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PROPAGANDA USE BY THE UNION AND CONFEDERACY IN GREAT BRITAIN
DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, 1861-1862

A Thesis

Submitted to the McNulty College & Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The Degree of Masters of History

By

Annalise L. Policicchio

August 2012

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Annalise L. Policicchio

2012

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ABSTRACT

PROPAGANDA USE BY THE UNION AND CONFEDERACY IN GREAT BRITAIN DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, 1861-1862

By

Annalise L. Policicchio

August 2012

Thesis supervised by Professor Holly Mayer

At the beginning of the American Civil War, the United States (the Union) already had international diplomatic status, whereas the Confederate States of America wanted foreign recognition of its independence. The two governments sent agents and propagandists across the Atlantic, in particular to Great Britain to support their objectives. The Confederacy and the Union used various avenues, including rallies, talking with members of Parliament, and publications to convince the British that supporting the Confederacy was the correct action to take. The Union's most well-known weapon emerged in January 1863: the Emancipation Proclamation. From the moment President Abraham Lincoln announced in September 1862 that he would emancipate slaves in the rebelling states, the nature of the American Civil War as viewed by the British changed. It could no longer be viewed simply as a war for southern

independence, for it became more explicitly about the maintenance or abolition of slavery. For the British, slavery was a moral issue that they would never countenance.

The propagandists battled not just over slavery and its moral implications but also over supplies, and the propaganda battle climaxed over a material issue, that of the 1862 *Florida* and *Alabama* incidents when the Confederacy sneaked the ships out of Britain. The Union had tried desperately to convince the British government to stop the ships from sailing, but the British government allowed them to sail. Union outrage over the ships, subsequent military victories and the Emancipation Proclamation ultimately outweighed the efforts of Confederate diplomats and propagandists to gain open international recognition and support.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who has always supported me in whatever I set out to do. When I struggled with parts of this paper, they encouraged me not to give up, and for that and many other things that they did for me, this study is dedicated to them.

I also dedicate this thesis to my committee, Dr. Holly Mayer and Dr. Perry Blatz, who worked closely with me to ensure that this thesis was the best that it could be. I appreciate all of the hard work and time that they dedicated to helping me, and in recognition of that, this thesis is also for them.

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Chapter 1: Historiography of Diplomacy and Propaganda in Great Britain during the American Civil War.

Almost ninety years after the creation of the United States, the young nation was torn apart by civil war. However, this feud between the states soon had trans-Atlantic repercussions. Both the Union and Confederacy immediately understood that European support, and particularly that of Great Britain, might provide key supplies, and might also be invaluable in negotiations on the diplomatic front. Great Britain with her powerful navy and political clout was an important potential ally to both the Union and Confederacy. But gaining that much-needed British support was not an easy task. Due to political issues within and between European nations, Britain was extremely reluctant to jeopardize her domestic and international stability or her economic interests in what many saw as an internal conflict with no easily predictable victor. On the other hand, Britain's dependence on Southern cotton could lead to Confederate support. As a result, Union and Confederate diplomats, and the propagandist who worked for or with them, faced challenging obstacles in seeking British support for their causes.

Attempts to gain British support involved more than formal diplomacy – it included efforts to influence public opinion. Although some diplomats engaged in such efforts, there was a new kind of agent in this front of the war: the propagandist. Propagandists not only disseminated news and acted as barometers of the public mood, but also expanded their operations into more thorough and in-depth intelligence-gathering and disinformation dissemination. Efforts to gather public support were especially vital in Britain, where Union and Confederate agents used intelligence-gathering and the mass production of articles and pamphlets to influence all levels of the populace, from the

working classes to the top tiers of the government. The two sides had quite different goals: the Confederacy strove to gain British diplomatic recognition and support for her war effort whereas the Union wanted Britain to remain neutral, refusing the Confederacy recognition or any foreign aid. Although both combatants strove to influence Britain's stance and actions throughout the war, their agents' work in the first few years of the war was especially significant because at that point, Britain appeared to be open to arguments from both sides. But by late 1862, following the issuance of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, the prospect of British support of the Confederacy was fading, and the continuance of British neutrality became more of a certainty.

The *Alabama* and *Florida* incidents in 1862 demonstrated the juncture of diplomacy and intelligence-gathering by the Union to prevent the construction and launching of these ships, a cruiser and a screw sloop-of-war, and of the use of propaganda by the Confederacy in an attempt to influence Britain to turn a blind eye to the construction of ships for the Confederacy. This thesis will examine attempts by Union agents to convince Great Britain to remain neutral and the equally determined attempts by Confederate agents to convince the British government to grant the Confederacy diplomatic recognition, supplies, and perhaps, military intervention during the first two years of the war. This essay emphasizes the increased role of the propagandists in Britain, their role in the outcome of the *Florida* and *Alabama* incidents, and thus posits the significance of propaganda to diplomatic conflict.

Academia has categorized the use of propaganda as a tool of diplomacy. It was part of the official ambassadorial job requirements. For the United States during its civil war, this emphasis on propaganda as a tool of diplomacy was seen in the majority of

works published on the subject until the mid-1900s. This narrow definition focused on revolved around the diplomats themselves and around the negotiations between ambassadors and foreign governments. The Union chose the diplomat Charles Francis Adams to represent its cause in Great Britain. Adams discussed the possibility of British intervention with both Lord John Russell, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and Prime Minister Lord Henry John Temple Palmerston. These discussions illustrated the Union's traditional approach to diplomacy, working from the top tiers of government down. The Confederacy, on the other hand, sent a number of representatives to Britain. The best-known representative was James Mason, a former senator from Virginia. Mason tried to follow Adams' example by working with the British government.

Most traditional works on the American Civil War and its impact on Great Britain emphasize one part of the conflict or a few key players. This approach to understanding the war meant that historians generally ignored the impact that other propagandists had on British public opinion. However, before studying the propagandists' roles in Great Britain during the years 1861 and 1862, it is necessary not only to examine the myriad of players involved in the conflict, but also the global and domestic economic impact of the American war on Britain's economy. The changing historiography of the last half of the Twentieth century illuminates that impact

Thus, for the purposes of this paper, traditionalism encompasses works that focus on government-to-government diplomacy, military strategy and battles, or focus on one part of the conflict or on key players. Revisionist works more closely examine the impact of economics on the American Civil War and some begin to reexamine the importance of propaganda. Works that may be called post-revisionist further expanded the field of

historiography by incorporating diplomacy that was not between foreign governments and included private discussions and a much larger examination of propaganda and its impact on Britain. This thesis fits within the latter two categories due to its focus on propaganda as used by both the Union and the Confederacy and its impact on the attitude of Great Britain toward the conflict.

An early example of the traditional approach is the article “[A] Biographical Sketch of the Hon. Thomas H. Dudley, of Camden, N. J., Who Died April 15, 1893” by William John Potts. It was published in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* in January 1895, two years after the Union intelligence agent’s death and thirty years after the end of the American Civil War.¹ Potts examined Dudley’s role in Great Britain through the eyes of a Mr. William Everett, commenting that Americans in Britain were “scattered, isolated, scantily informed... taunted, patronized and forced every hour to fight the battle of our country’s honor as truly as... the regiments at home.”² Dudley, as the United States’ Consul in Liverpool, was very close to Adams and fought to keep important information from prying eyes. Liverpool, described by many, Potts included, as a stronghold of Southern sympathy, was Dudley’s home base where he acted as a vanguard against Confederate influence in Britain. In Liverpool, Dudley aided Adams by determining the validity of information that was gathered by various contacts.³ Despite Potts’ decision to limit his study to one person during the conflict, he did break ground because he looked beyond Charles Francis Adams and his negotiations with the British

¹ William John Potts, “Biographical Sketch of the Hon. Thomas H. Dudley, of Camden, N. J., Who Died April 15, 1893,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 34 (Jan., 1895), 101-103.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

government. The move beyond Adams and a focus on individual players came to epitomize the traditionalist school.

James P. Baxter, III's article, titled "The British Government and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865," was published in 1928, sixty-three years after the end of the American Civil War. Baxter's work examined the British government and specifically the tug-of-war politics between the Union and Britain over British neutrality.⁴ Baxter hypothesized that one of the main reasons for Britain's decision to remain neutral in the American conflict was a concern over precedents that might be set concerning neutrality rights on the high seas in a future conflict, and this concern over precedents affected both Confederate attempts to gain British recognition and intervention, and Union attempts to convince Britain to remain neutral.⁵

Baxter's work focused on and praised British naval Admiral Alexander Milne, who was dedicated to maintaining British neutrality in the American conflict.⁶ Milne's unwavering dedication to preserving British neutrality was repeatedly emphasized and became an example of just how effective one man's actions could be in historical events and of the traditionalist school's narrow focus on key players or events during the American Civil War.⁷ In a move that would come to exemplify the traditionalist school, Baxter did not concern himself with British involvement in Western Hemisphere affairs

⁴ James P. Baxter, 3rd, "The British Government and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865," *The American Historical Review* 34 (Oct., 1928), 9-11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 18. There were times when Milne had to be reminded to remain neutral as events escalated in the waters surrounding North America and the West Indies, but as mentioned Milne continued to maintain Britain's neutrality.

beyond creating a context for Milne's actions; instead, Baxter's intent was to show Milne's dedication to British neutrality, even during disagreements with Union and Confederate commanders. One such incident involved Captain Charles Wilkes, the Union officer who arrested Confederate diplomatic representatives James Mason and John Slidell while they were en route to Britain aboard the British steamer *Trent*. Mason was a lawyer educated at the Law School of the College of William and Mary in 1820 as well as a senator in the United States government from 1847 to 1861, when he withdrew to serve the Confederacy. Mason's cohort, John Slidell, was also a politician, but was a businessman in private life. Slidell formerly served as a Commissioner to Mexico during the Texas-Mexico border dispute and as a Louisiana politician. When the Southern states seceded, Slidell sided with the Confederacy despite the fact that he was born in New York City.⁸ Following the removal of Mason and Slidell, Great Britain demanded the release of the two men, claiming that their removal from a British ship was a violation of British neutrality.⁹ The Union eventually released the two men, who traveled on to Europe.¹⁰ Wilkes, after the *Trent* affair had been resolved was reassigned to safeguard Union commerce in the West Indies and Bahamas from attacks by the *CSS Florida* and *CSS Alabama* in 1862.¹¹

The *Trent* Affair was a Confederate propagandist's dream. Confederate agent Henry Hotze railed against Wilkes, the Union commander, in his publication *The Index*,

⁸ Anonymous, "John Slidell, (1793 – 1871)", *Historical Times Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, from <http://www.civilwarhome.com/slidellbio.htm>, (accessed April 5, 2012); "MASON, James Murray, (1798 – 1871)," *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=m000216> (accessed April 5, 2012).

⁹ Baxter, "The British Government and Neutral Rights," 20-21

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

writing that Wilkes' actions during the *Trent* affair and the failure of the Union government to dismiss him from his post were in bad taste.¹² Hotze stated that the Union government had not acted fairly in responding to the *Trent* affair, since it reassigned Wilkes rather than removing him from the Federal navy or from a position of power. Hotze's comments were meant to incite anger and distrust among his readers towards the Union government for not punishing Wilkes, for embarrassing Great Britain, and for breaking international law. In addition, Hotze implied that the fact that the British captain allowed Wilkes to remove Mason and Slidell from his ship was a violation to British neutrality.¹³

In the aftermath of the *Trent* Affair, Milne gave orders that if any of Milne's officers observed a British ship being seized in neutral waters, they were not to interfere.¹⁴ In this way, Milne was determined to preserve Britain's neutrality in the American conflict, and this stance was typical of the traditionalist school, for the focus on Milne's actions obscured the bigger picture.

While the role of propaganda was relegated to the background of historical studies for many years, it became more important with the publication of Frank Owsley's *King Cotton Diplomacy* in 1931. This work was the beginning of the shift from traditionalist to revisionist interpretations of the Civil War, with its introductory study of the importance of propaganda in the conflict and an emphasis on economics.¹⁵ Owsley did

¹² Henry Hotze, "Notes on Events of the Week – America," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News*, February 11, 1864. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn04hotz>, 82.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Baxter, "The British Government and Neutral Rights," 18-19.

an excellent job showing the connections between diplomacy, intelligence-gathering, and propaganda, three subcategories not previously studied in conjunction. Despite its heavy Confederate bias, as seen in the book's emphasis on King Cotton Diplomacy and its basis for the Confederate diplomatic strategy, Owsley's focus on economics and its impact on the diplomatic relationships between the Union, the Confederacy and Great Britain, was important.¹⁶ In addition, Owsley was the historian who really initiated studies into propaganda and the British public's opinions on the conflict, thus introducing a new component to the study of the international dimensions of the American Civil War.¹⁷

Owsley's work was revisionist because it successfully introduced economics into the study of the American Civil War, a subject that had previously been relegated to the background. In addition, Frank Owsley was really the first historian to explore propaganda and its impact on Great Britain, enabling historians to look at the war on a more social and less political level. Owsley's work provided a crucial reconstruction of the world in which the Union and Confederate agents operated during the war.

"The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," written by Wilbur Devereux Jones in 1953, challenged the traditionalist view that Britain's Conservative Party was sympathetic to and gave aid and support to the Confederacy. Traditionalist historians argued that Britain's Conservative Party supported the Confederacy's call for intervention, a view that Jones rebutted.¹⁸ While Jones noted the similarities between

¹⁵ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ix; xix.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 467.

¹⁸ Wilbur Devereux Jones, "The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," *The American Historical Review* 58 (Apr., 1953), 527-528.

elite British landowners and Southern planters, and the distaste the British elite had for republican values, Jones argued that these widespread beliefs were not enough to enable the traditionalists to argue that British Conservatives hoped for Southern victory. Indeed. Jones argued that new sources, such as the Disraeli Papers, indicated that Conservative sympathy for the Confederacy was not as strong as previously believed.¹⁹ Jones contended that the new sources opened avenues of research that were previously untouched, and that the previous works declaring that the British Conservatives favored intervention on behalf of the Confederacy were faulty. In criticizing previous works, Jones emphasized that the Disraeli Papers in no way affirmed Conservative allegiance to one side or the other.²⁰

Furthermore, Jones highlighted the internal divisions within the British government over the correct action to take during the war. Jones emphasized how the analysis of public opinion and overall reactions to the war impacted the British government's ability to remain neutral. He noted that Lord John Russell commented in 1862 that much, if not all of the British government, sympathized with the Confederacy (something traditionalist interpretations picked up on and emphasized), but later he – and the entire government – came under pressure to switch their support to the Union and remain neutral, an idea not often accentuated until the traditionalists gave way to the revisionists.²¹ Furthermore, how could an observation of Ralph Earle, a former member of Parliament, written in a letter to Disraeli that “we [the British] shall be *Southern*, more

¹⁹ Wilbur Jones, “The British Conservatives and the American Civil War,” 527.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Wilbur Jones, “The British Conservatives and the American Civil War,” 529

or less, sooner or later” have any truth, given Britain’s aversion to slavery, and given that the root cause of the American Civil War was slavery?²² How could Britain justify any type of intervention on behalf of the Confederacy?²³ Therefore, Jones’ work moved beyond the traditional interpretation that the British Conservatives were in favor of intervention on the side of the Confederacy by providing new evidence of societal divisions that opened the way for others to examine how American agents tried to use those divisions.

Richard Greenleaf’s article “British Labor against American Slavery” was published a few months after Wilbur Jones’ piece and addressed the role of propaganda in a limited way.²⁴ This article was one of the first to comment on American concern for British public opinion during the war. Greenleaf observed that Adams attended a convention hosted by John Bright, British abolitionist and reformer, and took notes on the speeches presented there, among them speeches by Bright and Karl Marx. Both Adams and Marx were also present at a Trades Union meeting in 1863 - Adams to analyze Bright and Marx to present his views. Adams saw and described forces at work that shaped history, whereas Marx saw another way in which to influence the world “in the direction of freedom and equality.”²⁵ Their audience was composed of artisans, laborers and members of London’s trade societies, who wanted to hear the speakers’ opinions on the

²² Wilbur Jones, “The British Conservatives and the American Civil War,” 534. Ralph Earle wrote two letters to Disraeli prior to the opening of Parliament in 1863, the halfway point of the American Civil War. The first letter was written in late July 1862, and the second in early February 1863.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Richard Greenleaf, “British Labor against American Slavery,” *Science & Society* 17 (Winter, 1953), 42-43.

²⁵ As quoted in Ibid., 42-43.

war. During his speech to the Trades Union meeting in March, 1863, Bright compared the two American combatants, with a specific reference to the “honoured” position of laborers in the Union, and the degraded position of laborers (slaves) in the Confederacy. Here Bright appealed directly to the British aversion to slavery.²⁶ Clearly, a number of trade unions were interested in supporting the Union, and Bright’s speech itself was obviously propaganda, since it emphasized the worthiness of the Northern cause.

Frenise A. Logan’s “India—Britain’s Substitute for American Cotton, 1861-1865” connected Britain’s empire to the nation’s attitudes towards the American Civil War.²⁷ British investors and manufacturers had been worried for some time about their dependence on American cotton and had endeavored to find alternate sources of supply. Many thought that India was the solution. Logan emphasized that the manufacturers’ search for alternative supplies was not driven solely by economic factors, but by concern over the “immorality of slavery.”²⁸ Abolitionists emphasized the immorality of slavery as well as the British dislike of the institution – it had been abolished throughout the empire in 1832 – in an attempt to further encourage British neutrality. The Confederacy knew that British concerns over the morality of slavery and alternate cotton supplies were a threat to its “king Cotton” diplomatic strategy, a view that became a staple of the revisionist school.

Harriet Owsley also wrote about the American Civil War, but focused on one person and his accomplishments: Henry Sanford, a Union propagandist, spy and the

²⁶ As quoted in Greenleaf, “British Labor against American Slavery,” 45.

²⁷ Frenise A. Logan, “India—Britain’s Substitute for American Cotton, 1861-1865,” *The Journal of Southern History* 24 (Nov., 1958), 472.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

United States minister to Belgium. However, Harriet Owsley's article, published in 1961, also bridged the gap between traditionalist and revisionist studies, for while she focused on one facet of the American conflict, she also emphasized the broader picture, emphasizing Sanford's connections to Adams and Union Secretary of State William Seward.²⁹ Owsley's focus was on Sanford's spy network, which he utilized to gather crucial information on the Confederate propagandists' movements, information that he also used to boost his own propaganda efforts.³⁰ Owsley presented the Union in a positive light, an opposite view from that of her husband Frank Owsley, and her work was a combination of traditionalism and revisionism.³¹

The revisionist school's continued growth was seen with Henry Blumenthal's "Confederate Diplomacy: Popular Notions and International Realities," published in 1966. Blumenthal's work took a different look at Confederate diplomacy and the realities behind it.³² Blumenthal began his study by stating that the Confederacy pursued a course that followed "[the] popular notions and attitudes" prevalent in the South and ended up with a course of diplomacy that turned out, in hindsight, to be disastrous.³³ These "popular notions and attitudes" were the beliefs among the Southern populace that the war was going to be short, that the North would eventually let the Confederacy secede, and that Great Britain would quickly recognize the Confederacy because of its

²⁹ Harriet Chappell Owsley, "Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad, 1861-1865," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 48 (September 1961), 225-226. Both Adams and Seward eventually came to believe that Sanford was a loose cannon because his temper often overcame his logic. This led to his removal as head of the Union's intelligence network in Britain.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 226.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Henry Blumenthal, "Confederate Diplomacy: Popular Notions and International Realities," *The Journal of Southern History* 32 (May, 1966), 151.

³³ *Ibid.*

reliance on Confederate cotton, and these beliefs ultimately negatively impacted the Confederacy's diplomatic goals.³⁴ Blumenthal questioned the overall effectiveness of the Confederacy's diplomacy and the reasoning behind it, pointing out repeatedly that public opinion had too much of an impact on Southern diplomacy. For example, Confederate leaders were very eager to find foreign allies, and Blumenthal implied that this eagerness translated into a willingness to accept secondhand assurances that external aid was certain, a clear case of the Southern government accepting favorable information without verifying its accuracy.³⁵ This view ran counter to previous studies because Blumenthal focused on more than just the role of economic issues in the quest for foreign aid, suggesting that the ultimate failure of Confederate diplomacy did not result solely from economic issues, but also from Southern overconfidence.³⁶

Joseph M. Herson, Jr.'s 1967 study further stressed the importance of British public opinion during the American Civil War, arguing that the standard interpretation was too narrow to reach a full understanding of the total picture. This interpretation was mainly based on two sources, and this resulted in a narrow and inflexible interpretation of the subject.³⁷ His interpretation of British sympathies, however, utilized a number of more recent sources in order to make the point that British sympathies were divided across both social and economic lines. This division ensured that diplomats and

³⁴ Blumenthal, "Confederate Diplomacy," 151.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 154. This was seen a few times during the war, but more specifically at the war's outset. For example, the French minister to the United States – Count Édouard-Henri Mercier implied to his close friend John Slidell (the Confederate representative to France) that French recognition of the Confederacy was forthcoming.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

³⁷ Joseph M. Herson, Jr., "British Sympathies in the American Civil War: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Southern History* 33 (Aug., 1967), 366. The two mentioned sources are Ephraim D. Adams' *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (1925) and Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt's *Europe and the American Civil War* (1931).

propagandists from both the Union and Confederacy would work tirelessly to change British opinion.³⁸ Herson's work falls nicely into the revisionist school, for it becomes the foundation for a number of articles that not only continued the revisionist school but it also aided in the academic switch to the post-revisionist school of thought.

Mary Ellison's work, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* and Douglas A. Lorimer's article titled "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War" both examined British society and its divisions during the American Civil War. Ellison posited that the British middle class did not fully support the Union for several reasons: supporting the Confederacy was probably the quickest way to obtain raw cotton; the Emancipation Proclamation was seen as somewhat hypocritical, since it still allowed slavery in the border states; many felt that a Confederate victory would likely lead to the end of southern slavery; and finally, many British believed that American southerners had a fundamental right to choose their own form of government.³⁹ Ellison also refuted the notion that the lack of agitation from the Lancashire workers signified support for the Union, and argued that it cannot be assumed that the workers were sympathetic towards the North. Furthering her point, Ellison stated that if the workers supported Lincoln and the North, the evidence was not the lack of verbal protest; in fact, Ellison argued that many wanted the South to win and gave the Confederacy their moral backing. Ellison believed that the workers felt only mistrust for the Union, a feeling that deepened as the war progressed.⁴⁰

³⁸ Herson, "British Sympathies in the American Civil War," 366-367.

³⁹ Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), ix.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Although Ellison never directly stated that the Lancashire workers refused to support the North, her view runs against the grain of later historians such as R. J. M. Blackett and Brian Jenkins, both

Lorimer, acknowledged Ellison's findings, but focused more on the overall impact of anti-slavery sentiment on public opinion. He examined how the issue of the morality of slavery was viewed by the British public, a view that was ever-changing as the British social classes grew ever more divided.⁴¹

Ellison, Hernon and Lorimer all agreed that the English public was deeply divided over which side to support in the American conflict. Anti-slavery sentiment was a difficult obstacle for Confederate propagandists, especially when coupled with the growth of abolitionism in Britain and the growing concern with the immorality of human bondage.⁴² These moral sentiments became a rallying cry for Union supporters and increased the difficulty experienced by the Confederacy in gaining British support.

The complexities of Britain's Civil War diplomacy can be seen in Lord John Russell's concern with the consequences that Britain would face in the aftermath of the American conflict. Paul H. Scherer's article titled "Partner or Puppet? Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, 1859-1862" presented Russell as a misrepresented man whose naturally shy personality was overpowered by the dominant personality of Lord Palmerston.⁴³ Traditionalists viewed Lord Russell as nothing more than Lord Palmerston's puppet, while revisionists viewed Russell as a leader with a strong foreign policy background.⁴⁴ The post-revisionists argued that while Russell may have done

of whom returned to the traditionalist stance, arguing that the workers supported the North and/or remained neutral.

⁴¹ Douglas A. Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 19 (Jun., 1976), 405-406.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 406.

⁴³ Paul H. Scherer, "Partner or Puppet? Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, 1859-1863," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 19 (Autumn, 1987), 347.

Palmerston's bidding on occasion, he also used Palmerston to gain support for his own policies.⁴⁵ New collections helped Scherer to compile a much larger picture of what was going in Britain during the war, and his article not only focused on Russell during the American Civil War but also on his relationship with Lord Palmerston, which in turn examined Palmerston's involvement in Britain's decision to remain neutral and what the consequences of that choice meant for both the British public and the government officials.

Both David G. Surdam's "Cotton's Potential as Economic Weapon: The Antebellum and Wartime Markets for Cotton Textiles" and Sven Beckert's "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War" are firmly entrenched in the post-revisionist school, for both built upon and added to older arguments by turning to new evidence that they used to better understand propaganda's role in Britain. Economic in scope, Surdam's article examined how cotton grown throughout the British Empire could alleviate British dependence on Confederate cotton.⁴⁶ Ten years after Surdam's composition came another post-revisionist work by Sven Beckert titled "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War." Beckert asserted that the international cotton investors stepped up their search for new cotton sources, based on their fears that their total dependence on American, and specifically, Confederate, cotton sources could lead to economic

⁴⁴ Scherer, "Partner or Puppet? Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office," 347.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ David G. Surdam, "Cotton's Potential as Economic Weapon: The Antebellum and Wartime Markets for Cotton Textiles," *Agricultural History* 68 (Spring, 1994), 122.

disaster.⁴⁷ Like Logan before him, Beckert noted the heavy investment needed for India to even approach replacing the American South as Britain's chief supplier of cotton. India was the only nation that could come close to matching the American South's production.

Steven Siegel's article on British diplomacy during the first two years of the Civil War was also post-revisionist in nature due to its focus on both international and domestic diplomacy.⁴⁸ Published in *The Concord Review* in the fall of 2005, Siegel focused on the basic tenets of British diplomacy and on Confederate efforts to convince the island nation that recognition of the Confederacy was a better course of action than neutrality. In addition, Siegel's exploration of the social class structure of mid-nineteenth century Britain was crucial because it reinforced the idea that propaganda might have greatly affected the outcome of the American Civil War. Confederate propagandists knew that it would be easier to gain recognition if the populace petitioned the government; therefore, the British public and government were inundated with numerous requests, pamphlets, publications, and information dissemination from both Union and Confederate sympathizers to either convince the British government that intervention was better than neutrality or vice versa.⁴⁹

Another example of the post-revisionist school was *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, a collection of short essays edited by Robert May. This collection

⁴⁷ Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstruction the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *The American Historical Review* 109 (December 2004), 1405-1406.

⁴⁸ Steven Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War: January 1860 to September 1862," *The Concord Review* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2005), 117-137, http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/eprize07_Civil%20War%20Diplomacy%2016_1.pdf (accessed January 17, 2011).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

provided a more international examination of the Civil War, for as May commented in his introduction the main purpose of this collection was to introduce foreign nations into the formula of the American Civil War, showcasing the roles that these countries played and the urgency that Union and Confederate representatives felt in attempting to gain foreign aid.⁵⁰ Of importance here is that the essays also explored the influence that British public opinion had on the British government over the issue of intervention.⁵¹ One of the essay authors, R. J. M. Blackett, examined how cotton, African Americans, slavery and public opinion all acted as factors in the propaganda battle to gain British support.⁵²

Thomas Boaz's *Guns for Cotton: England Arms the Confederacy* examined the aid that private British citizens gave the Confederacy. Boaz wanted to show how the dedication of a few enabled the Confederacy to gain desperately needed arms, clothing and munitions, as well as limited financial support.⁵³ Boaz's book connects the revisionist school of economic thought begun by Frank Owsley and the post-revisionist trend of emphasizing international connections.

Dean Mahin's work, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War*, combined revisionist and post-revisionist analysis. Mahin asserted

⁵⁰ Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, The Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), 3.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Thomas Boaz, *Guns for Cotton: England Arms the Confederacy* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press, 1996), 1-3.

that Abraham Lincoln played a much larger role in diplomacy than previously thought.⁵⁴ Contrary to previous schools of thought that emphasized Secretary of State William Seward's role, Mahin showed that Lincoln worked with Seward to disguise diplomatic maneuvers in order to keep the Confederacy guessing.⁵⁵ Mahin also examined the *CSS Florida* and *CSS Alabama* incidents that involved the Confederacy's attempts to evade international law to obtain arms for the war effort. Mahin analyzed the role of propaganda in these two case studies, particularly the *Alabama* incident, with an emphasis on the activities of Union agent Henry Sanford and his attempts to persuade Britain to remain neutral.⁵⁶

Henry Sanford was not the only Union agent in Europe and Great Britain, for Thomas Haines Dudley had just as much, if not more, influence on events that occurred in the island nation. David Hepburn Milton's *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network* differed from William John Potts' article in a number of ways, yet Milton's work acted as a connector between the works of Potts and Milton.⁵⁷

Milton took the traditionalist route in that he wrote a detailed examination of one key player, yet he differed from Potts because he did not isolate Dudley's actions from the war's international aspect. Rather, Milton portrayed Dudley's accomplishments from an international perspective while showcasing the overseas theater of intelligence and

⁵⁴ Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 1-3.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

⁵⁷ Thomas Hepburn Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003); Potts, "Biographical Sketch of the Hon. Thomas H. Dudley," 103.

diplomacy in Britain.⁵⁸ Dudley's role as the Consul of Liverpool gave him access to the local British populace. Contradicting Potts' assertion that Dudley was rather isolated from his fellow Union agents, Milton showed that Dudley worked closely with Charles Francis Adams. Dudley ferreted out information about the Confederate agents stationed in Liverpool and elsewhere in Britain and relayed that information to Adams. This work thus combines revisionist and post-revisionist foci and interpretations.

The impact of the Union's blockade on Britain's mills in various towns and districts was closely examined in Rosalind Hall's article "A Poor Cotton Weyver: Poverty and the Cotton Famine in Clitheroe." Hall asserted that as the American Civil War increased in length and the Union's blockade tightened its hold on Confederate ports, raw cotton supplies became increasingly scarce in Britain.⁵⁹ This work observed that past historians concentrated on different aspects of the cotton famine, such as the relationship between increasing levels of poverty and the tightening of the blockade, or how the high level of donations to unemployed mill workers signified benevolent treatment. In this post-revisionist work, Hall took into account both the economic impact of scarce cotton supplies and closing mills and the effects on the unemployed triggered by different methods of charitable aid distribution, a concept that incorporated both traditionalist and revisionist views of the situation in the mill towns during Britain's cotton famine.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, xiii.

⁵⁹ Rosalind Hall, "A Poor Cotton Weyver: Poverty and the Cotton Famine in Clitheroe," *Social History* 28 (May, 2003), 227.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 229.

Howard Jones' *Blue and Gray Diplomacy* is post-revisionist in that it broadens the study of the American Civil War, by examining the foreign relations of the Union and Confederacy from both American and European perspectives. It shows how interconnected the diplomacy of the war truly was.⁶¹ Jones' emphasis on the international dimensions of the American Civil War followed Mahin's work, comparing and contrasting the diplomatic methods of both the Union and Confederacy.

Joining Howard Jones in the most recent spate of interpretations is Amanda Foreman and her work, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War*. As the title heralds, Foreman focuses specifically on Great Britain's impact on the American conflict. Foreman stated that although she had previously been aware of the polarization that the American war had caused among the British populace, she was surprised to learn that there were many elite Liberals in Britain who supported the Confederacy.⁶² Foreman's work went above and beyond previous works that examined Britain's role by exploring the entire Anglo-American relationship from antebellum times until just after the war ended in 1865. In this manner, Foreman successfully traced the evolution of British and American relations throughout the war, examining the difficulties inherent in gaining Britain's agreement for either neutrality or intervention, a task that has become a hallmark of post-revisionism. Britain's internal social divisions had not been previously linked to foreign influence, making this work rather novel; in

⁶¹ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 2-3.

⁶² Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (New York, New York: Random House, 2010), xxiii.

this respect, the Anglo-American world shifted and the relationship between the two countries was never the same.⁶³

The works above show how vibrant the study of Civil War diplomacy has been. This thesis, in turn, offers a contribution to the continuing post-revisionist examination of the effects of propaganda and public opinion to diplomatic engagements, but in particular on the outcome of the *Alabama* incident of 1862. This study focuses on the use of propaganda in Great Britain by the Union and the Confederacy so as to assess the overall impact of these efforts on Britain during the first two years of the war.

⁶³ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 806-807.

Chapter 2: The Development of King Cotton Diplomacy

In 1860, just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the American South was the dominant global producer of raw cotton, and Great Britain was the dominant global manufacturer of cotton textiles.¹ These economic realities set the agenda for Confederate diplomatic efforts as the conflict between North and South grew ever more certain. For Great Britain, the need for a constant supply of raw cotton to feed her massive textile industry was absolute. Britain had no source of raw cotton equal to that of the southern United States. For the South, this perceived British need for southern cotton became the driving force behind her efforts to gain foreign recognition and aid. Believing that she had Great Britain “over a barrel,” so to speak, the Confederacy ultimately based her foreign policy on “King Cotton.”

The cotton industry emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a major factor in the world economy due to both its size and financial worth, with an estimated 20 million workers involved in the industry.² The United States became the leading cotton producer, and her two largest customers were Great Britain and France, with the former importing 658,451,796 pounds of raw cotton from the American South in 1853, increasing within five years to 732,403,840 pounds, or about 75 percent of the global cotton yields for that year.³ These figures demonstrated British dependency on the

¹ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1. The entity known as Great Britain for this paper, unless referenced otherwise, shall encompass England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

² Sven Beckert, “Emancipation and Empire: Reconstruction the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War,” *The American Historical Review* 109 (December 2004), 1405.

³ David Christy, “*Cotton is King: or, Slavery in the Light of Political Economy*,” in *Cotton is King and Pro-Slavery Arguments, Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe, and Cartwright on This Important Subject*, ed. E. N. Elliott (Augusta, Georgia: Pritchard,

American South for almost three-quarters of her cotton, a dependency the South would attempt to exploit.⁴

Internationally, cotton was the primary ingredient for the world's burgeoning textile industry, one fueled by unparalleled growth in cotton yields. Whole regions of the world, such as Lancashire, England, and Massachusetts mill towns, were dependent on cotton shipments for both manufacturers' profits and the livelihoods of the mill workers.⁵ European nations grew wealthy from importing raw cotton and returning it to the international market as a multitude of manufactured products, whereas increasing raw cotton and numerous raw materials exports provided the basis for rapid antebellum economic growth in the United States.⁶

By the late 1850s, American cotton production outranked all international rivals, among them British India. American production accounted for an estimated "seventy-seven percent of the 800 million pounds that Britain consumed, ninety percent of the 192 million pounds imported by France and as much as ninety-two percent of the 102 million pounds manufactured in Imperial Russia."⁷ By 1860, United States cotton exports to Great Britain were worth about \$150 million, with the island nation's cotton consumption

Abbott & Loomis, 1860), 63, The Gutenberg Project, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28148/28148-h/28148-h.htm> (accessed September 19, 2011); Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 3. Great Britain imported cotton not only from the American South, but also from British India, Brazil, the West Indies, and Egypt; however, for the purposes of the aforementioned percentage, the amount of imported cotton references just that from the American South and British India.

⁴ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 2.

⁵ Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1408.

⁶ Freeman Hunt, ed., *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, vol. 18 (New York: The Author, 1848): 154, Available from Google Books.

⁷ Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1408-1409.

more than four times that of the North American textile mills.⁸ By the eve of the Civil War in 1860, the amount of cotton produced in the American South had risen to more than 4.5 million bales.⁹

Great Britain worried about her dependence on southern cotton. As early as 1840, Britain recognized the inherent danger of becoming dependent on one source of cotton, and she initiated a series of attempts to increase the cotton yields from the Indian subcontinent to offset American imports. The *London Economist* remarked on the issue of Britain's need to find alternate sources of cotton:

We are not surprised that the future supply of cotton should have engaged the attention of Parliament . . . It is a question of importance of which can not well be overrated, if we refer only to the commercial interests which it involves, or to the social comfort or happiness of the millions who are now dependent upon it for their support.¹⁰

The *Economist* further noted that in 1840, the amount of cotton imported by Great Britain was an estimated 592,000,000 pounds, but in the span of eighteen years, that amount had risen to roughly 900,000,000 pounds, an increase of about 50 percent.¹¹ These numbers spurred the British determination to find alternate sources of cotton.

The British press shared these fears of becoming too dependent on one nation for cotton. On June 9, 1855, the *London Economist* remarked that the demand for larger cotton shipments had not been met with a corresponding supply.¹² Then, on September

⁸ Thomas Boaz, *Guns for Cotton: England Arms the Confederacy* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press, 1996), 2; David G. Surdam, "Cotton's Potential as Economic Weapon: The Antebellum and Wartime Markets for Cotton Textiles," 68 (Spring, 1994), 125.

⁹ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 2.

¹⁰ As cited in Christy, *Cotton is King*, 62.

¹¹ As cited in *Ibid.*, 62. The issue of the *London Economist* referenced was February 12, 1859.

¹² *London Economist*, issued June 9, 1855, as cited in *Ibid.*, 61, 63.

1, 1855, this same newspaper observed the American crop was smaller than usual, and due to the continuing danger of American cotton crop fluctuations, it said Great Britain's continual reliance on the United States posed an economic danger, and an actual American crop failure would be disastrous for Britain's economy.¹³ A lack of raw cotton would force mills and factories to close, leading to the unemployment of thousands of mill workers. The fact that a large part of the British workforce relied on the textile industry for their livelihoods made social revolution due to unemployment in the cotton industry not only terrifying, but entirely possible.¹⁴ Therefore, Britain's fears of the consequences of depending upon one source for the majority of its imports were legitimate. Clearly, Britain had to find additional sources for cotton imports, and the logical place to look for increased cotton production was the British colony of India.

Britain had long imported Indian cotton, but the amounts were much smaller than those imported from the American South. Isaac Watts, author of *The Cotton Supply Association: Its Origin and Progress* and a longtime student of the issue of cotton supply, observed that the British hoped that India "would prove the land of promise, and fully realise our hopes."¹⁵ In hopes of increasing Indian cotton exports, Britain sent agents to India to gather information and find ways to turn India into a large enough cotton exporter to offset American shipments.¹⁶ The British House of Commons received a

¹³ As cited in Christy, *Cotton is King*, 61.

¹⁴ Isaac Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association: Its Origin and Progress* (Manchester: Tubbs & Brook, 1871), 10, Available from Google Books.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13. It should be noted that Watts' full and comprehensive report was not completed until after the American conflict had ended (1871); however, this does not detract from the study's usage as a valuable source of information concerning the full impact of cotton on Britain's economy.

¹⁶ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 3.

report dated February 29, 1848, concerning the obstacles to enhancing Indian cotton production, among them soil quality, the Indian revenue system, and the lack of profit for the cultivators.¹⁷ Watts reported on India's introduction of foreign strains of cotton (especially American and Egyptian) including the American variety known as the "New Orleans," grown in Dharwar, in the Southern Mahratta country of the Indian subcontinent.¹⁸ The climate in this part of India was similar to the American South, since it had more rainfall and a higher elevation thanks to the Ghats (mountains).¹⁹ It was hoped that the similar climates would allow for larger cotton yields and thus larger Indian exports.

Not only the British politicians, but also the merchants and cotton manufacturers knew how important cotton imports were to the British economy, and this knowledge led to the creation of the Cotton Supply Association. Founded in 1857 by the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire, its goal was to try to gather as much information as possible on cotton cultivation in any country that had the climate and soil needed for crop growth.²⁰ To encourage a switchover to Indian cotton, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a collection of concerned cotton manufacturers and merchants, met on January 19, 1850, to consider "whether any course was open whereby an enlarged commercial intercourse with India could be promoted, and especially an increased supply

¹⁷ Hunt, ed., *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, 666. This report, witnessed by Mr. Francis William Prideaux of the East India House and presented in the British House of Commons was not complete; Prideaux cited a lack of information concerning the situation of the cotton cultivators throughout the colony; however, the findings that he did present represented a comparison to cultivators in the subcontinent, which he cited as "not differently situated from the cultivator of other produce."

¹⁸ Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

of cotton obtained” in order to lessen British dependence on American cotton.²¹ The first resolution passed by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce called for a consideration of all other cotton producers in hopes of finding a suitable supplement for American cotton.²² While this was an excellent suggestion, and other areas of the world possessed good climates for growing cotton, producers such as Brazil, the West Indies, and Egypt did not harvest enough cotton to make a significant impact.²³

This fact, when added to the even smaller cotton supply from British India, created a situation in which Britain was unable to break free of its reliance on American cotton. The *London Economist* commented on the lack of substantial increase in cotton shipments from India to British ports, stating that:

From British India the supply is relatively shorter than from the United States. It fails us more than that of the States [American South], and the fact is rather unfavorable to the speculations of those who wish to make us independent of the States, and dependent chiefly on our own possessions. ... In 1855, when we have a short supply from other quarters, India has sent us one-third less than in 1853.”²⁴

The crux of the situation was this: if Britain’s empire was unable to supply a sufficient amount of cotton to supply the mother country’s cotton industry, then Britain could not break her dependence on American cotton.²⁵ Britain’s dependency on the United States for cotton was thus a crucial factor in its relations with its former colonies – and it would

²¹ Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 10.

²² In an interesting side note, Watts does not mention Lancashire as being particularly concerned with Britain’s reliance on one nation for cotton. He remarked that the Manchester Chamber of Commerce itself was also taken aback at the confidence with which Lancashire operated, particularly when the majority of her domestic economic market was reliant in one form or another on the cotton trade.

²³ As cited in Christy, *Cotton is King*, 63.

²⁴ As cited in *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁵ As cited in *Ibid.*

become a factor that American southerners tried to exploit in their attempts to achieve their independence.

Joining with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Cotton Supply Association adopted the Chamber's goal of encouraging cotton growth in every suitable part of the world in order to offset the dependence on imported American cotton.²⁶ Domestically, the Cotton Supply Association petitioned the British Parliament concerning the issue. In the petition, the Association stated that it was Parliament's duty to "adopt the most prompt and effectual measures for rendering India capable of furnishing an ample supply of improved cotton."²⁷ The petition further stated that a substantial investment was needed to create the necessary infrastructure to enable India to become a substantial cotton supplier. This task, the Cotton Supply Association noted, was the responsibility of the British government.²⁸ Additionally, the Cotton Supply Association's petition to the House of Commons listed a number of reasons why the Association felt the need for large monetary investments in India, all of which dealt with the advantages that American cotton growers possessed over their Indian rivals. Two of those American advantages were access to more capital than India, and easy access to both water and land-based communications and infrastructure not enjoyed in India.²⁹

Both the Cotton Supply Association and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent agents abroad to gather first-hand evidence of the results of British investment in

²⁶ Frenise A. Logan, "India—Britain's Substitute for American Cotton, 1861-1865," *The Journal of Southern History* 24 (Nov., 1958), 472-473; Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 11-12.

²⁷ Cotton Supply Association Petition to the House of Commons, "Where is Cotton to come from to keep the mills at work?", May 7, 1861, "House of Commons Papers," v. 44 (London: British Parliament, 1863), 55, Available from Google Books. Cited hereafter as "House of Commons Papers," v. 44.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

India and of the attempts at increasing cotton yields globally. Although the resulting reports were optimistic, they also noted several obstacles yet to be overcome, one of which concerned finding the correct type of land and climate for growing cotton.

Investigative reports stated that cotton could be grown anywhere in temperate and/or near tropical regions of the globe, and for the British Empire, upon which the Sun never set, this meant multiple prospective regions.³⁰ Accordingly, British consuls in those regions where it might be possible to grow cotton were asked to distribute seeds to farmers and to do everything in their power to increase the crop's growth, all with mixed results.³¹

India became a proving ground of sorts for Britain in terms of finding another source of cotton and demonstrating that the necessary amounts of cotton could be produced without the use of slaves. An issue of the *London Economist*, dated February 12, 1859, stated that India was certain to become a successful cotton producer due to the availability of inexpensive land and large pools of cheap labor.³² The *Economist* continued by asserting that whatever financial sacrifice was needed, including investment in transportation and other infrastructure, should be done enthusiastically, for it was the only way for India to become a large-scale cotton producer. This, in turn, would not only increase the amount of cotton available globally, but also lower prices, thereby benefiting those nations who imported large amounts of the fiber.³³

³⁰ Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 11-12. Watts even went so far as to state that “within our own [British] territories, and under the dominion of the British crown, nothing but energy, skill, and capital seemed to be required to produce all [the] cotton that we could consume.”

³¹ Ibid.

³² As quoted in Christy, *Cotton is King*, 63, 65.

³³ As cited in Ibid., 65. India's success was also supposed to help check the spread of slavery and the slave trade by proving that other cheap labor was available and just as good, or even better, in growing cotton than slaves.

In the decade prior to the American Civil War, the amount of cotton exported from India did indeed rise, evidence that British investment and focus on the subcontinent was somewhat successful, but the American South also continued to increase its yields. The English Board of Trade's annual report for 1859 corroborated this fact, for it showed that even though Britain had spent over twenty years investing in India's cotton trade, only about 60,000,000 pounds were exported from the Southeast Asian subcontinent, a difference of only 10,000,000 pounds when compared to the total amount exported in 1800.³⁴ Britain had obtained an increase of less than 20 percent in the face of continual demand for cotton and the United States' increasingly high-yield cotton harvests since 1800.³⁵

Watts estimated that by 1860, the United States produced roughly 85 percent of the cotton that Britain imported for use in her mills and factories, despite the increased amounts of Indian cotton exports.³⁶ In fact, when the numbers for 1860 were examined, Britain imported 562,738 bales of cotton from India, each weighing 400 pounds, a decent amount, but only about 21 percent of the cotton Britain imported from the United States during the same year.³⁷ Clearly, American cotton exports continued to dominate.

By April 1861, after years of attempts by various groups in Britain and throughout the British Empire to increase Indian cotton production, the *London Economist* publicly conceded defeat, telling its readers that Indian cotton was never going to be able to compete with its American cousin. The *Economist* cited a number of reasons for this

³⁴ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

³⁶ Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

defeat, primary among them that Indian raw cotton “loses more in the process of spinning [than American raw cotton].”³⁸ In other words, when Indian cotton was spun into manufactured products and yarn, the combination of large amounts of generated waste and the increased time it took to spin undermined profits. The same machinery, according to the *Economist*, produced “ten to twenty percent more American yarn than Surat (Indian) yarn.”³⁹ Some of the reasons behind the excess waste were that Indian cotton possessed shorter fibers and a higher dust content when compared to American cotton, and the manufactured cloth was also thinner, a flaw that bolstered the continued popularity of American cotton.⁴⁰

In addition, calls made for investments to improve the efficiency of the Indian transportation system to provide for easier shipment of cotton from India to Britain and to lower the cost of transporting Indian cotton had not been successful. The British government looked to both domestic parties and its colonial governors in India for plans to improve transportation systems and obtain more investment. Watts related how a proposal had been submitted to the British government and the East India Company in 1857 “to raise and apply a sum of four millions annually, for five years, in such public works as... necessary, for the development of the industry and commerce of India.”⁴¹ The British government considered the proposal, but did not agree to it or subsequent propositions, such as one that would have “improve[ed] the quality, and reduce[d] the

³⁸ As cited in Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 5.

³⁹ Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 83; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 5

⁴⁰ Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 83.

⁴¹ Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 17-18.

cost of cotton exported from India to this country [Britain]... by an estimated...
£286,000.”⁴²

However, some, such as the Cotton Supply Association, were unwilling to give up on India. In 1861, the Cotton Supply Association once again suggested that the British government open “the navigation of the River Godavery as a means of access to the vast cotton fields of Berar.”⁴³ It also remarked that India merely needed Britain to direct her “skill, enterprise and capital... to the development of the agricultural resources of India, that ...would speedily be rendered capable of supply cotton of as good quality as that now furnished by the restricted and costly slave labour of the United States.”⁴⁴ Its exhortations appeared to fall on deaf ears.

During all this time, war loomed larger in the United States. It came as no surprise that when war did erupt, the relationships that had underpinned the global economics of the cotton industry became increasingly frayed. Upon the South’s secession, the federal government of the United States (the American North) passed the Morrill Tariff in an attempt to protect and encourage the growth of her own industries by imposing high duties on foreign imports.⁴⁵ While still part of the Union, the South had

⁴² Watts, *The Cotton Supply Association*, 17-18. Watts does not give a specific reason as to why the British government refused to act on the numerous petitions it received about public works in India, but hypothesizes that irregular occurrences in India may have been to blame. It should also be noted, however, that the occurrences that Watts attributed to preventing the British government’s involvement in constructing public works were not mentioned specifically, but rather received a vague reference.

⁴³ “House of Commons Papers,” v. 44, 56.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55. The last part of this quotation references a moralistic belief that many sectors of British society, including emancipation societies, thought true. This belief was the idea that slave-grown cotton was somehow more impure than that grown by hired or free labor. As already mentioned, India possessed a large amount of free labor, waiting to start work on cultivating increased cotton growth, and for those in Britain who wanted an alternate cotton source, many also wished that the new supply be grown and harvested by free labor, not slaves, thereby making it more pure.

⁴⁵ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 54.

prevented the tariff's passage because it benefitted the North's industrial sectors and not the South's agrarian economy, and it would also have made trade more difficult for the South, dependent as she was on imported foodstuffs and manufactured products.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the tariff would also roil the British society for it would dampen Southern demand for British manufactured goods.

Britain, recognizing that a civil war was inevitable in the United States, had been purchasing cotton in huge amounts, so that by the time the war actually began, Britain possessed a surplus of cotton that was so large it would take about two years to consume, so it was therefore not in great need of Confederate cotton.⁴⁷ The fact that it possessed such a large cotton surplus was a factor in the failure of the Confederacy's King Cotton Diplomacy.

Upon establishing the Confederate States of America and as war became inevitable, the self-declared southern confederacy knew that it needed a strategy to gain foreign recognition, and it decided to use cotton as a bargaining chip with European nations, particularly Britain, because of their strong dependence on American cotton. A series of articles written by a number of different authors also fostered this belief and the resulting diplomatic strategy. The first of these works was the anthology of books and pamphlets, *Cotton Is King and the Pro-Slavery Arguments Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christy, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe, and Cartwright on This important Subject*, edited by E. N. Elliot. In his work from this book, "Cotton is King: or, Slavery in the Light of Political Economy, Ohioan David Christy stated that in order

⁴⁶ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 54, 191-192.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 549.

to avoid bloodshed and assure the peaceful secession of the South, negotiations between the two sections of the United States had to take place according to southern terms, among which was the idea that “Cotton is King.”⁴⁸ This phrase later became commonplace throughout the South, repeated by politicians and masses alike.⁴⁹ The phrase, “Cotton is King,” appears to have originated in a speech given by Senator James Henry Hammond on March 4, 1858. Hammond, responding to a speech by Senator William Seward given the previous day, argued that the southern exports were about twice that of the North, and this did not include another \$40,000,000 in products sent to the North. In arguing against a protective tariff, Hammond claimed that the passage of such a tariff would be the equivalent of declaring war on cotton. Hammond ominously warned that by not planting cotton, the South could bring about the collapse of the entire global economy, including that of the North. Hammond proclaimed “No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton is king.”⁵⁰ This idea, later shortened to “King Cotton,” took hold and soon many in the Confederacy were convinced that Great Britain had no choice but to support her main cotton supplier in this conflict. A prominent Georgian secessionist, Thomas R. R. Cobb, wrote on February 19, 1861, “that Great Britain, France and Russia will acknowledge us at once in the family of nations,” a statement that summarized the feelings of many Southerners at

⁴⁸ As cited in Christy, *Cotton is King*, 138. In part, this phrase also came from an examination of the American South’s profits from the past few decades, all of which were high and “exceeded in value the exports of breadstuffs and provisions to the extent of *fourteen hundred and twenty-one millions of dollars!*”

⁴⁹ As cited in *Ibid.*, 135-137; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 15. *Cotton Is King* began as the sole work of Christy, referenced above, but in 1860 this work was incorporated with other works by Southern writers and slavery champions..

⁵⁰ James Henry Hammond, “On the Admission of Kansas, Under Lecompton Constitution,” in *Selections from the Letters and Speeches of the Hon. James H. Hammond of South Carolina*,” (New York: John F. Trow & Co., 1866), 311-322, http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents/HammondCotton.html (accessed February 29, 2012).

the beginning of the American Civil War.⁵¹ It became a common Confederate assumption that European nations would intervene on the side of the Confederacy if war erupted, in order to keep their economies intact.⁵²

Further evidence of this belief was seen in British Consul Robert Bunch's report to Lord John Russell, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, concerning an encounter on December 15, 1860, with prominent Southerner Robert Barnwell Rhett. Bunch reported that Rhett questioned him as to the probability of the British offering support to the Confederacy, to which Bunch replied that he had no power to comment officially on the subject, nor could he offer an opinion on it.⁵³ Rhett, however, was insistent and said that the Confederacy would prefer to have Great Britain as an ally rather than enemy, a policy that he personally believed would benefit both nations but particularly Britain, which was still dependent on American cotton. Bunch also remarked that Rhett noted numerous economic benefits for Britain should she ally with the South, among them an "an interchange of commodities ... which would lead to an unrestricted intercourse of the most friendly character."⁵⁴ Bunch attempted to alert Rhett to the folly of assuming that Britain and other European nations would automatically support the Confederacy, but Rhett, supremely confident in his beliefs, assured Bunch that even if slavery was an issue, foreign recognition would come swiftly for the Southern states. Bunch pointed out that

⁵¹ Blumenthal, "Confederate Diplomacy," 153.

⁵² Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 3. Jefferson Davis, future president of the Confederacy, closely followed the discussions abroad concerning cotton's importance, becoming a firm believer in cotton's power to convince Great Britain and other European nations of the importance of the Confederacy's cause, cementing a policy that he would later utilize during his presidency in the battle to gain foreign support.

⁵³ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., "Despatch from the British Consul at Charleston to Lord John Russell, 1860," *The American Historical Review* 18 (Jul., 1913), 785.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 785-786. Bunch attempted a number of times to convince Rhett that he in no way spoke for Great Britain, but he still could discuss the matter with Rhett as a friend, which they did.

Britain would like to see the internal southern slave trade abolished, but Rhett argued that to do so would be a *de facto* admission that the institution of slavery was obsolete, something the Confederacy would never do.⁵⁵ Despite Bunch's refusal in any way to commit to British support of the Confederacy, Rhett believed he heard an implied assurance that Britain would recognize the Confederacy, and his belief matched the American South's firm belief that King Cotton diplomacy was the solution to the Confederacy's desire for European recognition.

This discussion between these two men showed the centrality of an issue the South preferred to avoid, that of the morality of slavery. Rhett blithely dismissed British, moral concerns, even as Bunch tried to emphasize their importance. The relationship between cotton and slavery, a relationship especially visible in the American South, was a sensitive one for Britain. The slave-based economy of the South fueled abolitionist demands for less reliance on slave-grown cotton. British economist J. T. Danson commented on the connections between cotton, American slavery and British manufacturing, stating that "there is not, and never has been, any considerable source of supply for cotton, excepting the East Indies, which is not obviously and exclusively maintained by slave-labour."⁵⁶ Britain had abolished slavery throughout its empire in 1832, which meant that for the British, a nation such as Confederate States of America that was dependent upon slavery to increase her material wealth was morally inferior (the British conveniently forgot that Britain had also allowed slavery to flourish in its empire

⁵⁵ Edmund Burnett, ed., "Despatch from the British Consul at Charleston to Lord John Russell, 1860," 786.

⁵⁶ As cited in Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1409. The East Indies refers to Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Danson is explicitly referring to India in this quote.

in the past). Danson's comment captured the feelings of a number of the British emancipation societies of the time, many of which desired the continuation of the cotton trade but not the use of slaves to grow and harvest the cash crop.⁵⁷

In a review of the international relations of the mid-nineteenth century, historian Robert E. May commented that "world opinion" was not in favor of the continuance of slavery.⁵⁸ Britain was not the only nation to have abolished slavery: by 1861 both Austria and Imperial Russia had outlawed serfdom, and France and the majority of Latin American nations had not allowed slavery for decades.⁵⁹ Therefore, the fact that the American South continued to cling to slavery was upsetting to many European nations.

That was one of the problems the new Confederacy faced as it tried to establish diplomatic ties. Another was trying to organize quickly so as to send ambassadors abroad. Initially, it relied on informal contacts and meetings such as the one between Rhett and Bunch, and upon information gathered by friends of the Confederacy. For example, Seward met with Lord Lyons, British consul to the United States in an unscheduled visit on March 20, 1861 where he attempted to sound out British reaction to a possible Union interruption of the southern cotton supply. Seward, pressing Lyons for information, provoked a blustery response from Lyons, who declared that if the North interrupted the cotton trade, "the most simple, if not the only way [to fight back] would be to recognize the Southern Confederacy."⁶⁰ This information was most likely relayed

⁵⁷ Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1409.

⁵⁸ Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, The Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (New York, New York: Random House, 2010), 69.

to the Confederate leaders. William Howard Russell, a correspondent for the *London Times*, traveled throughout the United States, including the South, meeting with future Confederate Attorney General, Judah P. Benjamin, in Charleston, South Carolina in late 1860. During that meeting Benjamin observed that a British refusal to recognize Confederate letters of marque would be “nothing more or less than a declaration of war against us . . .”⁶¹ Benjamin, confident that Britain was desperate to continue the southern cotton trade, drew the conclusion from Russell’s responses that British recognition of the Confederacy would soon be forthcoming.⁶² By the time the Confederacy actually sent official representatives abroad, most Southerners were convinced that cotton was the key to a Confederate victory. Southerners had persuaded themselves that British desperation for southern cotton would bring official recognition, aid, and perhaps even intervention on the Confederate side.

In their belief that cotton – or the lack thereof – was the key to British support, the Confederacy chose a tactic that would ultimately backfire – it placed a voluntary embargo on cotton exports to Europe in 1861.⁶³ The reasoning behind this decision was perfectly in line with the Confederate certainty that “King Cotton” diplomacy would work. The Confederacy reasoned that as cotton supplies dwindled, European nations, Britain in particular, would suffer economically as workers were laid off and profits fell. To save their economies, European nations would intervene on behalf of the

⁶¹ Sir William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1863), accessed September 19, 2011, <http://books.google.com>, 142.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 3

Confederacy.⁶⁴ The Confederacy resolved not to lift the embargo until the North ended its blockade of Confederate ports – implemented in April 1861 – and Confederate independence was recognized.⁶⁵

As part of Lieutenant General Winfield Scott’s Anaconda Plan, Lincoln instituted a naval blockade of Confederate ports in April 1861 shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter. The purpose of the blockade was to stop Confederate exports, especially cotton, thereby destroying the financial basis of the Confederate economy and preventing Confederate access to outside supplies.⁶⁶ The South, along with its belief that the cotton embargo would bring foreign recognition, also thought that it would preempt the Union’s own plans to stop cotton exports and thus destroy the Confederacy financially. This obviously made sense to the Confederacy, but it did not make financial sense. During the first year of the Union blockade, the Confederacy could easily have shipped her bumper crop of cotton abroad due to the spottiness of the blockade itself, thereby earning hard currency that could have been used to purchase much needed supplies.⁶⁷ However, the South was so convinced that the embargo would work, and that Britain, without Southern cotton, according to Senator Hammond, “would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her,” that it failed to understand the damage the embargo would do to the South.⁶⁸ In fact, the Confederate belief in the efficacy of King Cotton diplomacy was absolute. As William Russell observed to his readers, “King Cotton Diplomacy”

⁶⁴ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 31.

⁶⁷ Beckert, “Emancipation and Empire,” 1409-1410.

⁶⁸ Hammond, “On the Admission of Kansas, Under Lecompton Constitution.”

was “a lively all-powerful faith without distracting heresies or schisms. They [the southerners] have in it enunciated their full belief.”⁶⁹

At first, cotton diplomacy appeared to be working. As cotton shipments ceased, and in response to government queries, British representatives stationed in the Confederacy sent word that this move had indeed been voluntary and not forced. One such message came from Consul Bunch, who wrote Lord Russell in 1861, commenting that Southerners believed that withholding cotton for one year from Great Britain would plunge the island nation into social chaos and economic depression.⁷⁰ Shortly after the embargo was instituted and the Union blockade implemented, Queen Victoria of Great Britain issued a Proclamation of Neutrality that not only declared Britain neutral in the American Civil War, but also extended to the Confederacy belligerent status. This did not equate with recognition, but merely gave the Confederacy the legal right to seize ships and confiscate enemy goods based on the Confederate right of self-preservation. This proclamation was interpreted by the Confederacy as an example of strong support, but the Union was horrified, believing that the Proclamation implied that the Confederacy was indeed a legal entity.⁷¹

As the Confederacy became better organized, it began to send diplomats abroad, and here the Confederacy was at a definite disadvantage when compared to the Union. The Union’s representatives possessed more diplomatic expertise and were better known than their Confederate counterparts. The Confederate representatives were often

⁶⁹ William Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 142.

⁷⁰ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 21-22.

⁷¹ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 47-48.

domestically important, but possessed no international experience. The Union's diplomatic hopes rested on its minister to Britain, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and on a number of other ministers, among them Henry S. Sanford, the minister to Belgium. On the other hand, the Confederacy shipped three different groups of diplomats and/or propagandists overseas during 1861 and 1862 to negotiate with European governments.

The Confederacy first sent three diplomats, William Yancey, Pierre Rost and Ambrose Dudley Mann, abroad in early 1861. Their mission was to seek official recognition and negotiate treaties of commerce with all of the major European nations, but primarily Britain. They were instructed to argue that secession was justified as a means of self-preservation following the passage of the protective tariff levied by Congress. Furthermore, the three men were to show that the South had set up an orderly government and could maintain itself since it controlled much of the eastern and southern coasts of the United States. These arguments, however, provided no inducement for Britain or any other nation to support the Confederacy, so the men were instructed to emphasize that an independent Confederacy could offer virtually free trade to Europe with almost no tariffs, and this would apply to the cotton that Europe, and especially, Britain, was dependent upon. The three men met with Lord Russell on May 3, 1861, and although Lord Russell gave no indication of forthcoming British support, Yancey and Mann reported to Richmond that they believed that "recognition would not long be withheld."⁷² However, following a subsequent interview on May 9, the three men reported to Richmond that they now believed that the English government would postpone the "recognition of the independence of those States . . . as long as possible, at least until some decided advantage is obtained by them or the necessity for having cotton becomes

⁷² As quoted in Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 57.

pressing.”⁷³ By September 1861, Yancey appeared to have lost all hope of gaining British recognition and resigned his post, resulting in the dissolution of the group. Yancey and Rost were replaced by James Mason and John Slidell.

Despite this diplomatic setback, by the end of 1861, the Confederacy was convinced that its future was bright. Based on its absolute belief that cotton diplomacy would work, it sent representatives abroad to negotiate treaties of recognition and commerce, confident that their mission would be successful. This Confederate confidence was due to the newly instituted cotton embargo that the South believed would bring Europe and particularly, Great Britain to its knees and result in widespread unemployment, profit loss, social unrest, and perhaps even rebellion. As British mills ran out of cotton, Britain would be forced to grant official recognition to the Confederacy, provide aid, and perhaps even intervene on behalf of the Confederacy in order to protect her textile industry and her economy. The Union blockade was dismissed as ineffective due to the Confederate belief that it had, with its cotton embargo, preempted the purported purpose of the blockade: to financially destroy the South. Reassured by informal contacts with the British and by Queen Victoria’s proclamation, the Confederacy was convinced that it would not have to wait long for British support.

⁷³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 59.

Chapter 3: The Union and Confederacy Resort to a War of Propaganda

Propaganda is not a twentieth-century phenomenon, although the word usually brings to mind images of posters, pictures and phrases from World War II. Although both the Union and the Confederacy attempted to use propaganda, information gathering and dissemination, it was especially important for the weaker party, the Confederacy, that its propaganda efforts were successful in swaying British governmental and public opinion. The Confederacy desperately sought diplomatic recognition and aid, while the Union sought only to maintain the status quo.

At the outset of the American Civil War in 1861, the Confederacy relied heavily on King Cotton Diplomacy, believing that the loss of cotton imports from the American South would force the European powers, and especially Great Britain, to recognize the fledgling nation.¹ As war erupted, the Confederacy hoped that King Cotton Diplomacy would be effective and was dismissive of the deep abolitionist feelings within Britain and the reluctance of the British government to get involved in a war that might have no clear winner.²

In addition to King Cotton Diplomacy, Confederate President Jefferson Davis attempted to manipulate foreign nations into supporting the South in a number of other ways. For example, Davis framed the conflict as one in which the South was asking for “nothing more than independence,” an innocuous argument that could easily win foreign

¹ Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000), 20-21; Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 154.

² Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 25.

recognition.³ Davis also played to British fears of the growing commercial power of the Union by implying that a Confederate victory would restrain that growth, reducing its threat to the commercial power of Great Britain.⁴ Furthermore, Davis appealed to the mutual respect and kinship between Southern conservative plantation owners and the English aristocratic country gentlemen, arguing that such mutual respect “held out the promise of far-reaching co-operation and understanding” between the two nations.⁵ While some, such as R. B. Rhett, believed that recognition would lead to British governmental aid, others hoped for aid from supportive British private parties, such as the British country gentlemen.⁶

Davis might have hoped as Rhett did, for he was certainly aware of the need for vast amounts of military supplies to equip the new Confederate army, but he chose not to ask European governments for those supplies when he asked for recognition. Instead the new president of the Confederacy turned to private firms and connections to find the necessary equipment. The Confederate government chose the firm of John Fraser & Co., with offices in Charleston and subsidiaries in New York (later closed and reopened in Nassau) and Liverpool, to act as its agent in purchasing supplies from Britain.⁷ The Confederate government deposited its funds with John Fraser & Co. in Charleston, and

³ Henry Blumenthal, “Confederate Diplomacy: Popular Notions and International Realities,” *The Journal of Southern History* 32 (May, 1966),” 155-156. The Confederacy also attempted to appeal to France’s Emperor Napoleon III on the issue of nationhood, in part because Southerners assumed that the “defender of the principle of nationality” would support their aspirations to secede and create their own state.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 156.

⁶ Blumenthal, “Confederate Diplomacy,” 156-157; Edmund Burnett, ed., “Despatch from the British Consul at Charleston to Lord John Russell, 1860,” 785.

⁷ Thomas Boaz, *Guns for Cotton: England Arms the Confederacy* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press, 1996), 11.

the firm issued letters of credit on those funds to the Fraser subsidiary in Liverpool, which then used those letters of credit to pay for purchases made by Confederate agents in Britain.⁸ In addition, Davis set up the Confederate Ordnance Bureau under the command of Josiah Gorgas. Gorgas was ordered to equip the proposed 100,000 man Confederate army. Knowing that the available domestic supplies were inadequate, Gorgas ordered Captain Caleb Huse to Europe to buy “whatever was needed and available,” and to arrange for them to be shipped back to the Confederacy.⁹ Using letters of credit made available by the Fraser subsidiary in Liverpool, Huse was successful in securing the purchase of weapons for the Confederacy, and he remained in England, later working with James Bulloch and Major Edward Anderson to scour Britain for weapons to send to the Confederacy.¹⁰ Indeed, Davis was so pleased with Huse’s success that he sent instructions to Huse telling him to “acquire arms as he saw fit, and to act upon his own responsibility and not be controlled by other government agents.”¹¹

Compared to the Confederacy, the Union began the war with an existing intelligence network made up of ambassadors and consuls, such as Charles Francis Adams, Union ambassador to Great Britain, Henry Shelton Sanford, Union ambassador to Belgium, and Thomas Haines Dudley, who was both the United States consul in Liverpool, England, and the man who would become famous for discovering Confederate

⁸ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18

plans to pay for the construction and arming of ships in Britain for Southern use.¹²

Dudley worked closely with other Union agents, including Sanford, and the Union consul in London, Freeman Harlow Morse, to gather intelligence and counter his Confederate foes.

Adams played a major role in both Union diplomatic and propaganda efforts during the American Civil War. Traditionally, historians credited diplomats such as Adams for retaining of British neutrality; however, Adams' working relationships with Henry S. Sanford and Thomas Haines Dudley make claims that Adams operated alone invalid.¹³ Adams corresponded with several British civilians including Karl Marx.¹⁴ Adams also worked closely with the leaders of the British government, such as Lords Russell and Palmerston, hoping to convince them to maintain British neutrality. For example, Adams issued a statement countering claims that Britain had recognized the Confederacy's belligerent status through its issuance of a proclamation of neutrality.¹⁵ In an interview with Russell on May 18, 1861, Adams protested that the proclamation of neutrality had been made in haste and showed favor towards the Confederacy "before they had ever showed their capacity to maintain any kind of warfare whatever... It considered them a marine power before they had ever exhibited a single privateer upon

¹² Thomas Hepburn Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003), 11, 16-17; William John Potts, "Biographical Sketch of the Hon. Thomas H. Dudley, of Camden, N. J., Who Died April 15, 1893," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 34 (Jan., 1895), 111-112. Dudley was said to have been a natural at espionage.

¹³ Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, The Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), 3-4, 14.

¹⁴ Richard Greenleaf, "British Labor against American Slavery," *Science & Society* 17 (Winter, 1953), 42-43.

¹⁵ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 59.

the ocean.”¹⁶ Adams worked hard to convince the British government that siding with the Confederacy was the wrong action to take, and his increasing frustration at Britain’s refusal to interfere with Confederate purchases came to a head with the 1862 *Alabama* incident, in which he and Dudley failed to prevent Britain from selling and the Confederacy from launching the ship for use in the war.

Henry Sanford had spent years in Europe, spoke several languages, and had established a network of contacts, all of which made him eminently suited to work as both a propagandist and a spy. Although he was officially the United States Minister to Belgium, he spent most of his time in Great Britain, preferring to gather and disseminate information for the Union there. He and Morse, both present in London for six months prior to Dudley’s arrival, set up a network of detectives to spy on Confederate activities, and Sanford hired local spies in the hopes of gathering more information. In fact, by the end of 1861, Sanford was making plans to take over the entire intelligence network himself, but these plans fell through.

Sanford uncovered evidence of the Confederate shipments arranged by Huse and others. Sanford often acted as a spy in his official capacity as minister to Belgium, as evidenced in his dispatches addressed to Seward that November and December, informing him of Confederate purchases of cloth for military uniforms in Britain.¹⁷ Sanford found out that these purchases were being shipped to New Orleans, then under Confederate control.¹⁸ The French consul in New Orleans was to receive the shipment,

¹⁶ As cited in Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 59.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Fred C. Ainsworth and Joseph W. Kirkley, comps, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armie*, Series III, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), 678.

which would then be sold to the “rebel authorities.”¹⁹ Earlier that year, Sanford, working with Morse, hired a police detective, Ignatius Pollaky, to set up a surveillance system to identify as many Confederate agents as possible. These Union spies were not above opening mail and tracking the daily movements of the suspects once they identified them.²⁰ Furthermore, Sanford stationed Union agents at the major ports and steamship companies to monitor outgoing Confederate war supply shipments, and this eventually led to the discovery of the *Fingal*, an incident that will be discussed in Chapter 4.²¹

Additionally, Sanford was adept at utilizing the European press to keep the Confederacy from garnering support. Initially, Sanford favored letting Union military victories speak for themselves, but as the South won an increasing number of victories, Sanford realized that the Union had to direct its diplomatic and propaganda efforts towards keeping Britain from recognizing the Confederacy.²² Sanford worked with both the British and French presses, convincing newspapers to print rebuttals to Confederate propaganda, and even bought space in some newspapers, such as the *Independent Belge*, so that pro-Union articles could be printed.²³ He was so certain that these tactics would work that he wrote to Seward that the Union had “a pulpit to preach from which reaches a

¹⁹ Ainsworth and Kirkley, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armie*, Series III, 2:678.

²⁰ Harriet Chappell Owsley, “Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad, 1861-1865,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 48 (September 1961), 213-215.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 197-198; Owsley, “Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad,” 222.

²³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 222.

large audience & I consider it a very important gain.”²⁴

Despite his accomplishments, other Union agents, such as Charles Francis Adams, saw Sanford as somewhat of a liability, for they viewed Sanford’s network as useful but costly, especially since Adams and Morse, working together, were obtaining much the same information as Sanford and his network.²⁵ Other Union-affiliated agents, and even President Lincoln, believed that Sanford’s quick temper could provoke British ire and possibly involve the Union in a war that neither side desired, and for which the Union was almost certainly not prepared. Eventually, a consensus was reached that Sanford was a liability.²⁶ As a result, Lincoln and Seward limited the Belgian minister’s actions. Lincoln and his government praised Sanford for his “active and intelligence services for detecting traitorous proceedings,” but ordered him to turn over to Morse his duties as an intelligence agent and return to his duties as the minister to Belgium.²⁷ Finally, Seward removed Sanford from the British intelligence network, directing him to focus his activities on continental Europe, where Sanford still was the Minister to Belgium, where he remained through the end of the war.

Once the Confederacy had diplomats on the ground in Europe, it turned to another method of gaining European, and particularly British support – propaganda. From the war’s outset, the Confederacy, and, to a smaller extent, the Union, made use of a small

²⁴ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 222-223. Sanford was given some interesting advice from an A. Malespine of the Paris *Opinion Nationale* concerning how to best discredit the South. In a brilliant piece of advice, Malespine suggested a campaign advertising that the Civil War was being fought over slavery more than states’ rights or the preservation of the Union. Though hesitant at first, Sanford recommended the strategy to Seward in a dispatch and even paid Malespine for the piece of advice.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁶ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 30-31.

²⁷ *Ibid.* After Sanford’s dismissal, Morse received control of the Union’s British intelligence network.

number of native Britons, home-grown agents who usually worked independently of the Union and Confederate propagandists, both gathering information and disseminating it to the British population.²⁸ As Britons, this group of men probably had the most knowledge concerning actual public sentiment towards the two combatants, and this made them important assets to the Union and Confederate agents.

However, these home-grown agents were not enough for the Confederacy. Soon after William Yancey, Pierre Rost, and Ambrose Dudley Mann had established themselves in early 1861, a second group was dispatched - the two propagandist agents, Henry Hotze and Edwin De Leon - who created newspapers and authored pamphlets in an attempt to reach large numbers of the British people. Hotze was assigned to Great Britain whereas De Leon's post was France.²⁹

Henry Hotze was perhaps the Confederacy's best propagandist in Europe. Hotze was born in Zurich, Switzerland, on September 2, 1834. Hotze's father, Rudolph, was a captain in the French Royal Service, and his mother was named Sophie Esslinger, but little else is known about either of them.³⁰ Likewise, little is known about Hotze's youth, beyond the fact that he received a strong Jesuit education and that he immigrated to Mobile, Alabama, in 1850 where he became a naturalized citizen on June 27, 1856.³¹

²⁸ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 154-155. De Leon remained at this post until 1864, when due to a diplomatic violation, he was recalled. At that point, Hotze took over his post, adding it to his responsibilities in Britain.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 154-155, 168-169. De Leon's departure from France came on the heels of his violation of diplomatic protocol, which involved his opening mail not addressed to him not out of emergency, but because he was bored. John Slidell, De Leon's partner in France found out about the violations (it was his mail that had been tampered with) and wrote Judah Benjamin, requesting that De Leon be removed.

³⁰ Henry Hotze, *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist: Selected Writings on Revolution, Recognition and Race*, ed. Lonnie Burnett, (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Hotze arrived in America with entrenched views about race and the origins of mankind, views that were intensified when he was asked to translate *Essai sur L'inégalité des Races Humaines* by Count Arthur de Gobineau.³² When Fort Sumter was fired upon and Davis asked for volunteers, Hotze enlisted in the Mobile Cadets. He served in the Confederate army for three months, and then reported back to Richmond in late May or early June 1861 to meet with Leroy Pope Walker, the first Confederate Secretary of War.³³ Hotze was a well-connected young man who persistently sought an officer's commission. In the process, he contacted Colin J. McRae, an acquaintance who later became the chief financial agent for the Confederacy in Europe and who personally took Hotze's case to Walker and advocated for a diplomatic assignment for the young soldier.³⁴ After no initial response, McRae thought that Walker was ignoring his recommendation and so petitioned Walker again, insisting that Hotze was a man with talents and skills that would be valuable in service to the Confederacy; hence, Hotze was discharged from the army and received the assignment that led him to become a propagandist.³⁵ Hotze's task, as stated by Walker, was to communicate with Confederate agents already in Europe, and work with Huse to try to speed up the private purchase of war materials.³⁶

The first challenge for Hotze was to get to Europe. Hotze was unable to leave the United States through the Union blockade, so he planned to journey to Canada through

³² Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 13-14

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13-14; 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Detroit, Michigan, and then travel across the ocean. However, Hotze encountered delays in Indianapolis and Peru, Indiana, and then saw his plans further frustrated by a derailed train.³⁷ As a result, Hotze abandoned his original plans and traveled instead through Buffalo, New York, to get to Canada where, upon his arrival, he was, “tired, worried, and all out of patience.”³⁸ The delays were tiresome but he used them to practice the skills he would need later. Using his formidable journalistic talents, Hotze, observed and then reported on the North’s reactions to the war, such as the Union’s overconfidence. The reports were sent back to Richmond, thereby giving the South useful information.³⁹

Finally arriving in Britain on October 4, 1861, Hotze immediately met with his contacts. Soon he spotted two glaring weaknesses in the Confederacy’s overseas strategy: the need for a much stronger Confederate presence in Britain; and the need for the increased use of propaganda.⁴⁰ Hotze recognized the hold that the Northern press held over the British people, and he knew that the Confederacy’s lack of an organized diplomatic department and propaganda machine was a severe handicap for the Southern cause.⁴¹ Hotze believed that Rost, Mann and Yancey were not experienced or

³⁷ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 14-15.

³⁸ As quoted in *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Mahin, 21, *One War at a Time*; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 14.

⁴¹ Hotze’s reputation came from his past training as a journalist and his association with John Forsyth, who was on the editorial staff of the *Mobile Register* when the war broke out. Forsyth praised Hotze’s presence at the paper, which he cited as having helped the *Register* expand quickly. In addition to penning several articles concerning the importance of slavery for the American South, Hotze penned firsthand accounts of his time while serving with the Confederate army in Alabama, which were later bound and published.

knowledgeable enough to deal with the political world of Great Britain.⁴² Furthermore, while many in the Confederacy sneered at diplomatic and propaganda efforts and were convinced that military success would yield European recognition, Hotze did not agree, noting that the Northern propaganda machine already had a head start on information dissemination, and the Confederacy needed to have a propaganda office in Britain to counter that.⁴³

Hotze's return to Richmond in late October 1861 culminated in his meeting with Judah Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of War. In his report, he observed that the Confederacy was in desperate need of a full-time British propaganda agent and that he was an excellent candidate for the position. Benjamin agreed with the younger man's assessment, for he understood that European intervention on behalf of the Confederacy was absolutely crucial.⁴⁴ Benjamin, impressed with Hotze's insight, arranged a meeting with Secretary of State Robert M. Hunter, who agreed with Benjamin's assessment on the need for a propaganda machine. As a result, Hunter appointed Hotze a Confederate

⁴² Mahin, 18, *One War at a Time*; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 15. The three diplomats sent overseas at first were, perhaps, not the best choices that Jefferson Davis could have made in assigning diplomats. Yancey, the head of the three-man team, was a radical defender of slavery, a reputation not aided by his short temper and description as "the most undiplomatic of men." Mann did, in fact, have diplomatic experience as the United States' minister to Switzerland, but was described as a weak man and a poor judge of character. Rost, a Louisiana judge only earned a spot on the commission because he spoke French, a necessity for dealing with France, the other European nation that the Confederacy desperately wanted to recognize her as a legitimate nation. If given the chance to interact in a diplomatic atmosphere, Mahin stated that the three men would not have succeeded; however, they did not receive such an opportunity.

⁴³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 15.

⁴⁴ Judah Benjamin's other major concern was the procurement of military supplies. Hotze was aware of this fact and used *The Index* as a means of locating weapons suppliers who would be willing to sell arms to the Confederacy.

“Commercial Agent” to London, granting him the power to accomplish what he had told Benjamin needed to be done.⁴⁵

Hotze, now an officially appointed propagandist, was viewed with suspicion by the British government, whereas diplomats, as officially appointed representatives, were given at least the chance to be received by foreign governments. Hotze and his Union counterpart, Thurlow Weed, did have governmental support and were considered government employees, but they, unlike their diplomatic counterparts, usually did not follow diplomatic protocol.⁴⁶ They also were paid less than the official diplomats – Hotze’s annual salary was a mere \$1,500, a relatively unimportant sum not large enough to adequately cover his expenses while operating in Britain.⁴⁷ John Slidell, who replaced Pierre Rost as the Confederate envoy to France, and the propagandist assigned to work with him, Edwin De Leon, both also received salaries that were larger than Hotze’s. In a letter dated April 12, 1862, Confederate Secretary Judah Benjamin gave Slidell and De Leon total credits of \$25,000 for “obtaining the insertion in public journals of Great Britain and the Continent [of] such articles as may be useful in enlightening public opinion.”⁴⁸ Although no official reason was given for the substantial difference in

⁴⁵ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Diplomacy*, 16. Hotze was also told that he was not to involve himself in “commercial” interests, as that was not his mission. Hotze’s mission was to facilitate increased support for the Confederacy among the British public rather than concern himself with identifying possible sources of funding for the war effort.

⁴⁶ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 154-156. It may seem odd that the propagandists were technically not members of their respective governments, but in a manner of speaking, it is true. Unlike the diplomats, the propagandists were given great freedom to try to muster European support in any manner possible. This also gave the governments the option, if needed, to deny any connection with the propagandists.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁸ “Benjamin to Slidell, April 12, 1862,” in James D. Richardson, ed., *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy, including diplomatic correspondence, 1861-1865* (New York: Chelsea House, 1966), 2:230, <http://www.archive.org/details/messagespapersof02conf/>.

monies between Hotze and the Slidell-De Leon partnership, it could have been due to Slidell's higher position as a diplomat. As the war progressed, the available money decreased, as did the amount of resources and supplies that could be purchased, further impeding the propagandists' tasks.⁴⁹

Hotze now began to construct a Confederate propaganda machine from the ground up, including a network of acquaintances and friends loyal to the Southern cause. First, Hotze set up *The Index*, a publication with the task to gain the support of the British people for the Confederacy by publishing statistics, stories, correspondence, politics, and news that were favorable to the Confederacy. Hotze quickly realized that one major obstacle to gaining British support was British society itself, which was stratified and divided in such a manner that convincing more than one class of British society to simultaneously support the South was quite difficult.⁵⁰ In fact, the topic of how class loyalties affected foreign policy in 1860s Britain has been the subject of much historical debate, with traditionalists heralding the view that the British aristocracy, the upper-middle class and political conservatives were sympathetic towards the Confederacy, while the radicals, the lower-middle class and the working classes were pro-Union.⁵¹ This division was exacerbated by the fact that the government sometimes gave mixed signals, such as a statement issued by Lord John Russell in 1862 in which he suggested that the

⁴⁹ Mahin, 21, *One War at a Time*; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 156.

⁵⁰ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 17-18.

⁵¹ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 17; Douglas A. Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 19 (Jun., 1976), 405. Proponents of this view included E. D. Adams, Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, with more recent challengers including D. P. Crook who posited that the British were ambivalent to both sides and Frank Owsley, who claimed that slavery, which many historians insisted was one main reason for Britain's reluctance to aid the Confederacy was not as crucial a diplomatic issue as traditionalist historians had believed.

“great majority [of the British government] are in favour of the South & nearly our whole people are of opinion that separation wd. be a benefit both to North & South.”⁵² On the other hand, however, other members of the government gave different, and often opposite signals, such as the Conservative Party’s leader, Lord Edward George Geoffrey Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, who observed that the first public reaction from the British public was pro-Union.⁵³ Derby later came under pressure from his numerous political friends to change his position, which he did, retracting his previous statement and instead noting that the British public supported the Confederacy. This political game continued with other government officials such as William Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, commenting that Parliament, whose members were divided as much as the constituents they represented, opposed slavery but remained friendly toward the South.⁵⁴

These political rivalries were further inflamed by disagreements among the political statesmen as seen with Lords John Russell and Palmerston. Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, was rumored to have dominated foreign policy during his reign, completely overshadowing Russell’s accomplishments in the government. Lord Russell’s appointment to the Foreign Office was made without Palmerston’s total support, for he preferred George Herbert Hyde Villiers, 4th Earl of Clarendon. Deprived of the position, Clarendon remarked that “John Russell has neither policy nor principles of his own, and is in the hands of Palmerston, who is an artful old dodger,” clearly a vote

⁵² Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 17; Douglas A. Lorimer, “The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War,” *The Historical Journal* 19 (Jun., 1976), 405.

⁵³ Wilbur Devereux Jones, “The British Conservatives and the American Civil War,” *The American Historical Review* 58 (Apr., 1953), 529.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* By 1864, a number of British statesmen supported the North and described the British masses to be on the Federal side, yet Parliament disagreed with this statement.

of no confidence in Russell's abilities.⁵⁵ Other members of the government however, assumed that Russell's appointment was indeed Palmerston's doing, for Russell continued Palmerston's so-called "age of foreign policy, often appearing to be Palmerston's puppet."⁵⁶ However, this does not take into account Lord Russell's strong-willed and unpredictable personality or his extensive background in foreign affairs.⁵⁷ This knowledge was especially evident during the *Trent* Affair of 1861 when both he and Palmerston demanded the release of Confederate commissioners Mason and Slidell.⁵⁸ The Conservative Party backed Russell and Palmerston's stand during that crisis as a matter of national interest since the incident was a violation of international maritime law.⁵⁹ Despite the fact that Palmerston was Liberal while Russell was Conservative, they nonetheless formed a partnership that carried over to their work during the American Civil War, when the issue of intervention was key, and in which the British government was divided just as much as the other social classes.

As mentioned, the upper-middle and middle classes of British society were supposedly more likely to support the Union rather than the Confederacy; however, caution must be taken in making a generalization such as this, for like Britain's elite, the

⁵⁵ Paul H. Scherer, "Partner or Puppet? Lord John Russell at the Foreign Office, 1859-1863," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 19 (Autumn, 1987), 348.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 351-352.

⁵⁸ James P. Baxter, 3rd, "The British Government and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865," *The American Historical Review* 34 (Oct., 1928), 15-16; Scherer, "Partner or Puppet?," 352; Steven Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War: January 1860 to September 1862," *The Concord Review* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2005), 117-137, http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/eprize07_Civil%20War%20Diplomacy%2016_1.pdf (accessed January 17, 2011), 122.

⁵⁹ Wilbur Jones, "The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," 530.

middle classes were also divided in their loyalties.⁶⁰ For example, merchants who sold supplies to both the Union and Confederacy made more money since the Union-implemented blockade severely limited the Confederacy's access to foreign goods, making the British ability to market such supplies crucial. The blockade allowed the Confederacy to claim belligerent status giving it the right to buy arms, equipment and ships overseas, and for the Confederacy, with its lack of a merchant marine and domestic manufacturing centers, such imports were crucial.⁶¹ As mentioned earlier, working through the firm of John Fraser & Company, the Confederacy set about quietly purchasing desperately needed weapons and supplies from private British firms

On the other hand, mill owners and managers often supported the Union for several reasons, all economic. First, both the managers and mill owners believed that if Great Britain decided to enter the American Civil War in support of the Confederacy, profits would be lost and global markets would be destabilized, both undesirable economic situations.⁶² Britain was making huge profits from the war, especially in munitions by selling to both sides.⁶³ It was also seeing increasing profits in shipping, since Confederate cruisers and privateers were making it dangerous to ship goods on Union ships; therefore, Britain, being a neutral, picked up the slack.⁶⁴ Second, some merchants imported wheat, and demand for wheat rose as the war continued, especially in

⁶⁰ Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War," 124.

⁶¹ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 7. Belligerent status also allowed both Great Britain and France to purchase Southern cotton, which would not have been possible if the Confederate ports had merely been closed.

⁶² Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War," 125.

⁶³ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 553-555.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

light of small British wheat crops in 1860-1862.⁶⁵ As demand rose, so did prices, and Britain began importing more wheat from the United States. Some in Britain were fearful that if Britain supported the Confederacy, British merchants would lose access to American wheat, creating a food crisis in Britain, and destroying their profits.⁶⁶ Unwilling to risk damage to their profit margins, many merchants believed that supporting the Union, not the Confederacy, was the wiser course. However, many merchants and traders supported the Confederacy because a number of them were negatively impacted by the blockade. One such group – the “free traders” – owned or worked for businesses that traded with the Confederacy. The blockade had severely cut into their profits, and so these merchants were Confederate supporters.⁶⁷

Traditionalist historians commonly asserted that Union sympathy was rather prevalent in British society, and especially in the middle and working classes. More recently, historians such as Mary Ellison and Douglas Lorimer challenged this idea, citing as evidence the people of Lancashire. Ellison proposed that the British middle class supported the Confederacy for several reasons: first, support for the Confederacy seemed to be the quickest way to obtain raw cotton; second, they viewed the Emancipation Proclamation as somewhat hypocritical, since it still sanctioned slavery in the border states; third, many felt that a Confederate victory would eventually lead to the end of southern slavery, since many British believed that slavery was on its way out in the American South; and finally, many British believed that American southerners had a

⁶⁵ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 547.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Siegel, “British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War,” 125.

fundamental right to choose their own form of government.⁶⁸ Ellison also refuted the notion that the lack of agitation from the Lancashire workers signified support for the Union, and argued that it cannot be assumed that the workers were sympathetic towards the North. Ellison argued that many wanted the South to win and gave the Confederacy their moral backing. Ellison believed that the workers felt only mistrust for the Union, a feeling that deepened as the war progressed.⁶⁹

Lorimer sided with Ellison concerning the British public's loyalties during the war, thereby supporting that revisionist interpretation, but he delved more deeply into the intricacies of British society, particularly the political and social aspects that divided the populace.⁷⁰ For example, like his colleague, Lorimer stated that large segments of the British populace supported the Confederacy's fight for independence while nursing a strong distrust of northern war aims, and even those workers in Lancashire who were rumored to have endorsed the Union in reality favored the Southern states, urging the British government to back the Confederacy.⁷¹ The workers' most pressing issue was more economic than moral, a point identified in traditional historiography. Groups who shared the Lancashire workers' concerns urged the British government to move as

⁶⁸ Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), ix.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Although Ellison never directly stated that the Lancashire workers refused to support the North, her view runs against the grain of later historians such as R. J. M. Blackett and Brian Jenkins, both of whom returned to the traditionalist stance, heralding that the workers supported the North and/or remained neutral.

⁷⁰ Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," 406.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

quickly as possible to help the Confederacy achieve its independence, firmly believing that if this was done, their economic situation would quickly improve.⁷²

In fact, a large number of mill workers were paying close attention to the American conflict. By November 1862, an estimated 330,000 mill workers were unemployed in Britain.⁷³ Every morning, crowds gathered in Liverpool waiting for the mail from the United States to arrive. They hoped for news that there were incoming cotton shipments, or news that Britain was standing fast on, or conversely, setting aside, her neutrality. Some feared that if Britain intervened on the side of the Confederacy, the Union would declare war on Great Britain. A cotton spinner, John Ward from Clitheroe, commented on January 1, 1862, that the New Year was not beginning on a positive note, for thousands of mill workers had been laid off and others worried that their jobs would vanish in the next year, noting that, “A war with America [would be the final straw] as we [Britain] will get no cotton.”⁷⁴ Now that British surplus cotton supplies were mostly consumed, finding enough cotton to keep its textile industry running became the British preoccupation. Despite some small successes in establishing permanent alternate cotton sources, American cotton was still the most commonly imported cotton variant; however, by the beginning of 1862, as American cotton shipments became increasingly rare, Surat, or Indian cotton, although of poorer quality, was being imported more frequently.⁷⁵ Furthermore, spinning Surat cotton required fewer workers, which resulted in excess

⁷² Lorimer, “The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War,” 406.

⁷³ Siegel, “British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War,” 126.

⁷⁴ Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (New York, New York: Random House, 2010), 199.

⁷⁵ Beckert, “Emancipation and Empire,” 1415.

numbers of available workers and lower wages for those still employed; however, for the owners, the money saved from paying less workers actually more than made up for the decreased profits from sales of the poorer quality products.⁷⁶

The mills provided little aid or support to their unemployed workers, and as the supply of raw cotton decreased, the number of unemployed workers increased.⁷⁷ Since the blockade was seen as a major factor in the decrease in European cotton supplies, it was also seen as a factor in the subsequent cotton famine that the Confederacy had hoped for earlier in the war and that Britain had feared.

Thus, by the end of 1862, one-fifth of the mill workers in Lancashire were on relief, while in other areas close to 40 percent of the population was being helped by charitable organizations due to unemployment.⁷⁸ In addition, there were millions more who were on the verge of losing their jobs. Both the Union and the Confederate propagandists attempted to sway the opinion of these workers, hoping that their desperation would lead them to throw their support to one side or the other. Hotze used his *Index* to appeal to these workers. In the *Index*, Hotze published letters from shipping houses in New York and London indicating that private agents were scouring the globe for available cotton, since the Union blockade prevented any available Confederate cotton from reaching Britain, a fact that Hotze continually hammered home.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire," 1415.

⁷⁷ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 136; Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War," 126.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ J. B., "Private Letters, April to May 1862," published in *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, June 5, 1862,

Correspondents related that Southern planters would not send any cotton as long as the Union occupied port cities, and Hotze cleverly blamed the Union for the fact that the profit margins of the “free traders” were suffering.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Hotze was well-informed about the falling stockpiles of cotton in Britain, reporting those numbers to the public whenever possible. In an issue of the *Index* dated May 1, 1862, Hotze reported:

The stock of American cotton in Liverpool, 1st January, was 279,400 bales, of all kinds 622,600. Total import since, 320,755. Stock of American, April 25th, 124,250. Total, 398,890 bales. The quantity afloat to arrive from Bombay [India] is about 170,000 bales, or 50,000 less than at the corresponding period of 1861. These figures show the total available supply in the port, 1st January, to 25th April, to have been 953,000 bales.⁸¹

Hotze used statistics to convince the British public of the danger of supporting the Union, using them to heighten British workers’ fears of unemployment. In this same article, Hotze also played on fears of social unrest, stating that a cotton famine would be disastrous for the British textile industry. He argued that the apathy of the British populace towards intervention on behalf of the Confederacy would dissipate as cotton stockpiles decreased.⁸² Hotze continued to play on fears of unemployment, publishing statistics on cotton stockpiles in every issue of the *Index*. Hotze repeatedly emphasized the negative impact of the Union blockade on the British textile industry. In an issue of the *Index* dated October 23, 1862, Hotze commented

<http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>. Cited hereafter as “Private Letters, April to May 1862.”

⁸⁰ “Private Letters, April to May 1862.”

⁸¹ Henry Hotze, “Cotton and Dry Goods Market – Liverpool, 30th April,” *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, May 1, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>.

⁸² Ibid.

The great depression noted in my last report continued unabated on Thursday and Friday, the sales each day reached barely a thousand bales, and a further decline of 1/2d. was submitted to in Surats. ...In American cotton, scarcely any business has been done in the last few days. Yesterday no sales whatever were recorded, and to-day only 100 bales; the price of Middling Orleans may be put nominally at 26d.⁸³

If Hotze's reports did not change minds, they must have reinforced some beliefs already held by some British workers.

The divisions within the British elite drew Hotze's attention. Hotze believed that the elite were typically divided along more political lines rather than by socioeconomic conditions.⁸⁴ Hotze's investigations revealed a number of reasons why the British elite supported the South, among them a hatred of democracy and a desire to reassert aristocratic traditions. Britain's elite opposed giving political power to the masses. Hotze was aware of this distaste for democracy, and he knew that in order to influence British opinion, he would have to work from the top down. This meant starting with the elite, among whom the Conservatives tended to support the Confederacy, while the Liberals tended to support the Union and the democracy it represented.⁸⁵ However, even within these two divisions, debates raged between those in favor of self-determination, nationalism or just those (usually government officials) who sympathized the Confederacy but were unwilling to grant recognition or intervene. There were even some officials, such as the Second Earl of Granville, George Gower, the Lord President of the

⁸³ Henry Hotze, "Cotton and Dry Goods Market – Liverpool, Wednesday, October 22," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, October 23, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>.

⁸⁴ Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War," 124-126.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

Queen's Council, who in 1862 advocated mediation.⁸⁶ Granville's caution was indicative of most members of the British Parliament, who waited to see which side was more likely to win.

In Great Britain, anti-slavery feelings were a major obstacle for Hotze's propaganda machine. Throughout Britain, publications advocated support for both sides; The *Spectator* editorialized its opinion on the slavery issue in 1862 by stating that "all Englishmen now assume, that absolute subjugation of the South is a dream, that the war is a question of boundaries, – a question, as mathematicians would say, of the maximum or minimum extent of the slave power."⁸⁷ Confederate sympathizers were concerned about the *Spectator's* editorial, fearing that Britain's stance on slavery would affect her stand on the war.⁸⁸ For United States Minister Charles Adams, that fear was very much evident in mid-1862 when Confederate diplomat James Mason petitioned the British government to formally recognize the Confederacy, and the fact that the petition was accepted without comment did nothing to quell Adams' fears. Adams warned William Seward that if the Union was to stand a chance at convincing Britain to remain neutral,

⁸⁶ Wilbur Jones, "The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," 532, 534, 542; Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War," 125. It should be noted that historians have debated the extent of interest that Britain's political elite had in the American Civil War, and these debates in turn shaped the historiography. Jones asserted that the Conservatives, the faction most against intervention based their actions not so much on a supposed affinity with the American South and their cultural similarities or a distaste for republican virtues, but more so a disinterest in foreign affairs and a tendency to ignore war. If true, this hypothesis would give credence to Hotze's assertion to the Confederate government that a propaganda machine was desperately needed in Britain to attempt to change the populace's minds about intervention.

⁸⁷ As cited in Joseph M. Herson, Jr., "British Sympathies in the American Civil War: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Southern History* 33 (Aug., 1967), 360. This quote was originally cited by noted historian Ephraim D. Adams in the London *Spectator* from December 13, 1862.

⁸⁸ Herson, "British Sympathies in the American Civil War," 360.

then the moral argument of the war had to switch from preserving the Union to fighting against the evils of slavery.⁸⁹

Union and Confederate propagandists also found themselves facing British bias and perceptions of Americans from both the Union and the Confederacy. These biases were fanned by outspoken British authors such as Sydney Smith and Fanny Trollope, who looked down upon the United States, declaring that the United States was “militarily weak, politically corrupt, and financially unsound.”⁹⁰ One such writer, Charles Dickens, deeply upset Americans with his questions about whether America was a true republic. Basing his critique on what he experienced during his 1842 American visit, Dickens was upset by the refusal of the American people outside of abolitionist circles to discuss any topic related to slave revolts or to freeing slaves. The concept that a topic was taboo just because a portion of the population was not comfortable discussing it did not fit Dickens’ idea of a republic.⁹¹ Dickens’ comments were hurtful to many Americans and may have worsened relations between the two nations. Dickens’ public criticism of the American people complicated an already complex set of beliefs about the American political situation at the war’s onset. Another who insulted the Union was Edward Dicey, a correspondent for *The Spectator* and *Macmillan’s Magazine*, who commented that

⁸⁹ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 281.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 30. It should be noted that a part of Dickens’ hatred of the United States came from the belief that the United States thought itself inherently superior to Great Britain, convinced that its citizens “are the only religious, enlightened, and free people.” Dickens and much of the British populace felt this way towards the United States. However, perhaps the best representation of his dislike is an anonymous nineteenth-century journalist, who commented, “Americans believe that England dreads their growing power, and is envious of their prosperity. They detest and hate England accordingly.”

Abraham Lincoln was an ill-mannered man, one that “you would never say... was a gentleman.”⁹²

British aristocrats feared that democracy in the United States might inspire British reformers, such as John Bright and Richard Cobden, to campaign for an enlarged franchise at home, and the London *Times* was particularly concerned about the possibility of domestic reforms.⁹³ Thus, for the propagandists and diplomats alike, the opinions of British society were a crucial hurdle to overcome. With the attack on Fort Sumter and the commencement of the war, the British eagerly awaited news of what would happen next. One British magazine commented that the incident (Fort Sumter) was a justification of Britain’s wisdom in choosing a “solid political system,” effectively undermining the American government and its diplomatic powers.⁹⁴ However, a lengthy war was not what the British expected; in fact, the British press had considered a Southern victory *fait accompli*, believing that the Union would choose to avoid conflict and amicably allow the Confederate states to secede. British abolitionists and reformers like Bright and Cobden had also agreed that a “quiet secession” was the best course for the Union to take since it would avoid years of bloodshed. However, once the Confederates attacked Fort Sumter, that war the British believed would never happen,

⁹² As quoted in Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 28. This comment captures some of the attitudes of the British populace in the months leading up to the outbreak of war. Abraham Lincoln’s election was not met with overwhelming support in Britain, but rather, many thought him ill-suited for the office of president

⁹³ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 32. The London *Times* went on to say that the idea of obtaining more liberty for the British people was lunatic and was, in fact, a form of tyranny. This comment supported the common conception among the British people that democracy as a form of government was not permanent and that the United States’ failure to stay together was a prime example of the system’s inability to function.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

was now a reality. In 1861, few members of Parliament seemed to have been openly pro-Confederate, and, according to Ellison, many of the working classes were actually pro-Confederate.⁹⁵ According to historian Howard Jones, by mid-1861 it seemed as if some members of the British government might be moving toward a decision concerning their stance in the American Civil War. This was evident when Parliamentary member William H. Gregory announced his intention to present a motion for British recognition of the Confederacy, stating that both the war and the Morrill Tariff had convinced him that Britain had to pull back into her own orbit, putting her interests (particularly economic) first. Gregory believed that if Britain supported the Confederacy in the conflict and the Confederacy won its independence, Britain would be in a better position to negotiate with the new nation for trade and economic benefits. However, Gregory received little support for his motion, and the official policy of British neutrality continued.⁹⁶ Fellow Parliamentary member William E. Forster responded to the failure of Gregory's motion with one of his own, stating that Britain would remain neutral in the war not only because it was the wisest political move at the time, but also because Britain had no wish to resume the African slave trade, an indication of Britain's abolitionist beliefs.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ellison, *Support for Secession*, ix.

⁹⁶ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 31. This motion was driven primarily by economic concerns, as trade was in danger of slowing down, even halting all together. Southerners provided key links to British mills and offered a market for British manufactured goods and an invitation to continue trade with the Confederacy despite the Union blockade. It should also be noted that Gregory's concern over the Morrill Tariff was economic, for the measure protected American (i.e., Union) industries and drastically increased import rates, the latter of which Britain did not want to have to pay. Gregory was concerned that the tariff would negatively impact British trade while ensuring that the Union (the tariff was passed after the Confederate states had seceded) became a trade rival.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32. Forster was also personally opposed to British involvement in the American Civil War, as his family contained a number of missionaries, which when taken in conjunction with his Quaker and anti-slavery lineage meant that Forster was not an advocate of slavery.

Adams saw how Parliamentary debate affected the government, but also how divided the politicians were over what action to take. The Confederate position was one of underdog and victim, but many politicians also believed it was Britain's humanitarian duty to end the bloodshed. To counter that, Adams urged Seward to emphasize the Union's moral stance in the war.⁹⁸ Adams knew that Mason's petition was controversial, and his thoughts were confirmed when Lord John Russell mentioned to Lord Richard Lyons, the British representative in Washington that the ensuing debate had surprised him. In fact, Lord Russell had been astonished by the amount of passion present in Parliament in 1862, as the issue of intervention once again became a topic of interest. Lord Russell concluded that, "The great majority are in favour of the South."⁹⁹ Lord Russell's affirmation of the large amount of Confederate support in the British Parliament, when coupled with Lord Russell's personal views, further alarmed Adams. However, although Lord Russell admitted to favoring the restoration of the Union, he also stated that he was not sure of the war's outcome.¹⁰⁰ In order to maintain a neutral stance, Lord Russell indicated that he would take the middle ground between the two American factions. That infuriated Seward, for it meant that Britain's decision for or against neutrality might be based on the direction of the conflict itself.¹⁰¹ In 1862 the war was running in favor of the Confederacy, which had achieved major victories at the Second Battle of Bull Run and the Battle of Fredericksburg, and so this comment by Lord

⁹⁸ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 281.

⁹⁹ As quoted in *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 35.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Russell seemed to clearly imply that Britain would soon officially recognize the South and provide aid and possibly intervention.¹⁰²

Despite the Confederate victory at Fredericksburg, in December 1862, Confederate support in Britain began to decline due to a shift in the purpose of the Civil War. Until the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, the North's purpose for fighting the war was to preserve the Union. However, Lincoln, seizing upon the more or less victorious outcome of Antietam, issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, that freed the slaves in those areas in rebellion and that would become effective on January 1, 1863. Now there was a new moral purpose behind the Union cause – the abolition of slavery, and this cause resonated with the British who had abolished slavery throughout the empire.

Now Hotze and his fellow propagandists redoubled their efforts to gain British support. As early as 1862, Hotze published correspondence from a New Yorker who agreed with a brochure written by Edwin De Leon, the Confederate propagandist in France. In this brochure, titled *La Vérité sur les États Confédérés d'Amérique*, De Leon offered several arguments supporting the continuation of slavery. Hotze utilized this correspondence as propaganda to show the British public that slavery was not a cruel institution, but instead one that protected happy, contented Negroes. Hotze continued to use De Leon's brochure as evidence that the institution of slavery in the Confederacy was a blessing for African Americans, not a curse.¹⁰³ One popular quotation used in various media for propaganda purposes came from De Leon's brochure: "*Le noir... préférera*

¹⁰² Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 35.

¹⁰³ Edwin De Leon, *La vérité sur des États Confédérés d'Amérique* (The Truth on the Confederate States of America), 21, Available from Google Books.

l'état des choses auxquelles il a été habitué, ce qui lui a permis d'atteindre un âge... de la tranquillité et des jouissances matérielles,” which represented a common Southern argument that the blacks were perfectly content with their lives.¹⁰⁴ To this argument, De Leon added that the character of the Confederacy’s “peculiar institution” allowed the Southern states to send all of its white males off to war without damaging her agrarian economy because there were thousands of black workers, still available to farm and run the plantations.¹⁰⁵ De Leon and Hotze were both aware of the negative reputation of slavery in Europe, particularly in Britain and France, and so De Leon attempted to downplay that by using the phrase “peculiar institution” to build a more positive image of slavery.¹⁰⁶

Hotze’s *Index* continued to report on the American conflict as well as events in Europe, adding increased calls for the British to recognize that slavery was not evil or immoral. Hotze had long supported the idea of the inferiority of non-white races. Beginning with his translation of Gobineau’s *Essai*, Hotze had been an early convert to the idea of racial anthropology as the underlying factor of racial inequality.¹⁰⁷ In various writings, Hotze implied that blacks were meant to be the servants of the white race, since he said that they were made by God to be intellectually inferior. However, although he made many statements about racial inequality and the virtues of southern slavery, it was

¹⁰⁴ De Leon, 26. The rough translation of De Leon’s words is that “the black will prefer the state in which he has become habituated, that which has allowed him to reach an age of peace and material pleasures.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Bonner, “Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy, and the Racialist Mission of Henry Hotze,” *Civil War History* 51 (September 2005), 288-316, http://muse.jhu.edu.authenticate.library.duq.edu/journals/civil_war_history/b051/51.3bonner.html (accessed April 9, 2012), 300.

not until 1864, in an article titled, “Abolitionism and the Negro,” that Hotze stated in clear, precise terms his opinion: “[Negroes are] intellectually inferior to white people... [but] are nevertheless men—men who, as the institution of negro slavery in the South shows... are capable of social progress... are happy, and who above all else have aspirations for immortality.”¹⁰⁸

Hotze also attempted to interpret historical facts to his advantage. In the same article, Hotze argued that the profits from the slave trade had actually helped the Union become great; specifically, he mused that “[the slave trade] raised New York to the rank of an Empire city, and lined her streets with marble palaces... [and] the profits realised from dealing in the products of negro labour... laid the foundation of the greatness of Boston.”¹⁰⁹ With this comment, Hotze attacked the validity of the Union’s claims that slave labor was less productive than free labor, because enslaved blacks had directly contributed to the growth of wealthy urban centers such as Boston and New York. Hotze continued his propagandist tactics by stating that slavery was not the catalyst behind the dissolution of the United States or a moral evil; it was simply a way of life that had helped both the North and the South become successful.¹¹⁰

Union propagandists and agents were also active in Britain during the early years of the war. Like their Confederate counterparts, the Union commissioners were sent to Europe with the goal of gaining British support for the war – specifically, to keep Britain from recognizing and aiding the Confederacy by persuading it to remain neutral.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Hotze, “Abolitionism and the Negro,” *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News*, October 20, 1864. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn04hotz>.

¹⁰⁹ “Abolitionism and the Negro,” October 20, 1864, as cited in Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 204-207.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Secretary of State William Seward was concerned that foreign governments might view the South's actions as justifiable. The South's persistence in framing the conflict in terms of Confederate independence was designed to appeal to those with more liberal convictions, and the Union was determined to convince Europe, and particularly Britain, that the conflict was not a justifiable fight for Confederate independence but instead an illegal attempt to destroy the Union.¹¹¹ Seward ignored warnings from his own consuls and diplomats such as Henry Sanford that he was not taking advantage of the collective goodwill and sympathy available to the Union during the early stages of the conflict, spurning such sympathy as worthless. Seward even commented in a letter to John Bigelow, the new American consul in Paris, that "foreign sympathy... never did and never can create or maintain any state."¹¹²

However, Seward's attitude drastically changed upon receiving confirmation that the Confederacy had decided to send another group of emissaries to Europe: former United States Senators James Mason and John Slidell. Their assignment led to two crises: one external and the other internal. The first was the *Trent* Affair, an incident that involved Mason and Slidell being taken into custody in international waters on a ship registered to Great Britain. This incident created a diplomatic crisis that the Confederacy hoped to use to garner British support. Furthermore, Seward and President Lincoln were concerned about the Confederacy's proactive approach in sending additional emissaries

¹¹¹ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 164.

¹¹² As quoted in Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 164.

abroad. This led Seward to hastily assemble a team of commissioners to travel to Europe to intercede on behalf of the Union and counteract the Mason-Slidell mission.¹¹³

Thurlow Weed, both a close friend to Seward and his campaign manager during the 1860 election, was particularly interested in this hand-picked commission.¹¹⁴ Seward chose four men as Union commissioners: Edward Everett, John P. Kennedy, John Hughes and Charles McIlvaine. However, only McIlvaine and Hughes accepted.¹¹⁵ Everett, a former United States Secretary of State and a Senator from Massachusetts, refused to take on an unofficial position overseas when he had previously been the American ambassador to Great Britain, and Kennedy did not want to leave his business without the chance of compensation.¹¹⁶ Seward was embarrassed when Everett and Kennedy turned down the mission. The remaining candidates also had doubts concerning their appointments, but it was in John Hughes, the Catholic Archbishop of New York, that Weed took a peculiar interest, relating in his memoirs their conversation at a dinner party hosted by Seward. Hughes told Weed at that dinner that he had declined Seward's offer; luckily for him, the former campaign manager Weed had a solution to the problem.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ As quoted in Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 164.

¹¹⁴ Thurlow Weed, Harriet A. Weed, ed., *Life of Thurlow Weed, including his Autobiography and a Memoir embellished with Portraits and other Illustrations* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), 634, Available from Google Books. Weed's memoirs span his life and career, with a focus on the people he considered crucial to events; for example, the key people that he discussed concerning Seward's international mission were mentioned throughout Weed's autobiography.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* Kennedy was a businessman; Everett was a politician and famous orator; Hughes was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York; and McIlvaine was the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Ohio.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Forman, *A World on Fire*, 164; Weed, *Life of Thurlow Weed*, 634-635.

The ever-persistent Weed took up Seward's cause, stressing that it was Archbishop Hughes's obligation as a "loyal citizen, devoted to the Union, and capable of rendering great service" to accept Seward's offer, and he used Hughes' Irish birth as an additional reason why Archbishop Hughes should accept Seward's offer. Weed's persistence paid off: Archbishop Hughes agreed to take Seward up on his offer, with the condition that Weed must accompany him overseas.¹¹⁸ Weed reluctantly agreed, commenting that he could not think of a reason to turn Weed down.¹¹⁹

Seward finally had his representatives. The final list included: General Winfield Scott, a Mexican-American war hero and author of the Anaconda plan that included a Union blockade of the Confederacy; Archbishop Hughes, who would ultimately battle with Confederate John Slidell for France's sympathy; McIlvaine, who would woo and gain the Anglican clergy's support; and Weed, whose past as Seward's wily campaign manager made him an ideal match for James Mason.¹²⁰

Not everyone approved of Seward's choices. William Russell, reporter for the *London Times*, commented that while Weed's skills as a political lobbyist were admirable, they did not necessarily make him a good match for Mason. Russell wrote to a fellow war correspondent in New York that while Weed's slyness was an admirable trait, "he will be of small weight among the polished politicians of France or England."¹²¹ Another who disapproved of Seward's choices was Charles Francis Adams, who

¹¹⁸ Weed, *Life of Thurlow Weed*, 635.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 635-636.

¹²⁰ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 164.

¹²¹ As quoted in *Ibid.*, 164-165.

commented that Hughes, McIlvaine and Weed seemed “to [be to] me of no value.”¹²²

Weed in turn, rebutted Adams, commenting upon his arrival at the United States Legation in London that he should have arrived earlier, for he viewed Adams’ alarmed state and paranoia as making it more difficult than it already was to effectively gain public support.¹²³

In terms of propaganda, Hotze mentioned in a letter dated September 1862, to Judah Benjamin, that he believed himself capable of overcoming the Union’s own propaganda machine.¹²⁴ That may have been the case, but effectiveness rested not just on people, but also on process. While both Union and Confederate agents gathered information, they disseminated it somewhat differently. The Union’s diplomatic base in Britain was much stronger than the Confederacy’s, but the Union did not have a mouthpiece on the level of *The Index*. Union diplomats, however, regularly used established media forms such as newspapers to woo the British public. But often the American representatives themselves were left out of the propaganda loop. For example, the backlash from the *Trent* Affair ensured that the Union diplomatic representative, Charles Francis Adams, was not only furious, but humiliated that his overall knowledge of the affair was no better than what the general public gleaned from *The Times*.¹²⁵ This situation, when coupled with Adams’ failure to procure valuable information, contributed to the difficult task of gaining public support for the Union. Benjamin Moran, the

¹²² As quoted in Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 186-187.

¹²³ As quoted in *Ibid*.

¹²⁴ “Hotze to J. P. Benjamin, NO. 11,” London, 26 September 1862, as cited in Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 149-152.

¹²⁵ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 185.

Assistant Secretary at the United States Legation in London, commented on the difficulty of gaining British support when he chanced to look out a window and saw that the American owners of the Adelphi Theatre had added the Confederate flag alongside the Union's Stars and Stripes. This action was a symbol of the split in sympathies among both American residents and native Britons, but it could also have been a wise business decision designed to attract clientele from both sides.¹²⁶

If sympathies in London were divided, they were also divided in other major British towns; for example, in Liverpool, where the new Union consul, Thomas Haines Dudley, began laying the groundwork for his intelligence network. Dudley's arrival in Liverpool coincided with the *Trent* Affair, and his duties were threefold: building an intelligence network; continuing his official business as a consul; and engaging in a propaganda war with the Confederacy.¹²⁷ Moran, upon meeting Dudley, remarked that "he is as intelligent as he looks and talks with great force.... I was much gratified to find him a strenuous patriot. He is modest, refined and able and would make a splendid European representative."¹²⁸ Moran's approval matched that of Adams, for he regarded the Liverpool consul as a peer equipped to handle the tenuous situation in Europe. Dudley proved his worth early in the game for he soon reported to Adams and Moran that

¹²⁶ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 186.

¹²⁷ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 5- 10, 63. Dudley was born in 1819, and as a delegate to the Chicago Republican Convention he helped choose Abraham Lincoln as the party's delegate. When the war started, Dudley at first traveled to France with United States Minister to France William Dayton, then to London to visit Adams on June 26, 1861.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

Southern expatriates in Liverpool were capitalizing on the *Trent* Affair in an attempt to gain support for the Confederacy.¹²⁹

Upon arriving in London, Dudley was invited to a banquet in honor of John Bright, a radical Member of Parliament who was an antislavery activist and with a strong record of friendship with the Union. This was the beginning of a firm relationship between the two men. Bright remarked, in a letter written to Dudley on December 9, 1861, that “there are two nations in England, the governing class and the millions who toil, the former dislike your Republic and their organs incessantly misrepresent and slander it,” correctly implying that British society was not unified in its opinion on the American conflict; rather, the existing divisions prevented unanimity concerning what actions the British government should take.¹³⁰

Adams and Dudley dealt daily with assertions that the anti-Union hostility already present in British society was expanding and could influence the government. This fear motivated Union efforts to sway public sentiment towards support for British neutrality. Both men knew that Union efforts needed to be intensified after word spread in 1862 about General Benjamin Butler’s disastrous General Order No. 28 concerning the treatment of certain women in captured New Orleans. Butler’s threat to treat those women who insulted his troops as prostitutes outraged and simultaneously offended the British elite who termed the law “barbaric and outrageous.”¹³¹ Prime Minister Lord

¹²⁹ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 19, 63.

¹³⁰ As quoted in *Ibid.*, 64. John Bright was one of a few members of Parliament who were fully in support of the Union and were antislavery enthusiasts; Richard Cobden was also one of these politicians.

¹³¹ Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 124; Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 67. General Order No. 28, in basic terms, stated that women who insulted in any manner, physical or otherwise any officer or soldier of the United States [Union] would be “regarded and treated as common women plying their vocation,” or prostitution. Butler passed this law in an attempt to control the residents of New Orleans.

Palmerston publicly denounced Butler's actions in a speech to the House of Commons in June 1862, in which he expressed his disappointment and disgust.¹³²

Palmerston's ministry, much like the British public, was split on the issue of intervention. Hotze's preliminary observations revealed that among those supporting the Union were a handful of extremely powerful men such as Lord John Russell in the House of Lords; however, in the House of Commons there was not strong support, and in both houses, there was little action on matters involving aid to the Confederacy.¹³³ One powerful member who supported the Confederate cause, William S. Lindsay, remarked that he hoped the Civil War would be the end of American greatness, while Union supporter William Forster argued that British neutrality benefitted the Union.¹³⁴ Because the government was precariously balanced, the Prime Minister knew that one wrong move on his part could bring down the fragile coalition and force new elections that had the potential to destabilize the government at a time when global and domestic conflicts were of great concern.¹³⁵ This view was expressed in a public address printed in the *London Gazette*: "Her Majesty... has seen no reason to depart from the neutrality to

¹³² Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 67-68.

¹³³ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 18; George W. Davis, Joseph W. Kirkley, Leslie J. Perry, comps, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1897), 2:1238-1239; Siegel, 124. If the British government did not act in any manner to help the Confederacy, or was locked in numerous stalemates in the government, then the Union felt safe in the knowledge the Confederacy was forced to rely on just herself. William Yancey, one of the first three Confederate representatives sent to London wrote back to then-Secretary of State Robert Hunter that Lord Russell's refusal to meet with the "pseudo commissioners" of the Confederacy was a sign that Russell was trying to convince the British government to support the Union.

¹³⁴ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 53.

¹³⁵ Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 18-19.

which she has steadily adhered.”¹³⁶ This and other government-sponsored messages made the propagandists’ job more difficult. Therefore, Hotze worked closely with Confederate Commissioner James Mason to try to convince the British government to support the Confederacy. Both used intelligence gathered from the British populace to pressure the British government.¹³⁷ Adams and Dudley also gathered intelligence to counter Confederate publications and, in Adams’ case, to try to convince Lords Russell and Palmerston to support British neutrality.¹³⁸ It is interesting to note that throughout the war the British press continually emphasized Britain’s positive stance on neutrality so as to not upset any one segment of the population or government.¹³⁹

As the war continued, the Confederacy grew increasingly concerned that the British government stubbornly remained neutral, a choice that implied support for the Union. With the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, the worst fears of the Confederacy were realized – the war was now viewed in Britain as a moral conflict over slavery – and the Union was in a stronger position to pressure the British to remain neutral. Hotze worked against abolitionist sentiments to sway public opinion in favor of the Confederacy, at one point writing to M. T. Hunter that the “vast majority of the British public . . . are now anxious to do something to strengthen us. . .”¹⁴⁰ Despite this

¹³⁶ “The Speech of the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, August 7, 1862.” *London Gazette*, 8 August 1862, <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/22651/pages/3921> (accessed April 24, 2011); “The Speech of the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, July 28, 1863.” *London Gazette*, 31 July 1863, <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/22758/pages/3835> (accessed April 24, 2011).

¹³⁷ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 179-180.

¹³⁸ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 50.

¹³⁹ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 84.

¹⁴⁰ “Hotze to R.M.T. Hunter, N O. 5,” London, 11 March 1862, as quoted in Lonnie Burnett, ed., *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*, 144.

optimism, due to the divisions within British society concerning neutrality, Hotze's attempts to convince people to support the Confederacy were generally unsuccessful. Even though Hotze, in correspondence with Benjamin, at times exaggerated his success in changing public opinion, the fact remained that since the issuance of Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, there had been a shift in public opinion concerning the South.¹⁴¹ As Hotze attempted to downplay the issue of slavery, Thurlow Weed countered Hotze's actions in his meetings with high officials in both the British and French governments, by playing up the Union's strengths and the strong economic partnership that had existed between the United States and Britain since before the American Revolution.¹⁴²

In comparing the propaganda efforts of Union and Confederate representatives, a few key differences appear. One was that the Confederate propaganda machine was aimed at the general population of Britain – particularly after the creation of *The Index* – whereas the Union seemed to focus more on the British government, working from the top down. This did not mean, however, that the Confederacy neglected government officials, for as already mentioned, Hotze was particularly adamant about appealing to them based on touted similarities between Southern planters and the British elite.¹⁴³ In a December 27, 1861, letter to Seward, Weed related how, during the *Trent* affair, he had commenced his own attack on the European public: “we [the Union] have access to several journals, for which we have one very able writer, Torrens McCulloch, and two

¹⁴¹ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 69-70.

¹⁴² Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 66-68; Weed, *Life of Thurlow Weed*, 638-639, 643-644.

¹⁴³ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 66.

subordinates.”¹⁴⁴ In a move echoing what Hotze had done prior to receiving Judah Benjamin’s permission to create *The Index*, Weed convinced a handful of writers to publish articles in favor of the Union in their own journals. Compared to Hotze’s strategies, this was more of a “sharpshooter” tactic, using carefully selected journals and papers to spread pro-Union propaganda rather than a more widespread use of the media to appeal to various segments of the population. The effectiveness of propaganda in swaying British opinion, particularly when the issue of the construction of Confederate ships in British shipyards appeared, will be investigated in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁴ “Weed to Seward,” London, 27 December 1861, as cited in Frederick William Seward, *Seward at Washington, as Senator and Secretary of State, A Memoir of his Life, with Selections from his Letters, 1861-1872* (New York: Derby and Miller, 1891), 31, Available in Google Books.

Chapter 4: 1862: The Apex of Confederate Efforts in Britain

Throughout 1862 the Confederate need for British support moved beyond the use of propaganda machines such as *The Index* to sway British popular opinion to pressure politicians. The Confederacy, which had been secretly purchasing supplies and weapons from British firms, became bolder as it commissioned the construction of ships in British shipyards. Incensed, the Union found itself not only countering the Confederate propaganda machines, but also trying to prevent the growing sale of arms and supplies to Confederacy. Both sides redoubled their diplomatic and propaganda efforts – which included disinformation and deceit – aimed at the British government and people.

As already mentioned, Hotze's use of *The Index* to publish anti-Union articles had some success among the working classes, but not so much among the elite. While there were some high officials who supported the Confederacy, the majority seemed content to remain neutral, unwilling to commit themselves to the support of a combatant that might not be victorious. Despite the increasingly severe shortage of raw cotton, the moral issue of slavery seemed to play a larger role in this determination to remain neutral, and the fact that British firms and merchants were making huge profits selling supplies to both sides reinforced the benefits of neutrality.

By October 1862, the British government was basically determined to remain neutral, and Hotze realized that his *Index* was not doing enough to influence British decision makers, and he began working closely with Confederate diplomat James Mason to convince the British government to intervene on behalf of the Confederacy. Hotze and Mason, however, continued to reach out to the British people through *The Index*, as well

as through existing British media such as newspapers.¹ In addition to his use of the media, Hotze began assisting British-born Confederate sympathizers in organizing public rallies and gatherings to gain public support. Hotze knew that having a base of native support was crucial, because British Members of Parliament had to listen to their constituents if they wished to be re-elected.² In this way, Hotze hoped to pressure the members of Parliament who had thus far resisted his attempts to change their minds. Therefore, Hotze set aside one thousand pounds to fund public rallies in the areas hardest-hit by economic difficulties, usually areas with a large unemployed population, in hopes that their voices would pressure the British government.³ Hotze hoped the rallies would aid him in spreading propaganda and influencing government officials, but they apparently resulted in no major gains for the Confederacy.⁴

Hotze increasingly aimed his propaganda toward the elite and the top members of the British government, and his efforts were rewarded when he found an ally in William Lindsay. Lindsay was a Member of Parliament and was intimately acquainted with Prime Minister Palmerston, Foreign Secretary Russell and most, if not all, of the other high government leaders. Now, Hotze had an inside source for valuable information.⁵

¹ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 38; Douglas A. Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 19 (Jun., 1976), 409; Steven Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War: January 1860 to September 1862," *The Concord Review* 16, no. 1 (Fall 2005), 117-137, http://www.tcr.org/tcr/essays/eprize07_Civil%20War%20Diplomacy%2016_1.pdf (accessed January 17, 2011), 129.

² Siegel, "British Foreign Policy During the American Civil War, 126.

³ Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, The Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1995), 84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

⁵ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 62-63.

Lindsay was eager to help the South win, for he was a self-made shipping magnate and foresaw future profits in a Confederate victory; however, he did not support the retention of the institution of slavery.⁶ Lindsay seized any available opportunity to ensure Southern success, going so far as to gain an audience with Emperor Napoleon III of France in 1862 to urge French intervention on the side of the Confederacy. Writing to Mason after his interview, he said, “I now have positive and authentic evidence that France only waits the assent of England for recognition [of the South] and other more cogent measures.”⁷ Hotze and other Confederate supporters were elated by Lindsay’s news and hoped that British recognition of the Confederacy was imminent.

Hotze’s network of collaborators continued to expand when Lindsay and native-born James Spence began working together. Spence was a Liverpool merchant who became a financial agent for Richmond and lecturer for various pro-Confederate organizations, and he aided Hotze by setting up public meetings and rallies in which he tackled the question of slavery.⁸ Spence argued at length in his book, *The American Union* (1861), for the independence of the American South. Spence stated that the Union was not fighting for the abolition of slavery, and that an independent South would be forced to improve the lives of its slaves.⁹ In this book, Spence advocated a gradual

⁶ Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain’s Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (New York, New York: Random House, 2010), 96. Lindsay’s ally in Parliament was William Gregory, who convinced Mason to ask Lord (he later became an Earl) Russell for an unofficial interview so that the Confederate commissioner could present his case to the Foreign Secretary.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 224. Lord Russell was infuriated with Lindsay’s move and refused to meet with him upon his return to Britain.

⁸ Lorimer, “The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War,” 409.

⁹ *Ibid.* Spence’s work was very popular and was translated into a number of languages, including French.

abolition of slavery in the Confederacy, and argued that such an action would naturally occur following the end of the war, for slavery was an “outdated system of labour neither morally nor economically viable in the civilized nineteenth century.”¹⁰ *The Saturday Review*, in a positive review of Spence’s work, predicted that he would be quite successful, in part because he did not antagonize abolitionist sentiments and dealt with the subject of slavery in a logical manner, and he did not advocate social unrest.¹¹

Hotze’s *The Index* pounced on Spence’s work and reported on it in the June 5, 1862, issue, remarking that Spence’s research on the “causes of the dissolution of the American Union, with such a profound knowledge of the true character of the American Constitution and laws” was so well done that it was hard to understand why the British government still hesitated to recognize the Confederacy.¹² Hotze’s praise for his fellow propagandist did not stop there, for he later reported on a meeting of the Southern Club, held in Liverpool on October 9, 1862, where Spence presided.¹³ Organizations such as the Southern Club adopted Spence’s views that British recognition of an independent Confederacy would be the best support possible for the Southern states, and might encourage gradual and responsible emancipation of slaves. Hotze continued to tread

¹⁰ As cited in Lorimer, “The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War,” 409.

¹¹ As cited in *Ibid.*

¹² Henry Hotze, “Foreign Correspondence – Paris, June 3, 1862,” *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, June 5, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>. Spence’s work was so well-received in Britain that it was translated into French, where Hotze predicted that its circulation would strengthen the Southern position in Europe.

¹³ Henry Hotze, “Notes on Events of the Week – America,” *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, October 16, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>.

lightly on the issue of slavery, recognizing its volatility among the British populace. He indicated to his readers, however, that the Confederacy was more than willing to listen to the abolitionist promptings of its friends, a message that he hoped would reassure enough Britons so that no segment of the British public would feel alienated.¹⁴

Many of the same approaches used by Hotze were also used by the Union to gather information and disseminate propaganda. The Union especially relied on word-of-mouth for intelligence gathering when its agents attempted to gather information on Confederate shipbuilding as well as their purchase of other arms, munitions and supplies. Although concerned about the Confederate purchases, Northern agents were confident that growing British support for neutrality made the possibility of intervention unlikely.¹⁵ The Union believed that it had the ear of the British government, an opinion clearly held by Thurlow Weed when he related how, upon his arrival in Britain, he broke

through all the usual forms of diplomacy... [and] I was tendered an audience by Earl Russell... and subsequently was received by the Duke of Argyll, Milnor, Gibson, Count de Morny, and other distinguished officials in London and Paris, as a representative of my country, without ever having an opportunity... of presenting my letters of instruction.¹⁶

In this diary entry Weed seemed arrogant and satisfied. Furthermore, he noted that he was able to meet with Earl Russell and a number of high-ranking British officials without

¹⁴ Henry Hotze, "The South and the African Slave Trade," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, October 2, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>; Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions," 416; May, ed., *The Union, The Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, 77.

¹⁵ Thurlow Weed, Harriet A. Weed, ed., *Life of Thurlow Weed, including his Autobiography and a Memoir embellished with Portraits and other Illustrations* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), 639, Available from Google Books.

¹⁶ Ibid.

having to go through official channels as Adams and Mason had done.¹⁷ Nonetheless, Union agents watched Hotze's reports closely, knowing that the Confederate promoters and the anti-Union propaganda were having some impact on British opinion.¹⁸ Furthermore, about the same time as Weed's arrival in Europe, the Union agent and spy, William M. Walker, U.S.N. reported to his chief, William Seward, on October 20, 1861, that there was a swarm of "southern gentlemen," who had entrée to British and French society and "were rapidly bringing the upper classes and the educated under their influence."¹⁹ Furthermore, some of these "gentlemen" were making purchases and shipments while using the press to spread their "views and opinions" in the different circles in which they moved.²⁰ Walker urged that some northern "gentlemen" with good manners should be sent over immediately to counteract the "southern gentlemen."²¹ The Union apparently ignored this suggestion, for no "northern gentlemen" ever arrived.

Freeman Harlow Morse, the American consul to London, took over Sanford's network once Sanford was sent back to Belgium in late 1861, and he hired British detectives to gather information, hoping that the daily reports he received would include a key piece of intelligence that he could utilize to sabotage Confederate efforts in Europe.²²

¹⁷ Weed, *Life of Thurlow Weed*, 639.

¹⁸ Thomas Hepburn Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003), 66. These successes were seen with Hotze being invited to write a lead editorial justifying the South's secession in the *Morning Post* (which subscribed to Lord Palmerston's policies), which was followed by similar columns in the *Standard* and the *Morning Herald* (Lord Derby's mouthpiece).

¹⁹ As cited in Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 31-32.

Morse also bribed postal workers to obtain the addresses of Confederate agents, giving him the opportunity to intercept pieces of mail and telegrams.²³ Morse, like his predecessor Sanford, successfully obtained crucial information on the shipments of goods to the Confederacy, playing the role of spy rather than propagandist.²⁴ In a dispatch to Seward dated November 28, 1862, Morse confirmed that the Confederacy was indeed shipping supplies to rebel ports under the British flag and had plans to carry on trade through the ports of Texas and Matamoros, Mexico.²⁵ Morse's usage of his intelligence network was the work of a spy, and his attempts to halt the Confederate supply ships were tactics intended to produce long-term suffering and put pressure on the Southern states.²⁶

The Union was especially concerned about Confederate attempts to purchase or build ships for the Confederate navy, and that concern skyrocketed when Confederate James Dunwoody Bulloch arrived in Liverpool on June 4, 1861.²⁷ The Confederacy was

²³ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 31-32.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Fred C. Ainsworth and Joseph W. Kirkley, comps, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armie*, Series III, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), 948-949. This dispatch detailed how goods were going to arrive in Confederate ports, and how the contracts between the major trading houses and the Confederacy had been authenticated by Mason and other highly placed Confederate supporters.

²⁶ Fred C. Ainsworth and Joseph W. Kirkley, comps, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armie*, Series III, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), 213; Ainsworth and Kirkley, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armie*, Series III, 2:948-949. Adams' work with various agents had previously netted him information about Confederate supply shipments to ports in Texas and Mexico, which he used to warn Seward about the Southern states' attempts to break through the blockade.

²⁷ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 27-28. At first, the intelligence network was run by both Morse and Sanford, but the two men's differing goals ensured that there was no unity, which the Confederacy took advantage of quickly. The main argument was over whether or not to use covert action or direct sabotage to halt the Confederacy's plan in London.

not equipped with a large number of naval yards, and she needed ships. Therefore, in order to create a navy, the Confederacy negotiated contracts with a number of European shipyards for the construction of powerful naval vessels.²⁸ On May 9, 1861, Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory ordered Bulloch to travel to Great Britain and purchase ships capable of preying on Union trade vessels and possibly breaking the blockade.²⁹ Bulloch was given one million dollars and allocated more credit to purchase two ironclad ships in Europe. Bulloch arrived in London with orders from Mallory to purchase “six armed steam cruisers, equally capable of destroying United States commercial shipping on the high seas and engaging blockade ships along the Southern coast.”³⁰ Bulloch arrived in Britain seeking to purchase or construct six armed steam cruisers, as well as arrange for the construction of ironclad ships.³¹

Union agents Sanford, Morse, and Ambassador Adams were quite concerned over Bulloch’s presence in Europe, with Adams labeling him as “the most dangerous man the South can have here and fully up to his business.... So dangerous do I consider this man that I feel disposed when he comes to the continent, to have him arrested on some charge

²⁸ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 397; James Dunwoody Bulloch, “The Confederacy’s First Government-Owned Blockade Runner Begins Her Career,” in *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, Philip Van Doren Stern, ed. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1959), 82.

²⁹ Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 360, 394. It should be noted that there were other private agents sent to Europe to purchase much needed supplies for the Confederacy: Caleb Huse, W. G. Crenshaw, J. B. Ferguson, Charles Helm, Louis Heyliger, and Norman S. Walker, all of them responsible in one manner or another for getting the necessary supplies. On another note, Bulloch was the uncle of future United States president Theodore Roosevelt.

³⁰ Thomas Boaz, *Guns for Cotton: England Arms the Confederacy* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press, 1996), 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*

or other.”³² Even though Sanford was not active in Britain after 1861, he, too, knew the danger that Bulloch posed to the Union. In a preemptive strike, Sanford bought all the weapons and saltpeter he could in continental Europe to prevent Southern sympathizers from purchasing them for the secessionist cause.³³

Bulloch, in turn, was cautious in searching for willing shipbuilders, particularly because of the British Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819. This act forbade the “equipping, furnishing, fitting out, or arming” in British territory of any naval vessel with the intent of using it against a belligerent nation; Confederate plans to use the ships against the Union clearly violated this law.³⁴ Bulloch’s Liverpool solicitor, however, interpreted the act as not prohibiting the construction of any ship, but merely forbidding the arming of a ship inside Britain’s dominion with the intent to use it against a friendly state.³⁵ Though not a propagandist himself, Bulloch’s use of the loophole showed his willingness to misinform his enemies about his actions. In this case, Bulloch used disinformation and deceit to hide his actions from Union agents, which included funding the ships’ construction under false identities and having the shipyards begin building them.

Bulloch’s first acquisitions were raiders and blockade runners. Shortly before Bulloch’s arrival in Britain, a former U.S. Navy officer, Raphael Semmes, acting on

³² “Sanford to Seward,” July 4, 1861, as cited in Harriet Chappell Owsley, “Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad, 1861-1865,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 48 (September 1961), 214. Sanford detailed his suspicions to Seward in the above dispatch, emphasizing the danger that the Confederate agent posed, particularly in his efficiency and the threat of a navy to combat the Union-enforced blockade.

³³ “As cited in *Ibid.*, 221-222.

³⁴ Van Doren Stern, ed., *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, 82.

³⁵ Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2000), 144.

behalf of the Confederacy, had purchased and converted a steam packet called the *Havana* into a fighting ship “armed with a massive 8-inch pivot gun and four 32-pounders.”³⁶ On the *Havanna*, renamed the *Sumter*, Semmes prepared to go to sea and begin his campaign against the Union, but several Federal warships arrived to prevent the *Sumter*’s departure. Semmes managed to escape from the small Federal fleet, including the fifth largest warship in the Union Navy, the *Brooklyn*, by utilizing the small size of the *Sumter* to his advantage.³⁷ The *Sumter* escaped a Federal patrol once again in Martinique and went on to capture a total of eighteen Union ships, burning three of them. The Union knew that although it was small, the *Sumter*’s presence did more harm than just the physical capture of ships, for it caused a number of Union ships to remain in port, leave on smaller and less profitable voyages, or sometimes fly foreign flags in an attempt to elude that ship and other Confederate vessels.³⁸

Soon after his arrival in Britain, Bulloch purchased a private ship, the *Fingal*, a propeller-driven vessel of relatively new construction that, while on a test run, clocked in at thirteen knots under steam, a speed high enough that Bulloch thought it had potential to become a blockade-runner.³⁹ Taking possession of the vessel in Greenock, Scotland, Bulloch noted that “it was necessary to act with caution and secrecy, because the impression got abroad that the Confederate Government was trying to fit out ships in

³⁶ Raphael Semmes, “The First Confederate Cruiser Puts Out to Sea,” in *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, Philip Van Doren Stern, ed. (New York: Bonanza Books, 1959), 79. Semmes was among the first naval officers to quit the United States Navy (he did so on February 15, 1861), which allowed him the advantage of visiting Northern states before the outbreak of hostilities. He ordered munitions and supplies for the Confederacy, successfully smuggling them into the Southern states before the firing on Fort Sumter.

³⁷ As cited in *Ibid.*, 79-80.

³⁸ As cited in *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁹ As cited in *Ibid.*, 82.

England to cruise against American commerce and... all vessels were closely watched.”⁴⁰

Nonetheless, Bulloch procured the *Fingal*, had her loaded with critical military and naval supplies destined for the Confederacy.⁴¹ Bulloch obtained legal documentation from the Board of Trade stating that the ship was free to depart for either Bermuda or Nassau, with a small crew of sailors and engineers. No mention was made of the ship’s cargo.⁴²

However, Henry Sanford’s intelligence network discovered that the *Fingal* was set to depart from Greenock with munitions for the Confederacy.⁴³ One of Pollaky’s men discovered that the *Fingal* was soon to set sail and reported:

after cruising unmolested amongst ‘an immense assortment of multifarious goods’—I fortunately observed *the cases* [...] there is no mistake about them as in addition to the marks... they also have a card on each *Isaac Campbell & Co.* they are remaining on the *platform* ready for delivery, depend upon it I will keep a bright look out on them.⁴⁴

Brennan, one of Pollaky’s men, reported the hourly movements surrounding the *Fingal* to Pollaky, who in turn gave the reports to Sanford, but the observations failed to make any mention of Bulloch or his crew actually boarding the ship.⁴⁵ Bulloch, fearful of detection and detention by British customs, and knowing that his movements were being closely

⁴⁰ As cited in Van Doren Stern, ed., *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, 82-83.

⁴¹ As cited in *Ibid.*, 82

⁴² As cited in *Ibid.*, 83.

⁴³ Owsley, “Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad,” 217.

⁴⁴ Ed Brennan to Pollaky, October 4, 1861, Sanford Papers, Box 139, as cited in *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Owsley, “Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad,” 217.

watched, moved up the time of the *Fingal*'s departure.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Bulloch slipped down the coast and boarded the *Fingal* at a different harbor, accomplishing an escape.⁴⁷

When Bulloch and the *Fingal* arrived safely in Bermuda, he received a dispatch from Stephen Mallory, the Confederate Secretary of the Navy. Mallory congratulated Bulloch on his acquisition of the *Fingal*, approved the contracts for the building of two warships that would become the *Florida* and *Alabama*, and approved Bulloch's plan to captain the *Fingal* through the Union blockade and back to the Confederacy with her supplies.⁴⁸ Bulloch eluded the Union blockade and sailed the *Fingal* up the Savannah River, where the Union's larger ships were unable to follow. The Confederacy got its supplies, but the Federal blockade prevented the *Fingal* from resuming her service as a supply transport or raider. She was later converted into an ironclad and renamed the *Atlanta*, but was captured by Federal troops in June, 1863.⁴⁹

While the *Sumter* and the *Fingal* were helpful, it was clear a tougher ship was needed: a warship. Earlier, after his arrival in Liverpool, Bulloch began to quietly search for a naval yard amenable to the Confederacy. By August 1861, Bulloch had £131,000 to begin purchasing or subsidizing the construction of Confederate ships; soon he had contracts for the construction of two vessels: the *Oreto* and ship 290.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ As cited in Van Doren Stern, ed., *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, 85.

⁴⁷ Owsley, "Henry Shelton Sanford and Federal Surveillance Abroad," 217-218.

⁴⁸ As cited in Van Doren Stern, ed., *Secret Missions of the Civil War: First-hand accounts by men and women who risked their lives in underground activities for the North and the South*, 85-86.

⁴⁹ As cited in *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁰ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 9; Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 395.

The first true warship constructed for the Confederacy was the *Oreto*, later rechristened the *Florida*, built at the William C. Miller and Sons shipyard in Liverpool.⁵¹ Adams found out about the *Oreto*'s construction and sent Dudley to investigate further. Dudley uncovered Bulloch's secret shipbuilding program in the early months of 1862, discovering that the ships were funded by the British firm Fraser, Trenholm and Company, the same firm that bankrolled the majority of Confederate purchases throughout the war.⁵² On February 3, 1862, Dudley reported to the Union's State Department what he had uncovered concerning the *Oreto*:

The builders [at the Liverpool shipyard] say she is intended for the Italian Government. Fawcett Preston & Co. are fitting her out, supplying all the machinery, etc. From this fact and some other suspicious circumstances I am afraid she is intended for the South. She has one funnel, three masts, bark rigged, eight port holes on each side and is to carry sixteen guns. Her coal is now being put on board and she will go to sea most likely the latter part of the week. Her armament is not as yet on board and the appearances indicate that she is to leave Liverpool and receive (armaments) at some other place.⁵³

Dudley contacted the Italian Embassy, where the Italian professed ignorance that his government had funded the construction of a ship; Charles Francis Adams saw this as additional confirmation that the Confederacy was attempting to slip ships out of Britain for use against the Union.⁵⁴ Construction on the *Oreto* was finished in February 1862, so Dudley and Adams launched an immediate campaign to stop the ship from sailing. The two men discovered evidence of arms shipments sent from Liverpool to islands along the

⁵¹ Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 145.

⁵² Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 34. Dudley's compatriot Freeman Morse did not aid Dudley on this matter as he worked more closely with Sanford and the pre-established intelligence network.

⁵³ Dudley to Seward, February 3, 1862, Thomas Haines Dudley Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, box 1, DU-4573, as cited in *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 34-35.

West African coast, where they were then shipped to the Confederacy – one way of working around the British Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819.⁵⁵ They presented this evidence to the British government, to no avail. One of Dudley’s major successes concerning the *Oreto* incident was the discovery that Bulloch was the Confederate agent in charge of obtaining ships. When Dudley destroyed his cover, Bulloch became emboldened, as when he commanded the *Oreto* when she was launched (although, he then turned control over to Captain James Duguid).⁵⁶ Bulloch spoke of Dudley in his memoirs as being in a “wakeful and agitated condition during the remainder of the war” once he discovered the Confederate successes in circumventing the British Foreign Enlistment Act.⁵⁷

Adams turned over the information that he and Dudley had gathered on the *Oreto* to the Foreign Office in March 1862, which in turn sent customs officers to inspect the ship. The lack of arms on the ship led the officials to conclude that the *Oreto* was not a warship; therefore, there was no cause for denying her launch.⁵⁸ Infuriated by the news, both Adams and Dudley attempted to take their information and pleas to Lord Russell, but the foreign secretary had left London, and this allowed Bulloch to sail the *Oreto* out of Liverpool on March 22, 1862.⁵⁹ The *Oreto* sailed to Nassau in the West Indies where the ship was armed and renamed the *Florida*.⁶⁰ Bulloch’s gamble was a success. On the

⁵⁵ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 35.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ James E. Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, as cited in *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁵⁸ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

other hand, the *Florida* was seized at Nassau in the summer of 1862, under the suspicion that she was waiting to be armed, news that pleased Secretary of State William Seward immensely.⁶¹ Unfortunately, there was not enough evidence to hold the ship and so the *Florida* was released. Hotze used this and subsequent victories of the *Florida* as propaganda, reporting in his *Index* that

a mob of discharged sailors and others were employed to transship cargo from a schooner into the *Oreto*. I am credibly informed that about half an hour after they got on board the *Oreto* she put to sea, and in about three hours afterwards overtook the British schooner *Prince Alfred*, said to have been lately purchased... [after towing the *Prince Alfred* to a small island in the Bahamas] the men [of the *Oreto*] began to take out of the *Prince Alfred* her cargo and to put it on board the *Oreto*. They discharged six 32-pounded broadside guns and two 68-pouder pivot guns, lots of stores, shot, shell, and powder. This took six days to do, when the *Oreto*, having these guns mounted on her deck, weighed anchor, hoisted the Confederate flag, her crew manning the rigging and giving three cheers.⁶²

Hotze's report on the triumphs of the *Florida* serves as an example of the Confederacy's success in outwitting Union efforts to prevent the Southern states from gaining munitions and ships. Hotze continued to report on the *Florida*'s movements during the war, citing an instance where the ship sneaked into the port of Mobile, Alabama to resupply. Also, the *Florida* continued to capture more ships. Hotze later related how the *Florida* captured and burned a ship called the *Star of Peace*, bound from Calcutta, India to Boston, Massachusetts.⁶³ The value of the captured cargo was

⁶⁰ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 223-225.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² "A Nassau letter of the 6th September – Notes on Events of the Week, America," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, October 16, 1862. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn01hotz>.

⁶³ Henry Hotze, "Notes on Events of the Week, America," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, April 16, 1863. <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn2hotz>.

\$500,000.⁶⁴ The *Florida*'s capture of another Federal schooner was further proof that the Confederacy now had the naval capability to successfully raid and capture Union vessels.⁶⁵ Hotze used this propaganda to bolster his claim that the Confederacy was a viable military power with a chance of victory. However, the *Florida* was captured by the USS *Wachusett* on October 7, 1864, in the Bay of San Salvador, Brazil without a shot having been fired.⁶⁶ The *Florida* had been at sea since sneaking out of the port of Brest, France eight months earlier, and during this time at sea, the *Florida* captured a total of thirteen prizes.⁶⁷ The *Florida*'s captain had sailed into port to get more fuel and supplies, but was pounced upon by the *Wachusett*.⁶⁸

Despite losing their chance at stopping the *Oreto* before it sailed and became the *Florida*, both Adams and Dudley were determined to prevent Bulloch's next ship from being launched. The *290* was constructed in the John Laird and Company's Birkenhead Ironworks, a shipyard that had been in business since 1829 and was said to be more powerful than her sister vessel.⁶⁹ Bulloch, who kept an ear to the ground for news from the British government concerning any possible intervention, reported that Lord Russell seemed "more determined than ever to preserve its neutrality...[and] the chances of

⁶⁴ Henry Hotze, "Notes on Events of the Week, America," April 16, 1863.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 704.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. In total, the *Florida* captured thirty-eight prizes during its two-year service, a decent amount.

⁶⁹ James P. Baxter, 3rd, "The British Government and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865," *The American Historical Review* 34 (Oct., 1928), 25; Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 225; Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 39. The John Laird and Company's Birkenhead shipyards are located along the Wirral Peninsula in northwest England.

getting a vessel to sea in anything like fighting condition are next to impossible.”⁷⁰

Bulloch knew that his plan to get the *290* out of British waters had to be top-notch, for both Dudley and Adams were investigating the various shipyards in an effort to discover Bulloch’s plans. Bulloch moved the *290* into a private graving dock in an effort to continue her construction unimpeded. Weeks of surveillance by Dudley and his network led to the discovery that the *290* was already under construction, and Dudley reported to the Union State Department on April 4, 1862 that the ship was a “gunboat of eleven hundred tons [and] was the exact model of the *Florida*, with engines of three hundred horsepower.”⁷¹ Dudley also reported that he had heard that the Spanish government had contracted the ship’s construction, but he doubted the claim. Upon making inquiries at the Spanish embassy, Adams found that the ambassador there knew nothing about it.⁷² Dudley further discovered that two Confederate officers who had served on the *Sumter* confirmed that the *290* was indeed meant for service in the Confederacy.⁷³ After further investigation, Dudley confidently reported to Seward that “[The *290*] will be when finished a very superior boat...The order when given was to build her of the very best material and in the best & strongest manner without regard to expence and the foreman says this has been done....There is no doubt but what she is intended for the Rebels.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Official Navy Records, series 2, vol. 2, p. 183, Bulloch to Mallory, April 11, 1862, as cited in Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 225-226.

⁷¹ Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 39.

⁷² *Ibid*, 39-40.

⁷³ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 193; Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 39-40.

⁷⁴ Dudley to Adams, May 23, 1862, Thomas Haines Dudley Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, box 1, DU-4573, as cited in Milton, *Lincoln’s Spymaster*, 40.

This evidence became part of the case that both Dudley and Adams presented to the British government in an attempt to prevent the *290* from being launched.

The Union agents repeatedly attempted to stop the *290* from sailing, searching for any evidence that Bulloch was breaking the Foreign Enlistment Act or that the ship was legally owned by the Confederacy. Adams and Dudley also pressured Lord Russell to act, hoping that they had gathered enough evidence to prove that the *290* was meant to serve the Confederacy, and if permitted to launch, would violate British neutrality. However, their case relied heavily on hearsay evidence, and there was a lack of documented wrongdoing.⁷⁵ Adams insisted that Lord Palmerston's ministry abide by its declaration of neutrality and stop Bulloch.⁷⁶ Russell debated whether or not to prevent the launching of the *290* until the matter was legally clarified, or until Adams and Dudley produced more evidence. As with the *Florida*, customs officers inspected the *290* and reported that while there were powder canisters, no guns or gun carriages were seen.⁷⁷ After the inspection was completed, the customs office stated that there was not enough evidence, physical or otherwise to justify the seizure of the *290*, nor was there evidence to support the claim that the ship was destined to become a Confederate war vessel.⁷⁸ Thus, Russell took no action.

The *290* launched on May 15, 1862, and seemed likely to clear Liverpool by mid-July, setting course for international waters.⁷⁹ Those plans were delayed, however, when

⁷⁵ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 193.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 193-194.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 194-195.

⁷⁸ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 194-196; Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 145.

⁷⁹ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 196.

on June 23, Adams tried yet again to convince Russell to prevent the *290* from sailing, asking for a warrant to have the ship seized. This time Adams supplied circumstantial information gathered through Dudley's spy network, including a number of testimonials and evidence gathered through his team of private lawyers that indicated the ship had indeed been built as a warship for the Confederacy.⁸⁰ Russell, however, still was not convinced. Dudley finally succeeded in fulfilling Lord Russell's demands by submitting sworn depositions from Liverpool customs agents, and so demanded the *290's* seizure.⁸¹

Both Adams and the British Foreign Office reminded Lord Russell that if the *290* was allowed to sail, it might be seen as a declaration of support for the Confederacy, which would violate the Queen's proclamation of neutrality and even lead to an undesired war with the United States, but to Adams' and Dudley's frustration, Lord Russell did not order the ship to be seized.⁸² Lord Russell attempted to justify his delay in issuing an arrest warrant, asserting that Britain wished to remain the Union's friend but also wanted to remain neutral in the conflict by not acting in a manner that might be seen as friendly to one side. Needless to say, the Union was not pleased with this explanation.⁸³

Adams and Dudley continued to demand the seizure of the *290*, but the British Board of Customs refused. To make matters worse, the paperwork submitted by the two

⁸⁰ Baxter, "The British Government and Neutral Rights," 25-26; Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 223-225; Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 196.

⁸¹ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 196.

⁸² Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 397-399. Lord Russell felt that he had to get approval from the law office of the British crown before he could issue an arresting warrant for the ships, which significantly slowed down the response time of British agents to capture the *290*.

⁸³ "A Speech from Earl Russell," *Harper's Weekly*, no. 356, 24 October 1863 [magazine on-line]; available from <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war/1863/civil-war-knoxville-tennessee.htm> (accessed February 4, 2011).

Union agents had been misplaced, and this, in turn, significantly lowered the chances of Union success.⁸⁴ In addition to the misplacement of papers, the examination of the gathered evidence took quite a long time.⁸⁵

While the British government was scrambling to recover the misplaced papers and thoroughly examine the evidence, Bulloch quickly acted to remove the *290* from British waters. Bulloch sailed the ship, under tugboat escort, for a purported trial cruise on the Mersey River. By the time that Dudley realized that Bulloch had pulled off a hoax of massive proportions, it was too late to stop the ship and the *290*, successfully escaped Britain on July 29, 1862, just a few weeks later than originally planned.⁸⁶ As had happened with the *Florida*, Lord Russell was out of town when the ship escaped British waters. Although his actions gave him an alibi, Lord Russell's actions did not bolster his claims to uphold British neutrality. Dudley wrote to Seward that he feared British public support for the Union had declined, in part due to General George McClellan's losses in the Peninsular Campaign and his failure to capture Richmond; Dudley opined that McClellan's military losses had "caused the feeling in this country [Britain] against the United States and in favor of the South to break out afresh and with increasing virulence.... Those who pretended to be neutral now show themselves in their favor... The current is against us and it is strong and threatens to carry everything with it."⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 226, 281; Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 197.

⁸⁵ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 197.

⁸⁶ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 226, 281; Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 197-198; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 397. Although the *290* was renamed the *Enrica* in July, 1862, for ease of comprehension in this paper, it will be called the *290* until it is rechristened the *Alabama*.

⁸⁷ Neil Fred Sanders, "Lincoln's Consuls in the British Isles, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1971), 26, as cited in Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster*, 41.

Hotze trumpeted the Confederate victories and the escape of the *290*. In *The Index* on October 30, 1862, the Confederate propagandist commented that the *290*

has disturbed and altogether unsettled the Federal public... this vessel, which is worthy of being the successor of the *Sumter*, has played such havoc with the Federal marine, that the rate of insurance has increased 5 per cent. It is this apparent that the commerce as well as the territory of the North is vulnerable. If privateering should be facilitated by the Confederate Congress, the north will find its trade completely crippled.⁸⁸

Hotze hoped that if the *290* was successful, it might aid the Confederate goal to gain British recognition.

After escaping from Liverpool, Bulloch had the *290* anchor off the northern coast of Ireland, whereupon he arranged for the transport of Raphael Semmes and his crew to the Confederate ship along with nineteen cases of goods.⁸⁹ Semmes, his crew, and the shipment of supplies reached the *290* on August 20, 1862, and Semmes raised Confederate colors five days later, more than prepared to begin raiding Union ships. The *290* sailed for the Azores Islands, where she was armed and rechristened the *Alabama*. During her career, the *Alabama* captured over sixty-six Union vessels and caused more than \$5 million worth of losses to the Union merchant marine trade in a two-year span, taking the most prizes of any Confederate raider.⁹⁰ It seemed once again that Bulloch and, by extension, the Confederacy, had outwitted the Union, slipping a powerful warship out of Liverpool while Adams and Dudley were tied up in bureaucratic red tape.

⁸⁸ Henry Hotze, "Notes on Events of the Week, America," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, October 30, 1862, <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn02hotz>.

⁸⁹ Howard Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 198. The fate of the *Sumter* was explored at an earlier point in this chapter.

⁹⁰ Boaz, *Guns for Cotton*, 9; Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 624.

The *Alabama* menaced the high seas for two years, and Hotze continued to broadcast the ship's successes and refute accusations that the *Alabama* was knowingly violating Britain's neutrality by seizing British ships. He remarked in the November 6, 1862, issue of *The Index* that there

is not a shadow of a pretence for the allegation that Captain Semmes has violated any neutral rights. He has not knowingly destroyed any British property, even on board the enemy's ships; if he has done so unwittingly, England must demand reparation, and the Confederate States must accord it.⁹¹

Hotze did his utmost to ensure that the Confederacy's image was as untarnished as possible, declaring that accusations that the Confederacy was acting dishonorably by capturing British vessels were false. Hotze heralded the integrity of Semmes, declaring that the captain was not a man who would ever violate British neutrality.⁹² Hotze's declaration that the *Alabama* was indeed obeying international law was also used to discredit Northern cruisers. For example, Hotze related an incident in which the British ship *Blanche* was halted off the coast of Cuba by a Union man-of-war; the *Blanche* tried to escape, whereupon the Union ship gave chase, captured the *Blanche*, and set her afire.⁹³

The successful escape of the *Alabama*, combined with British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston's refusal to issue a warrant for the arrest of the Confederate warship, deeply upset some northerners. Many wrote to their local newspapers condemning Britain for allowing a Confederate ship not only to be *built* within her borders, but then

⁹¹ Henry Hotze, "Burning Ships; Belligerent and Neutral," *The Index: A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News devoted to the exposition of mutual interests, political and commercial, of Great Britain and the Confederate States of America*, November 6, 1862, <http://www.archive.org/details/indexweeklyjourn02hotz>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

allowing that vessel to escape unscathed. One anonymous writer to the *New York Herald* on October 10, 1862, questioned: “Is this the neutrality which the British government proclaimed? Is this friendship which it manifests towards a nation with whom it professes to be on terms of peace and animity [*sic*]? ...It is easier to deal with an open enemy than with a concealed one.”⁹⁴ Many northerners could not fathom why Britain allowed a Confederate agent to build two ships in her shipyards and then permitted those ships to sail out of Liverpool to attack Union ships. There was great bitterness over what some considered to be Britain’s betrayal.

The downfall of the *Alabama* occurred in 1864 when she got into a battle with the USS *Kearsarge* off the coast of France. The *Alabama* was in a dilapidated state, and Semmes knew that his ship needed to resupply, so he chose Cherbourg as the site at which to undergo repairs.⁹⁵ While waiting for permission to enter the harbor and go into dry-dock, the *Kearsarge* sailed into view. The ships battled on June 19, 1864, in a dueling fashion, with each ship’s guns facing the other.⁹⁶ In less than an hour, the *Alabama* was destroyed, and her survivors were rescued by the *Kearsarge*, and a number of other spectator vessels.⁹⁷ When the survivors of the *Alabama* arrived in Southampton, they were given a rousing welcome, with the London *Standard* commenting, “Every TRUE Englishman will regret to learn that the gallant *Alabama* has gone to her last resting

⁹⁴ “An Anonymous Writer: “English Treachery—Gross Violation of Neutrality,” *New York Herald*, in *The Civil War: Primary Documents on Events from 1860 to 1865* by Ford Risley (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 171.

⁹⁵ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 621.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 621-22.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

place.”⁹⁸ When word reached the Union of the *Alabama*’s downfall, celebrations and parades broke out, and *The New York Times* discussed the ship’s sinking for several weeks following the battle.⁹⁹

Up to her valiant fight to the finish, the *Alabama* was quite a morale-booster for the Confederacy.¹⁰⁰ Hotze made sure to publish every capture and victory by the *Alabama*, and he desperately tried to use her victories to convince the British government and populace that the Confederacy would be victorious and thus deserved British recognition and support. The warm welcome given to the crew of the *Alabama* upon their arrival in Southampton indicated that the exploits of the *Alabama* had excited the imagination of the British people, and in winning their support, Hotze’s propaganda efforts obviously achieved some success. But even though some of the British populace cheered on the *Alabama*, this support was certainly not enough to sway the position of the British government in regard to the American Civil War. By this point, Britain seemed determined to maintain her neutrality, a position she would defend throughout the remainder of the war. The victories of a few ships were not enough; in all probability, only consistent major Confederate victories over the Union, perhaps combined with other economic incentives might have had a chance to bring about the much desired diplomatic recognition; thus Hotze’s propaganda efforts were in vain.

Although the actions of the *Alabama*, and to a lesser degree, the *Florida*, led to increased tensions between the Union and Great Britain, they were not enough to alienate

⁹⁸ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., M.T-185, roll 8, vol. 8, U.S. Consuls in Bristol, Consul Eastman to Seward, June 24, 1964, as cited in Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 623.

⁹⁹ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 624.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 623.

the two permanently. Following the war, Secretary of State Seward, arguing that Britain had failed to maintain her neutrality by not preventing the *Alabama* from sailing, insisted upon a British apology and some land concessions (at first parts of Canada, then later, the Bahamas) as reparations for the *Alabama*'s damages to Union shipping.¹⁰¹ Seward was unsuccessful in getting Britain to agree to his demands, and it was not until President Ulysses Grant's administration that an agreement was reached. In 1871, the claims of both sides were submitted to a tribunal in Geneva, and after much delay and argument by both sides the tribunal announced on September 14, 1872, that Britain owed the Union \$15.5 million, including interest, for the damage caused by the *Alabama* and her sister ships.¹⁰²

When the Civil War ended with the Union victorious over the Confederacy, Great Britain was still neutral. The exploits of propagandists, spies, and ships such as the *Florida* and the *Alabama* were not enough to bring about the recognition the Confederacy so desperately sought.

Hotze was a brilliant propagandist, but he was often short of funds. This affected his ability to hire spies and publish additional propaganda. Further efforts by James Bulloch to secure additional naval vessels for the Confederacy ended in failure, and the two ironclad rams he did commission in 1863 were seized and then bought by the British government. Clearly, the Union anger over the *Florida* and especially the *Alabama* did influence the British government to be more careful about living within the bounds of its proclaimed neutrality. Nevertheless, if the Confederacy had been able to win at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, which surely would have been touted by its diplomats and

¹⁰¹ Foreman, *A World on Fire*, 795-801.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 803.

propagandists, British recognition and aid might have been possible. However, the turning of the tide in favor of the Union that occurred in 1862 in Great Britain, and in July 1863 in the United States, put an end to any Confederate hope of British support. With moral issue of slavery still looming, and now the eventual defeat of the Confederacy becoming more certain, Great Britain was not going to jeopardize her stability, profits, and reputation by granting the Confederacy recognition and support.

Conclusion

When the Civil War ended, Henry Hotze faded from public view. He never returned to America, but he may have continued to write, for his obituary mentioned that he received “various decorations from foreign governments for services as a publicist.”¹ That suggests that he had not limited himself as just a propagandist for the Confederate States of America. Hotze died in Zug, Switzerland on April 19, 1887.²

Until the end of war, Adams, Dudley and Morse continued to gather information for the Union. Sanford, too, continued to gather information from his post in Belgium. Charles Francis Adams served as the American Ambassador to Great Britain until 1868, after which he returned to America and became a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard University; he died in Boston on November 21, 1886. Following the end of the Civil War, Thomas Haines Dudley returned to his native New Jersey, and built a large house on an estate near Camden, where he maintained his involvement in Republican Party politics; he died in Philadelphia of a heart attack on April 15, 1893.³ Freeman Harlowe Morse served as U.S. consul to London until 1870, but he never returned to the United States following his retirement; he died in Surbiton, Surrey, England on February 5, 1891.⁴

¹ Henry Hotze, *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist: Selected Writings on Revolution, Recognition, and Race*, Lonnie A. Burnett, ed. (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 29.

² *Ibid.*, 30.

³ David Hepburn Milton, *Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003), 122.

⁴ “Morse, Freeman Harlowe,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 2011. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M001010> (accessed February 29, 2012).

As these men faded from public view, so too did some of their activities fade in public memory. As time passed, so did the memories of the propagandists and their efforts. Both the Union and the Confederacy attempted to convince the British government and people that theirs was the side to support as they battled during the American Civil War. Both sides used propaganda – in the forms of pamphlets, newspaper articles, and magazines, information gathering, dissemination, disinformation, and essays. Even though the Union diplomats arrived only shortly before those of the Confederacy, the Union had a history of diplomatic relations with Britain, and those relationships served that nation well. It also had established access to the British media. The Confederacy, on the other hand, had to start from scratch.

Besides Adams, Sanford, Dudley, and Morse, the Union agents included Secretary of State William Seward's four-man commission, in particular the wily Thurlow Weed, Seward's former campaign manager. The Union had more money and used it to hire private agents and detectives to gather information, to print pro-Union articles in British and Continental newspapers, and to support its cause. The Confederacy was often short of funds, but managed to conduct quite a propaganda campaign despite that. The major Confederate agents included James Mason and John Slidell, the two Confederate ambassadors to Europe, with Mason assigned to Great Britain and Slidell to France, and former Union naval officer James Dunwoody Bulloch, and Major James Caleb Huse. However, without a doubt, the outstanding propaganda agent on either side was Henry Hotze, the brilliant journalist, who devised a campaign to sway British public opinion to the Confederate side.

President Jefferson Davis and other officials in the Confederacy began the war fully expecting diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy by Great Britain. The primary reason behind this expectation was cotton. The American South had long been the primary global producer of raw cotton, and her primary market was Great Britain, with its huge textile industry. Davis and others believed that recognition would pave the way for commercial treaties and alliances; furthermore, they believed that once Great Britain granted recognition to the Confederacy, much of the rest of Europe would follow, facilitating the purchase of critical war supplies, weapons, food, and even uniforms. Some in the Confederacy even believed that Great Britain would have to militarily intervene if the Union blockade interfered with the shipments of Confederate cotton to Great Britain. In fact, the Confederacy was so certain that its cotton was the key to gaining British recognition that it instituted a cotton embargo. The embargo was meant to oblige the British government to show its support for the Confederacy. What the Confederacy apparently failed to consider was the effect of the embargo on the Confederacy itself.

Things did not work out as the Confederacy thought that they would. British recognition did not come quickly, and the Confederacy soon recognized that it would have to do more to convince the British government to grant the sought-after recognition. One tactic was propaganda. After establishing a permanent minister in Great Britain – James Mason – the Confederacy sent Henry Hotze there to establish and operate its propaganda machine. Hotze's *Index* was a masterly mouthpiece. In the *Index*, Hotze published articles, quoted statistics, made observations, and generally published everything he could that was favorable to the Confederacy and unfavorable to the Union.

The Union also resorted to propaganda, but not necessarily to make Great Britain intervene on its side. The Union preferred that Great Britain remain neutral, and this meant that the British government would not officially or unofficially support the Confederacy.

There was thus a propaganda war in Great Britain as Union and Confederate agents attempted to influence the British. The stakes were high: should Great Britain grant recognition to the Confederacy, it could mean a shift in the momentum of the war, and in the early years of the war, the momentum already seemed to be on the side of the Confederacy.

When the Confederacy decided to have ships purchased or built in Great Britain that could be used in the war with the Union, the Union became quite concerned. That concern increased when the Confederacy sent James Bulloch to Britain to negotiate contracts to have two warships built. The two warships, the *Oreto*, later renamed the *Florida* and the *290*, later renamed the *Alabama*, sailed out of English shipyards despite strong attempts by Union representatives to stop them from doing so. Together, the two ships captured almost eighty Union vessels and captured hundreds of thousands of dollars of cargo. Hotze gleefully reported on every victory of both ships, using them to capture the imagination – and, he hoped, active support - of the British people. He disseminated the stories to show that the Confederacy could still win the war. But he could not convince the British government to abandon its neutral stance.

In the end, what impact did the intense propaganda employed by both the Union and the Confederacy have in Great Britain? British society remained divided in its support of the Union or the Confederacy, and while there were some in the British

government who vigorously supported the Confederates, most preferred to remain neutral rather than risk ending up on the losing side of the American conflict. It appears that neither the Union's nor the Confederacy's propaganda had much of an effect in changing those sentiments. Despite all of its propaganda efforts, the Confederacy was ultimately unable to convince the British government to grant it the diplomatic recognition it so desperately sought. As the Civil War began, Great Britain maintained its neutrality, and when the Civil War ended, Great Britain still maintained its neutrality.

Does this mean that the Union's propaganda efforts were successful, especially given that the Union goal was to convince Great Britain to remain neutral? The answer is apparently "No." All evidence supports the fact that Great Britain remained neutral because it was in her best interests to do so. Great Britain was making huge profits by selling war supplies to both sides, and since it had built up a large cotton surplus prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, it resisted Confederate pressure for recognition. Furthermore, Great Britain was quite reluctant to become involved in an internal and unpredictable American conflict. Finally, had Britain supported one or the other side, support could have led to intervention, and that could have destabilized Great Britain internally and also destabilized her relationship with Europe and the rest of the world. Thus, despite all of the pressure tactics employed by both the Union and the Confederacy, they had temporary or minimal effects. In the end, the Confederacy never gained that sought after recognition, and Britain's choice to remain neutral most likely stemmed from internal rather than Union pressure. Great Britain's actions were based on its determination to do what was best for its long-term interests, and no amount of propaganda could alter that determination.

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