

## Manipulating Images of the North: Union Public Diplomacy in Europe

Thomas Rynard

As Union agents moved in European circles during the Civil War, they understood that shaping the opinion of the foreign public could aid diplomacy and further the Union cause. They pursued campaigns to influence that opinion by engaging in forms of public diplomacy directed at keeping Europe from recognizing the Confederacy. It was rudimentary by today's public diplomacy standards but it met all the essential elements of public diplomacy. It presented, in the words of public diplomacy, "a manipulated image of the state," and thereby influenced European policies on the war from within by shaping the impressions, desires and values of the British and French public and establishing a mutuality of goals.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to measure the impact of public diplomacy, more so in the Civil War era than today. Public diplomacy is seldom decisive in foreign relations. This is the case with the public diplomacy exercised by the Union in the Civil War. Great Britain and France never recognized the Confederate States of America—a feat in part because of the Union's public diplomacy efforts.

Diplomacy practiced during the American Civil War largely dealt with two sides of the same coin—recognition or non-recognition of the independent sovereignty of the Confederate States of America by the European countries.<sup>2</sup> Both sides understood that formal recognition of the Confederacy would greatly benefit their war effort and be the tipping point in gaining independence, much as French recognition of the United States in the American Revolution was seen as the turning point in that conflict. If any of the European countries recognized and supported the Confederacy, this would also mean more supplies and provisions for the ailing Southern effort.

In terms of traditional diplomacy, both the Confederacy and the Union had their shortcomings. The Confederates, to their detriment, relied on King Cotton diplomacy. Foremost among the blunders of King Cotton diplomacy was an embargo on cotton exports designed to starve Europe of the commodity and force it to recognize the South to re-open the trade. On other issues, the South was careful to portray its cause as one against Northern oppression and to paint itself as already having all the attributes of a sovereign nation capable of standing on its own. It also made every effort to sidestep or minimize the issue of slavery and its relation to its bid for independence.<sup>3</sup>

In some respects, the North was no less arrogant than the South in its traditional diplomacy. The Union saw the conflict as an internal

one of rebellion in which Europe had no business. The North was carrying out its right as a sovereign nation to preserve the government which had been established by the Constitution. European interference could only lead to conflict between the United States and those who would formally recognize the Confederacy as a separate nation. Northern diplomacy would also be affected by its position on the issue of slavery. Initially, the Union would be hurt by the refusal of Lincoln to tie the war to the abolition of slavery, a refusal made necessary by the need to mollify border states which remained in the Union.<sup>4</sup>

As to the European view of the diplomatic landscape, Britain predominated. France was willing to recognize the South only if Britain did. Britain declared itself a neutral in the conflict. On recognition, Britain took a middle of the road approach. The South was considered “belligerent,” a status under international law which fell short of recognizing the Confederacy as an independent nation.<sup>5</sup> This position satisfied neither Union nor Confederacy as “[i]t frustrated Confederate supporters, who found themselves in the position of having to pressure the government to alter a policy that could result in direct involvement in the war, and it worried pro-Unionists, who saw neutrality was a possible first step toward recognition of Southern independence.”<sup>6</sup>

While sticking to neutrality, the idea of intervention was not effectively rejected until the middle of 1863.<sup>7</sup> The intervention considered took two basic forms—a forced mediation of disputes by various combinations of European powers or a six month truce. The Union feared either type of intervention. It believed that if it refused to mediate, the European powers would intervene militarily into the war to force the North to accept a peace that would involve Southern independence. The problem with the truce option was only the South would benefit from the halt of hostilities, particularly if free trade with Europe opened during the period of the truce.

Diplomacy between the Union and Britain would also be shaped by flashpoints. The first flashpoint involved encounters at sea between Union ships and British vessels. It would become a major issue in late 1861 when a Union ship stopped the British ship *Trent* and removed two Confederate commissioners bound for Europe. British political and public opinion clamored for a strong response to this insult to British sovereignty. For the North, the *Trent* affair was the first serious foreign relations trial of the war. Had the Lincoln administration not handled this matter correctly, there was a real potential of open warfare between the Union and Britain that would have seen the British allying themselves with the South.

The second potential flashpoint came in 1862. As the bloody battles of 1862 established the ferocity with which the war was being fought, intervention on humanitarian grounds began to be advanced.<sup>8</sup> As one British paper implored, “Let us do something, as we are Christian men. . . . [L]et us do something to stop this carnage.”<sup>9</sup>

Europeans could not comprehend the magnitude of injury the two sides were capable of inflicting on one another and felt that for humanitarian reasons it could not, and should not, be sustained for any period of time.

The third flashpoint was the cotton trade. Significant sectors of the British and French economies were dependent on the importation of cotton from the South. The effects of the war on the textile industries of these two countries was not felt at the war's beginning as bumper crops in 1859 and 1860 had produced a cotton surplus in England. By the summer of 1862, though, the surplus had dissipated. Fears in both countries turned to a "cotton famine."<sup>10</sup> Almost three fourths of the textile mills had ceased operating full-time and large segments of the work force were either out of work altogether or were employed only part-time in Britain.<sup>11</sup> The British government would end up walking a fine line in dealing with the cotton famine and resisting pressure to intervene in the war to re-establish the flow of cotton to the British mills.

### **Union Public Diplomacy in the Civil War Recognizing the Need**

The Lincoln administration realized the need for an information campaign in Europe. The South had been active in Europe since secession and established its principal organ of persuasion, *The Index*, a newspaper published in London by Henry Hotze but financially backed by the Confederate government. It was dedicated to publishing a pro-Southern and anti-Union message.<sup>12</sup> Secretary of State Seward believed from early in the war that it would be necessary to send prominent Americans abroad to present the Union case in ways which official representatives could not.<sup>13</sup> Thurlow Weed summarized Secretary of State William H. Seward's thinking: "Late in October, 1861, it was deemed important by the Administration that some gentlemen of experience, possessing a good knowledge of all the circumstances which preceded and occasioned the rebellion, should be sent abroad to disabuse the public mind, especially in England and France, where numerous and active agents of Secession and rebellion had long been at work in quarters too ready to accept versions unfavorable to the North."<sup>14</sup>

Henry Sanford advocated for a trusted Republican to be sent abroad to correct European misunderstanding of the situation. Sanford left for Europe on March 26, 1861, as minister to Belgium with instructions to counteract Confederate influence in Europe.<sup>15</sup> William Dayton, minister to France, wrote Seward in May of 1861, "If a gentleman accustomed to the use of the pen, and especially if he had some acquaintance with the leading men connected with the European press, could be sent over here in the possession, nominally, of a *good* Consulate (the duties of which could be performed by clerks) while his attention could be really directed at the press, it might be

of great use in giving a right direction to public sentiment. It is a duty which a public Minister could not *with propriety*, perform if he would."<sup>16</sup> Carl Schurz, who became minister to Spain, spoke to Lincoln along these same lines in September 1861.<sup>17</sup> Even Winfield Scott, on tendering his resignation as commander of the Union army, suggested that he could go to Europe and operate in private circles to counter the actions of Confederate agents.<sup>18</sup>

### **Union Public Diplomacy in the Civil War The Message**

Both Britain and France were fertile fields for public diplomacy. European public interest in the American Civil War was high.<sup>19</sup> Governments in both Britain and France consulted and considered public opinion in setting policy. Britain had a history of public influence on political action, particularly on social reform issues. While Parliament may not have always embraced public opinion, important legislation was impossible in the absence of public support or in the face of stiff opposition.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, in France, Napoleon III gathered and gauged the views of the public before acting.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, there was a public in Europe potentially amenable to public diplomacy. When speaking of the Union's public diplomacy message in the war, there were two messages—one that preceded the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation and one that followed it. The ineffectiveness of the former message and the success of the latter were tied directly to British public opinion, and well illustrate the truism in public diplomacy that "it is not what one says, but it is what the other hears that ultimately matters most."<sup>22</sup>

Understanding the Union's public diplomacy in the war begins with an understanding of British public opinion and the Union's perception of and reaction to that opinion. The public in Britain was not unitary, nor was its opinion. There was a multiplicity of opinions on the war. Some took an economic and geopolitical view, seeing advantages from a divided United States that would check its economic growth and expansion in the western hemisphere and elsewhere in the world.<sup>23</sup> Those who took this view also tended to see the war as the inevitable product of the inferior American system of republican democracy.<sup>24</sup> Even among the more liberally-minded there was no unity of belief on American democracy. Some saw the United States as having betrayed the democratic ideal, while others perceived the Union as a beacon of hope for democratic government and freedom.<sup>25</sup>

There were, however, two beliefs held in common. Most believed that Southern independence was inevitable. As the London Times noted prior to the first Battle of Bull Run, "Everyone knows and admits that the secession is an accomplished and irrevocable fact."<sup>26</sup> The military progress of the war from 1861 through the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg strengthened this belief. Yet, this belief of inevitability of Southern independence did not result in immediate

recognition of the South.

The second common belief was a universal opposition to slavery.<sup>27</sup> However, this disapproval of slavery did not necessarily equate with support for the North or opposition to the South. Some European abolitionists believed that the end of slavery would be achieved quicker if the South seceded and had to deal with the international moral condemnation of its institutions as a matter of foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> Others believed that once the South removed itself from the protective umbrella of the growing Northern economy, it would come to see that the economic costs of slave labor outweighed the economic costs of paid labor.<sup>29</sup> Others simply ignored the issue in their support for the South or sought to rationalize that support by advocating gradual emancipation.<sup>30</sup>

This European opposition to slavery was undercut significantly by the message the Union was conveying in the first year of the war. The North was unable to openly claim that slavery and its abolition had anything to do with its war aims. The British public largely accepted at face value Lincoln's statements that he was fighting to preserve the Union and not to end slavery. Few also looked behind Southern claims that they were fighting to throw off Northern oppression. As a result some were able to sublimate their distaste for slavery to other interests that equated to support for the South. Others were forced to a neutral view, unwilling to support the South because of slavery and unable to support the North because it was not committed to destroying slavery. There remained, however, a core of British abolitionists who viewed slavery as the root of the conflict and who believed that Lincoln was anti-slavery at heart.<sup>31</sup>

The issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation altered the public opinion landscape. Initially, the pro-South British argued the act was born of desperation out of a realization that the war could not be won on the battlefield and contended that it was intended to produce slave insurrections throughout the South.<sup>32</sup> Others saw the Proclamation as hypocrisy by not going far enough, agreeing with the sentiment expressed by the London *Spectator* that "The principle is not that a human being cannot justly own another, but that he cannot own him unless he is loyal to the United States."<sup>33</sup> However, and more decisively, large support for the Union came out of the Emancipation Proclamation, especially among the British working class.<sup>34</sup>

While British public opinion cut across classes and interests, there was one group of British society whose opinion was of great concern to all and which would be paramount in Northern public diplomacy efforts—textile workers. Like with the British public in general, textile worker opinion was not unified. Some placed their economic interests first and favored government action that would restore the cotton trade. Others saw the issue foremost as one of labor and opposed slavery as the ultimate control of labor and contrary to the laboring class' right to acceptable working conditions and wages.<sup>35</sup> The significance of British labor views on slavery came to the

forefront after the announcement of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in late 1862 in the wake of the battle of Antietam, an event which coincided with the darkest days of the cotton famine. While some labor support for the South would continue, a substantial portion saw beyond the limited scope of the Emancipation Proclamation and perceived that Union victory would bring an ultimate end to slavery.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly British labor threw its support behind the Union cause. It has been argued that this groundswell of support in the final months of 1862 buried any chances for British intervention in the war after 1862.<sup>37</sup>

Union perception of British and French public opinion was neither entirely accurate nor entirely inaccurate. Seward saw British opinion divided between those who supported the North out of opposition to slavery or a desire that American democracy not fail and those who supported the South out of dislike of republics, personal interest, or a desire to see a potential economic and imperial rival eliminated.<sup>38</sup> Henry Adams complained of British press portrayals of Seward as “an ogre” who was out to insult Britain into declaring war.<sup>39</sup> Charles Adams, the minister, noted as late as December 1862 that “[t]he great body of the aristocracy and the wealthy commercial classes are anxious to see the United States go to pieces.”<sup>40</sup> Lincoln bemoaned that Europeans focused on Union set-backs in the eastern theater of the war and ignored the significant successes the Union produced in the western theater.<sup>41</sup>

At war’s beginning, the North was also disappointed in the European failure to understand that the South was making war to preserve and expand slavery.<sup>42</sup> Charles Adams blamed the failure of Britain to fully comprehend the nature of the war “because we do not at once preach emancipation.”<sup>43</sup> Charles Sumner would write to John Bright, the principal Union supporter in Parliament, “It is not necessary that emancipation should be openly on our flag. It is enough that we are fighting against men seeking to found a new government with slavery as its cornerstone, claiming outlying territories for slavery, and sure also, if successful, to pen the slave trade.”<sup>44</sup> Northern perception of British attitudes on the nexus between slavery and war changed dramatically following the Emancipation Proclamation. Henry Adams was able to write to his brother in January of 1863, “Politically things go on swimmingly here. The anti-slavery feeling of the country is coming out stronger than we expected, and all the English politicians have fairly been thrown over by their people.”<sup>45</sup> Charles Adams would also note the effect of the Proclamation in letters to his son and to Secretary Seward.<sup>46</sup>

As to the substance of the message, it was limited at the war’s beginning. Unwilling and unable to speak of an end to slavery, the Union had difficulty garnering support for its cause in Europe. Publicly it stuck to the message that it was fighting to preserve the Union and that European beliefs that Southern independence was inevitable were mistaken. The message being conveyed in this respect was that

the North had the resolve and the power to bring the South back into the Union.<sup>47</sup> As to slavery, the Union's efforts were directed at ensuring Europeans saw the connection between the South and slavery. If the North could not claim that it was fighting to abolish the institution, it could at least make note that the South was fighting to preserve it.

This was the message publicly conveyed. There was some indication that privately representations about slavery and its end were being made. As early as January, 1862, Weed would say of his discussions abroad, "In England, too, when I express my surprise that we do not receive the moral support we expected from them, they answer, the North takes no ground on the slavery question. I ask them to watch the progress of events, with which in the end they will be satisfied."<sup>48</sup> If Union agents were constrained to speak of emancipation in the first two years of the war, others were less reticent to make representations about the outcome the war would have on the institution of slavery. For example, as many as forty freed blacks and escaped slaves in England, many of whom made their way to England with Union assistance and encouragement, were speaking on the lecture circuit or wherever their voices could be heard. They spoke out against British intervention in the war but more importantly, they reminded their audiences of how terrible slavery was and of British revulsion to it.<sup>49</sup>

Whether or not he was an official Union agent spreading public diplomacy or a wild card in the mix, George Francis Train conveyed the message that the war was ultimately about slavery and its abolition. In early 1862, a letter from Train appeared in the British press to repudiate claims and accusations that Confederate minister William Yancey had published in the press. The cause of the war, Train said, had been correctly stated by the Confederate Vice-President as "African slavery was the immediate cause of the late rupture and the present revolution."<sup>50</sup> The South, his closing words would state, was fighting for "The bowie knife—the revolver—and eternal slavery of the white man as well as the black—and this is Secession."<sup>51</sup> At an earlier debate which he organized, he was blunter and more colorful in his remarks, presenting the South's position as, "We in Secessia have based our Constitution and reared our Temple of Despotism on one acknowledged cornerstone- NEGRO SLAVERY."<sup>52</sup>

The North's public diplomacy message before the Emancipation Proclamation was perhaps best stated and summarized by President Lincoln himself in responding to petitions addressed to him by the textile workers of Manchester, England.<sup>53</sup> When he first came to office, Lincoln wrote, his paramount duty under the Constitution was to preserve the Union and the integrity of the government and added, "It is not always in the power of governments to enlarge or restrict the scope of moral results which follow the policies that they may deem it necessary for the public safety from time to time to adopt." He acknowledged the hardships the workers were undergoing as a result of the war in America but placed the blame for that wholly

on the Confederacy—"our disloyal citizens"—who were bent on overthrowing a government "which was built upon the foundation of human rights, and to substitute for it one which should rest exclusively on the basis of human slavery[.]"<sup>54</sup> He concluded by praising the textile workers for putting their anti-slavery sentiments before their own economic interests and saw in such a choice "an augury that whatever else may happen, whatever misfortune may befall your country or my own, the peace and friendship which now exists between the two nations will be, as it shall be my desire to make them, perpetual."<sup>55</sup>

Following the announcement of the Preliminary Emancipation Act, the tenor of the Union message changed, as did the means used to deliver it. In the early days of the war, Lincoln had read the dispatches British correspondent William Russell sent home to England as he traveled through the South. From the tenor of those dispatches, Lincoln perceived that the true weak point in the South's efforts to gain European recognition was the issue of slavery.<sup>56</sup> At the time, he also believed that he was not in a position to exploit this weakness.<sup>57</sup> This changed with the Emancipation Proclamation. Pamphlets supporting the contention that slavery was the real issue in the war began circulating in Britain.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, copies of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Address to the Ladies of England*, an anti-slavery tract, was widely distributed.<sup>59</sup> Fanny Kemble's popular journal of her life as a slave was published but Victorian mothers forbade their daughters from reading it because of its explicit detail of sexual relations between black slaves and white masters.<sup>60</sup> John Bigelow began to openly write and distribute materials that announced the true cause of the war to be slavery and of the South's desire to perpetuate that institution.<sup>61</sup> Seward issued a circular to the diplomatic and consular offices in Europe declaring war aims had changed to "Union and abolition" from "Union and not abolition," which was, in turn, distributed by Bigelow in Europe.<sup>62</sup>

Lecturers supported or encouraged by the North flocked to Europe to speak on the war and emancipation.<sup>63</sup> One of these was William A. Jackson, escaped slave and former coachman to Jefferson Davis. Jackson spoke at meetings and gatherings throughout 1863. He spoke of his life as a slave, of the Confederate leaders he had known and of life in Richmond. What made him particularly popular and effective was his experience and knowledge of Jefferson Davis, along with his resolve to escape slavery even given his comfortable and prominent position for a slave.<sup>64</sup>

Another influential speaker sent by Lincoln across the Atlantic was Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriett Beecher Stowe. Beecher was an accomplished orator, abolitionist, and evangelical. He began his lecture tour as news of the Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg arrived. Everywhere he went Beecher spoke to packed houses about anti-slavery and democracy as a religious concept. In his speech before the textile workers of Manchester, he noted the battle



for human rights the Union had been fighting and traced the connection between American and British democracy.<sup>65</sup> A Northern victory could only mean more democracy and more liberty. The South, on the other hand, was fighting out of a fear of losing its political power and, thus, its ability to protect and extend slavery. Slavery had been the reason for the war all along, he concluded.<sup>66</sup>

With the Emancipation Proclamation, the North found a public diplomacy message which resonated with the target audiences in Europe. As the shift in emphasis of message and means of delivering it indicated, Lincoln realized the potential that public diplomacy held when the right message was being delivered. In the language of public diplomacy, the North had a good message to deliver.

### **Union Public Diplomacy in the Civil War The Communications Environment**

There were many means available for delivering this message, particularly in Britain. The communications environment of the time, while not as instantaneous or far-reaching as later means such as the radio, television and the internet, was still capable of reaching large numbers of persons and was open to a significant degree to carrying the Union's message. The principal means of communication included newspapers, broadsides or pamphlets, public rallies, and smaller organized organizational and social gatherings.

Newspapers were plentiful in both Britain and France. They were also not above slanting their content to reflect their opinion. In France, where some censorship prevailed, this was more difficult but in Britain the North could find ready outlets for its informational campaign.<sup>67</sup> The journalistic ethics of the time did not preclude journalists or publishers being paid subsidies in exchange for what news was reported from America and what opinions were expressed in editorial content. It was also normal that stories or editorials in one paper would be copied verbatim and without attribution in another.<sup>68</sup>

The Union took full advantage of the availability of the press in Britain and France. Henry Adams contributed pieces anonymously to various pro-Union newspapers in Britain, at least until he was embarrassed by having his identity as the author revealed by pro-Southern newspapers.<sup>69</sup> When Thurlow Weed traveled to Europe on his special mission in late 1861 and early 1862, he took funds to procure press favors in Europe and likewise wrote for the press in both Britain and France.<sup>70</sup> At the time the Trent affair was breaking, an open letter appearing under the signature of General Winfield Scott, who was in Europe at the time, suggested that the Union captain who removed the commissioners from the *Trent* was acting without authority of the government and predicted the release of the commissioners." This letter was credited with having some effect on the peaceful resolution of the matter.<sup>71</sup> What the Union did not have in terms of resources was its own newspaper in London like the Southern funded

and operated *The Index*. However, London's *American*, established and subsidized by American George Train, helped fill this void. The Lincoln administration disavowed connection with the *American* and George Train. Henry Adams claimed to ignore it because of its openly outrageous writings on the war. Train, though, claimed that at least on one point, Seward secretly sent him funds to keep the paper in circulation.<sup>72</sup>

As part of his duties to oversee informational activities in Europe, John Bigelow cultivated and subsidized members of the French press in order to get the Union message to the French public.<sup>73</sup> Bigelow believed he should not buy the opinion of the French press but that he should engender a willingness in the French press to listen to the Union side before passing judgment on events. In explaining himself to Secretary Seward, he said: "When I give an editor a document I can give him at the same time the light by which it is to be read and interpreted. . . . This too is the only means I have of placing the press under obligation to me and of establishing claims upon their courtesy."<sup>74</sup> Bigelow also wrote anonymous articles for the French press denouncing French suggestions of a truce and providing a biographical sketch of Secretary of State William Seward.<sup>75</sup>

Union agents also distributed fact sheets to the information-starved foreign press. These filtered the information that was coming from America, using Northern news stories, correspondence and official documents that projected the Union in a favorable light. Similarly, Union agents would ensure that Southern newspaper articles, correspondence and official documents which were critical of the South, the war effort, or Southern support for the war were disseminated.<sup>76</sup>

Public diplomacy efforts went beyond the foreign press. It was in these alternate forums that the Union was most successful in getting its message across. The public could be reached through organized public and private meetings, rallies, debates, street corner gatherings, pamphlets and other publications. In Britain, Northern and Southern support organizations and societies, such as the Union and Emancipation Society and Southern Independence Association, began to form in 1862, some with the aid and financial backing of Union or Confederate agents.<sup>77</sup> These organizations had volunteers, paid employees and agents who expended great effort to get out their message. Little of the activities of these organizations were spontaneous and most of it was carefully designed and planned around events, such as Parliamentary debate, to maximize its political impact.<sup>78</sup>

The North had many sources for providing information to these venues. Seward originally believed that dissemination of information should come from consuls who either worked information campaigns as part of their consular duties or were placed in the position of consul as a front to their true function to oversee propaganda. John Bigelow was in the latter situation. He authored a reference book published in France on the United States, *Les Etats-Unis d'Amérique en 1863*, covering all aspects of American society. He likewise arranged

for publication of a French edition of Fanny Kemble's slave narrative, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.<sup>79</sup>

Freeman Morse of the London legation and Thomas Dudley, consul in Liverpool, coordinated political activity throughout England and Scotland. They worked closely with the pro-Union societies and their agents, helping to set them up, providing funding for pamphlets and meetings, and assisting in organizing meetings and rallies.<sup>80</sup> Charles Adams met with pro-Union societies and saw that memorials and petitions generated by these groups made their way to Washington and received appropriate response.<sup>81</sup>

Great meetings were held by pro-Union societies which, in the words of one historian, "provided a kind of people-to-people contact that spoke to traditions of independent political activity across national boundaries."<sup>82</sup> Henry Adams wrote to his brother of one of these meetings and detailed the charged atmosphere in support of the Union cause generated by the meeting.<sup>83</sup> American agents were personally involved in organizing and funding some of these meetings.<sup>84</sup> Freeman Morse concluded that the Union's money and his time had been "well spent" and that the results were better than he had hoped.<sup>85</sup>

Seward also sent special missions abroad as a counterweight to "the machinations of the agents of treason against the United States."<sup>86</sup> First of these was the dispatch of a trio of unofficial envoys at the end of 1861, consisting of political advisor and newspaper publisher Thurlow Weed, Catholic Archbishop John Hughes and Episcopalian Bishop Charles McIlvaine. They remained in Europe through the middle of 1862. Weed dealt directly with the press and prominent persons in Britain and France. Archbishop Hughes worked on support from the French, the Irish and the Catholic Church. Bishop McIlvaine was active among the British clergy, but he also had well-placed connections in British government. He spent much of his time speaking to private and semi-private meetings of British clergy, preaching sermons in churches throughout the country, and attending dinners and social gatherings of prominent Britains. McIlvaine explained the Union cause to all the groups he met but he appears to have interspersed this with religious topics and to have given a religious cast to what the Union was seeking to achieve in the war.<sup>87</sup>

Besides Weed, Hughes and McIlvaine, others also went for the express purpose of performing public diplomacy.<sup>88</sup> Among these was Robert James Walker, sent to Britain to whip up support against efforts by the Confederates to raise money through the sale of bonds. Walker's attacks on Jefferson Davis ultimately backfired but his efforts are worth noting for one method of distributing his anti-Davis materials—he dropped his pamphlets from a hot air balloon as it sailed over Britain.<sup>89</sup>

As noted in the discussion of the Union public diplomacy message, public lecturers reached audiences large and small, especially in England. Bishop McIlvaine preached in British churches and spoke

to small religious gatherings. Freed blacks and escaped slaves were said to have “had a profound influence on the direction of British public debate about the Civil War.”<sup>90</sup> These speakers played an important role in the informational campaign as they put a human face on Southern slavery.<sup>91</sup> Other lecturers were well-known and came with a following, such as Henry Ward Beecher, whose connection to abolitionism in its own right as well as his family relationship to Harriett Beecher Stowe was well known. Fanny Kemble also made the lecture circuit, her notoriety and popularity attributable both to her standing as an actress and to the published memoir of her time as a slave with its details of the sexual relationship forced on her by her owner.<sup>92</sup> Others were popular and effective speakers because of who they had known, most notably Jefferson Davis’ former coachman.

In contrast to the South, the North utilized a broad spectrum of the communications environment to deliver its public diplomacy message.

## Conclusion

Without consciously doing it, the Union effectively conducted public diplomacy in the Civil War. It won the information battle that was being waged to “win the hearts and minds” of the European public and, thereby, influence foreign policy. To be sure, the campaign was not always perfect in its implementation or its message. Indeed, it was not until the North could put itself into the position of openly discussing slavery as a cause and anti-slavery as an aim of the war that its efforts would bear fruition. At the same time, public diplomacy is about projecting images of one’s culture and identity. The North may not have been openly talking slavery and emancipation but the message was still being conveyed unofficially and a positive image of the North implanted in the mind of the European publics. Nor can it be said that the Union suffered from a problem of poor delivery of the right message. Its efforts may not have been as organized or direct as those of the South, represented by Henry Hotze’s *The Index*. The Union, though, still reached the European public, especially in Britain, and may have done so through more effective forums than newspapers. Its message was delivered at the level of the public to which it was directed.

Public diplomacy is not the end-all in bringing about foreign policies of foreign nations. It is a tool, a contributor to policy decision-making that works indirectly through the public in the foreign nation. The Union had both the right message and the right means of delivering its message. It might not have been master of the art of public diplomacy but it was, in the end, effective at it.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ben D. Mor, “Public Diplomacy in Grand Strategy,” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 2, no. 2 (April 2006), 157. For a general discussion of public diplomacy, Joseph S. Nye,

Jr., "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, no. 1 (March, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Sources for the general discussion for foreign policy of both North and South in the war are (unless specifically cited): George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press 2008); Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2010); Jay Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press 1997); Howard Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom: The Union and Slavery in the Diplomacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press 1999); R.J.M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 2001); and Charles M. Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press 2000).

<sup>3</sup> General sources on Confederate diplomacy on which this paragraph are based are Hubbard, *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*; Charles P. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe 1861-1865* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press 1969); and Lonnie A. Burnett, *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist: Selected Writings on Revolution, Recognition and Race* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 11-12; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 129.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 123.

<sup>7</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 100.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> The story of Hotze and *The Index* is told in detail in Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe* and Burnett, *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist*.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick W. 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): 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Joseph A. Fry, *Henry S. Sanford: Diplomacy and Business in Nineteenth-Century America* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1982), 33; Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe*, 24-36.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Margaret Clapp, *Forgotten First Citizen: John Bigelow* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1947), 150-151. John Bigelow filled this position.

<sup>17</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 63.

<sup>18</sup> Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 182.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, *Divided Hearts*, 123. See, also, Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 171-172, for a discussion of Parliamentary consideration of public opinion on issue of intervention.

<sup>21</sup> George M. Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press 1997), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Ross, "Public Diplomacy Comes of Age," 77.

<sup>23</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 17; Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 3, 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 27.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 169-170.

<sup>30</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 17, 27.

<sup>31</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 22, 33; Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 39; R.J.M. Blackett, "Pressure From Without: African Americans, British Public

Opinion, and Civil War Diplomacy," in *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, Robert E. May, ed. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press 1995): 72; Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 57, 63.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 116.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-156.

<sup>35</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 10, 32-33; Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 208-209.

<sup>36</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 32-33; Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 154-156; Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 227-228.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 154 & 156; Jones, *Diplomacy in Blue and Gray*, 279-280, 301.

<sup>38</sup> Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 625-626.

<sup>39</sup> Henry Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Dec. 20, 1861, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861-1865, vol. 1*, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed. (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1920), 88-89.

<sup>40</sup> Charles F. Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Dec. 25, 1862, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 220-221.

<sup>41</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 4-5.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 43-44; Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 580.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 39.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe*, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Jan. 30, 1863, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 251.

<sup>46</sup> Charles F. Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Jan. 23, 1863, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 236; Charles F. Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Feb. 27, 1863, in *Ibid.*, 254; Charles F. Adams to William F. Seward, quoted in Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 157.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Weed to Seward, Apr. 18, 1862, in Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 86.

<sup>48</sup> Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 57.

<sup>49</sup> Blackett, "Pressure from Without;" Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 187-191.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 208.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 195. Official Union diplomats distanced themselves from Train because of his rhetoric and antics, which included publishing the names of British firms believed to be supplying war materiel and supplies to the Confederates and breaking out in song at public meetings. *Ibid.*, 104-106, 164.

<sup>53</sup> The letter and Lincoln's response is most fully discussed in Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 277-279.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 278-279.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 86, 90.

<sup>57</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 63.

<sup>58</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 260-262.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 309. Kemble was a renowned international actress of her day in Europe.

<sup>61</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 119; Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 285.

<sup>62</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 119.

<sup>63</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 288.

<sup>64</sup> Blackett, "Pressure from Without" 72-73.

<sup>65</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 336.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>67</sup> Clapp, *Forgotten First Citizen*, 151.

<sup>68</sup> Blackburn, *French Newspaper Opinion*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe*, 26; Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 104; Henry Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., January 10, 1862, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 101, and Henry Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., January 22, 1862, *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 134.

- <sup>71</sup> Clapp, *Forgotten First Citizen*, 157-159. The letter was ghost-written for Scott by John Bigelow. *Ibid.*, 157.
- <sup>72</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 104.
- <sup>73</sup> Clapp, *Forgotten First Citizen*, 155-156, 170, 172-173.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182, 191.
- <sup>76</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 153.
- <sup>77</sup> An extensive discussion of these organizations is in Blackett, *Divided Hearts*.
- <sup>78</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 170.
- <sup>79</sup> Clapp, *Forgotten First Citizen*, 184-186, 189.
- <sup>80</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 134-135.
- <sup>81</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 134; Seward, *Seward at Washington*, 158.
- <sup>82</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 157.
- <sup>83</sup> Henry Adams to Charles Adams, Jr., Jan. 27, 1863, in *A Cycle of Adams Letters*, 244-245.
- <sup>84</sup> Jones, *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom*, 119; Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 280.
- <sup>85</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 280.
- <sup>86</sup> Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 131.
- <sup>87</sup> Sources for the Weed, Hughes and McIlvaine mission are: August C. Miller, "Lincoln's Good-Will Ambassadors," *Lincoln Herald* 50, no. 2 (June 1948), 17-20; John Herbert Kiger, "Federal Governmental Propaganda in Great Britain During the American Civil War," *Historical Outlook*, 19, no. 5 (May 1928), 204-205; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 131-132; Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 156-161; James B. Bell, "Charles P. McIlvaine," in *For the Union: Ohio Leaders in the Civil War*, Kenneth W. Wheeler, ed. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press 1968), 235-238; and various discussion and letters from Seward, *Seward at Washington 1861-1872*, 17-86.
- <sup>88</sup> Generally, Miller, "Lincoln's Good-Will Ambassadors"; Kiger, "Federal Governmental Propaganda in Great Britain."
- <sup>89</sup> Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda*, 77-78; Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 314.
- <sup>90</sup> Blackett, "Pressure from Without," 73.
- <sup>91</sup> Generally on this topic, see Blackett, "Pressure From Without"; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 187-191.
- <sup>92</sup> Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy*, 309.

## Bibliography

- Bell, James B. "Charles P. McIlvaine." In *For the Union: Ohio Leaders in the Civil War*, Kenneth W. Wheeler, ed. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1968: 235-238.
- Blackburn, George M. *French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1997.
- Blackett, R. J. M. *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War*. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 2001.
- "Pressure From Without: African Americans, British Public Opinion, and Civil War Diplomacy." *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, Robert E. May, ed. (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1995: 69-100.
- Burnett, Lonnie A. *Henry Hotze, Confederate Propagandist: Selected Writings on Revolution, Recognition and Race*. Tuscaloosa, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 2005.
- Campbell, Duncan Andrew. *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003.
- Clapp, Margaret. *Forgotten First Citizen: John Bigelow*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947.

- Cull, Nicholas J. "Public Diplomacy' Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase." USC Center on Public Diplomacy (undated). <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/gullion.pdf> (accessed July 31, 2011).
- Cullop, Charles P. *Confederate Propaganda in Europe: 1861-1865*. Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1969.
- DeLeon, Edwin. *Confederate Diplomacy Abroad*. William C. Davis, ed. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2005.
- Ford, Worthington Chauncey., ed. *A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861-1865, vol. 1*. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920.
- Fry, Joseph A. *Henry S. Sanford: Diplomacy and Business in Nineteenth-Century America*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1982.
- Heiman, Bruce A. and Senem E. Ozer. "Determinants of US Public Diplomacy Success/Failure: Structural and Institutional Elements." *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 5 (2009). <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/pb/journal/v5/n1/abs/pb200829a.html> (accessed July 27, 2011).
- Herring, George C. *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Hubbard, Charles M. *The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2000.
- Jones, Howard. *Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom: The Union and Slavery in the Diplomacy of the Civil War*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.
- . *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Relations*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Kiger, John Herbert. "Federal Governmental Propaganda in Great Britain During the American Civil War." *Historical Outlook*, 19 (1928): 204-209.
- Miller, August C. "Lincoln's Good-Will Ambassadors." *Lincoln Herald* 50 (1948): 17-20.
- Monaghan, Jay. *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Policy: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*. Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- Mor, Ben D. "Public Diplomacy in Grand Strategy." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2 (2006): 157-176.
- Nye, Joseph S., Jr. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 94-109.
- Ross, Christopher. "Public Diplomacy Comes of Age." *The Washington Quarterly*, 25 (2002): 75-83.
- Seward, Frederick W. *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.
- Tom Rynard is a candidate for the Masters of Arts in American History at American Public University. He received his Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of Kansas and his law degree from the University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Law. His studies in history at the undergraduate and graduate level have focused on diplomatic history and American cultural history. He is currently working on his Masters thesis on the photojournalism of Jessie Tarbox Beals at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St.*



*Louis World's Fair) of 1904. He has been both a practicing lawyer in Jefferson City, Missouri, and a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps of the United States Army for over 25 years. His emphasis and experience in the JAG Corps has been in the area of international law and host nation relations. He has numerous publications in the legal field and a series of short stories in a mystery e-magazine.*