Review Article

Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Civil War, and the International Press

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Abstract: Most studies of Abraham Lincoln and the press focus on how American newspapers covered the sixteenth president of the United States. In this study, the author looks at how the international press covered Lincoln. Closest in proximity was the Canadian press, which tended to side with the Union but at the same time was not totally unsympathetic with the Confederacy because it saw the South as a countervailing influence on the growing U.S. military apparatus. Indeed, once the war ended, the Hamilton Spectator began to worry that the Americans might be more tempted to invade their neighbor to the north because it now possessed the strongest army and navy in the world. The British journalist William Howard Russell likewise had a somewhat complex view of the war. The Times of London correspondent found Lincoln to be more sophisticated than the country bumpkin stereotype that played fairly well in the London press. Russell sided with the Union, but he was somewhat smitten with the South in a social sense, as he observed the Confederates really did like the monarchy and aristocracy of Great Britain. In other countries, the key issue of Lincoln's presidency was economics. The Indian press followed the international cotton trade and saw the Union blockade of the South as an opportunity to export more and more Indian cotton. Thus, Indian journals paid attention to the quality of the cotton crop, as well as British incentive programs to get Indian farmers to expand their production of the fiber. Thus, this study examines the various ways the international press saw Lincoln and the central issue of his administration, the internecine war. This study shows that international journalism was mainly concerned with the strategic implications of the war, while interest in Lincoln's personality and statesmanship were secondary.

Keywords: Canada; cartoons; Germany; Great Britain; Greeley, Horace; India, journalism; Lincoln, Abraham; magazines; newspapers; Punch; Times of London; and U.S. Civil War.

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The Canadian press was the closest in proximity of the international newspapers and magazines covering Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, and the Canadians had a major stake in the war on both economic and political levels. They were concerned about what would happen south of their border, and typical of Canadian newspaper coverage came from The True Royalist and Weekly Intelligencer in Windsor, Ontario. Most of its coverage came from telegraph reports or letters written from citizens in New York or articles reprinted from the New York Tribune, Horace Greeley's generally pro-Lincoln newspaper. The Windsor journal, which had a religious bent, advocated emancipation and looked for any story that promoted that objective. For example, one story discussed a Missouri man of approximately seventy who had moved his plantation to Bolivia, where he planned to free his slaves upon his death. He claimed that if he had stayed in Missouri, his will would have been voided and his slaves would not have been given their freedom. The editor, A.R. Green, remarked: “Sensible old man and may God let him live till four score as an example to others” (Windsor True Royalist and Weekly Intelligencer, 1861).

The Newmarket (Ontario) Era and North York General Intelligencer and Advertiser ran wire reports from the United States under the headline “American Revolution.” It would also run official government documents from both Washington and Richmond, such as printing the Emancipation
the European powers to intercede and stop the carnage. The bloodbath of Antietam having just occurred, the Hamilton editors wondered if it was not time for America is fast approaching that mixture of unhealthy corruption and cruelty that has long been submerged in the wild passion that the war has conjured up, and the condition of North and South. There was very little commentary about the American conflict.

That was not the case with the Hamilton Weekly Spectator in Ontario. The Weekly Spectator ran both news and editorial stories about the Civil War. It noted that First Bull Run had been initially proclaimed a Union victory by the Northern press, but that those journalists had “received a sudden shock” when news of a reversal reached the newsrooms of the North. “Such a rout was never before recorded,” observed the Spectator’s editors in the August 8, 1861, weekly edition, using the hyperbole that often characterized Civil War commentary (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). A much-anticipated quick Union triumph in the war had not materialized. The Weekly Spectator goes on to say that the “demoralization of the Northern army was complete,” and the expectation of the editors was that there would be no Union Army rally (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). As it often did, the Hamilton newspaper turned the actual battle coverage over to a newspaper from the U.S. eastern coast—in this case from the New York Commercial. Obviously, a newspaper from Hamilton, Ontario, did not have the financial resources to send its own reporter to the front, and plenty of American newspapers were available via the telegraph or through postal exchange.

In the following weeks, the Weekly Spectator editors observed that several Northern newspapers were concerned that some Canadian journalists were siding with the Confederacy. The Hamilton journalists, generally conservative, noted that most Canadians supported the Union, but that some were repulsed by overconfidence, particularly in the Northern press. The Hamilton editors added that verbal abuse of Canadians by the Northern newspapers only intensified a newfound sympathy for the South. They continued: “The Southerners considered themselves oppressed, whether justly or not we cannot say: at all events they rebelled against the constituted authority, and for several months have maintained a defiant position, beating the federal troops in the first great battle” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). Having long memories, the Canadian editors claimed the Southerners were belligerents who should not be despaired. Furthermore, the Hamilton journalists wrote that some of the disaffection for the Union came from American encouragement of the Canadian rebels against the British authorities in 1837 and 1838.

In the September 18 edition of the Weekly Spectator, the editor described the conflict as a “war between two nations de facto” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). They added that the American Civil War seemed more like a colony trying to remove itself from the mother country. In other words, the Hamilton editors believed the South should have been recognized as an independent nation based on the fact that the Confederate Army had become a “formidable” power. Such a frame by the Hamilton editors favored the South in that they saw it as legitimate country. Yet no such legitimacy was recognized by the Canadian government, which of course was still part of the British empire and took its orders from London.

In 1862, the Hamilton newspaper would call the Civil War “The American Revolution.” A typical headline might be “Progress of the American Invasion” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). The Canadian journal noted that many citizens in Baltimore, Maryland, believed General Robert E. Lee’s invasion of the North would result in his army occupying their city. The next week, the editors of the Spectator observed: “All we know of this war, every glimpse we obtain of the state of affairs in the Border States, shews that men’s feelings are boiling over into frenzy, that the restraints of civilization, the charities of domestic life, the strong ties of blood, the gentle influences of religion, are all submerged in the wild passion that the war has conjured up, and the condition of North America is fast approaching that mixture of unhealthy corruption and cruelty that has long been the disgrace of the Southern portion of the continent” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). With the bloodbath of Antietam having just occurred, the Hamilton editors wondered if it was not time for the European powers to intercede and stop the carnage.

The following week they took President Lincoln to task for his Emancipation Proclamation, calling it a “foolish step likely to incur the hatred of those who have hitherto been waving; and the probability is that it will strengthen the hands of Confederacy” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861). The Hamilton journalists added that the slave owners in the Border States would now turn on Lincoln and the Republicans. They also wondered why emancipation had become the proper policy at this point of the war after Lincoln previously had overturned General John C. Fremont’s liberation policy in Missouri. “The freedom of the slave should have been the first object of the war; emancipation should have been the declared policy of the Government from the beginning in order to be successful,” the editors wrote (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861).

On the other hand, that same week, the Hamilton editors published a letter from a New Yorker who inveighed against the pro-abolitionist newspapers in his city for criticizing the Lincoln administration and the military for not finishing off Lee after Antietam. The letter writer noted that Lincoln had come to power in part because of Republican newspapers and that the responsibility of “subjugating the South” was an “impossible undertaking” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861).
He added that Lincoln’s administration “has done all that could have been done under the circumstances,” and “I do not believe any set of men could have been found in the United States who would have met and struggled against this difficulty with greater success than Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet have” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1861).

The Emancipation Proclamation came up again in January after it took effect on the first day of 1863. The Hamilton editors criticized Lincoln for not freeing all the slaves, including those in the Border States. They remarked that the American president had “no desire of extending sympathy to the black man” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). They feared freeing the slaves in the rebellious states would create a “great ferment in the South” where the government would adopt extreme policies to discourage slaves from escaping (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863).

The Canadian newspaper would continue characterize the American conflict as two wars: (1) the North’s attempt to overcome the Confederacy and return the South to the Union; and (2) the war between moderates and abolitionists in the North. In July 1863, the Hamilton newspaper reported that Confederate Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton had unconditionally surrendered to Major General Ulysses S. Grant at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Similarly, the Spectator printed the dispatch from Union Navy Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles that Vicksburg had in fact fallen. That same edition of the newspaper had reports of Lee retreating from Gettysburg. “Reports from the front are very cheering” for the Union, the newspaper reported (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). The war reporting indicated that matters were going very well for the Union in the summer of 1863.

At the same time, the Spectator editors speculated on whether or not Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the king of France, would aid the Confederacy, but they doubted he would become involved in the American conflict, in part because they claimed there was a glut of cotton on the international market despite the Union blockade of the South. They did claim that the French leader wanted to possess Mexico, although that bid would ultimately fail, and, if he had conquered that nation, he also planned to annex Texas and Louisiana because those states had climates favorable for cotton production. Still, the Hamilton scribes concluded that fears of French intervention in the Civil War were “entirely groundless” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863).

On the matter of civil liberties, the Hamilton Spectator editors decried Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus. “The Union is worth nothing if the Constitution be disregarded” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). The Hamilton writers maintained that “President Lincoln and his advisers have grossly and willfully violated” those laws that protect the civil rights enshrined by the Constitution, and “it is this deliberate trampling on the Constitution which is opening the eyes of all Conservative men in the States to the true character of the administration” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). According to the Spectator, the conservatives—that is, the Democrats—had come to see Lincoln as a dictator and that a “lawless faction now ruled” the United States (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). The Canadians ridiculed the abolitionist press for holding that the Constitution only applied during fair weather, not “for stormy times.” They agreed with the Democrats who said that Lincoln was operating outside the framework of the founding fathers.

As for the British press, it has been riveted by the American conflict going back to its antecedents, including Lincoln’s election. the Saturday Analyst and Leader of London noted that Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin had been elected president and vice president of the United States. “The new president’s platform is anti-slavery,” the Saturday Analyst and Leader noted succinctly (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1863). Another platform for coverage of the American Civil War came in broadsides. For instance, a Scottish broadside, in verse, titled “The Irish Brigade in America” applauded the sons of Ireland who were “fighting in the American states to put down slavery/Far from our native shore and the friends you do adore,/In the loyal cause of freedom, on the American shore” (“Irish Brigade in America,” 1863).

Punch, the humor magazine, recognized the Lincoln election with a cartoon of a slave asking his master if he had read the newspapers yet. The slave is holding a newspaper with the headline “Lincoln Elected.” In a satirical paragraph underneath the cartoon, the Punch editors delighted in reporting that South Carolina had ordered a “solemn day of humiliation, on which all the slaves in the state were to be flogged, and all the copies of the Scriptures burned” (Punch, 1861). The Illustrated London News encouraged the North to let the South secede, using the precedent of Austria nearly bankrupting itself in its attempt to deal with the Italian independence movement (Foreman, 2010).

After Fort Sumter, Punch featured a cartoon of Lincoln sitting in a rocking chair and stoking a fire. Headlined “The American Difficulty,” the caption reads: “What a Nice White House This Would Be, If It Were Not for the Blacks” (Punch, 1861). Two weeks later, Punch’s American cartoon (a fairly regular occurrence in the magazine) saw two whites (“American Gladiators”) fighting in front of a
black Caesar and his black countrymen at the Forum (Punch, 1861).

William Howard Russell of the Times of London was a leading international reporter covering Lincoln and the Civil War, at least in the early years of the war. A veteran war correspondent, Russell had covered the Crimean War and taken advantage of the relatively new technology of the telegraph to send his stories back home instantaneously. His reporting from the Crimea did not hide the violent truth of warfare. Not only did he write accurately of how battles took place, he also described the inadequacies of military hospitals.

Like most correspondence of that period, Russell wrote each article as a letter, in his case to John Delane, the editor of the Times. In addition to his work covering the Crimean War, he also went to India and wrote about the aftermath of the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion in 1858 and 1859 (Masur, 2011). His descriptive writing there was often vivid: “Tortured by flies, smothered by an atmosphere of dust, prostrated by heat, my sufferings were augmented by loss of blood, by recent leech bites, and by a fresh blister” (Russell, 1860).

In America, Russell's Civil War coverage in 1861 and 1862 is most memorable for its descriptive writing, for how he saw Lincoln and Americans in general, and his observations about the culture North and South. He did cover battles, or at least he tried to, in his inimitable way. However, he was interested in more than merely war in tactical terms. His impression of what the men in Lincoln's White House were thinking in his first letter during the spring of 1861 just after the inauguration was that the Southern independence movement would be short-lived. He wrote: “The friends of the existing administration, on the whole, regard the Secession as a temporary aberration” and that the South would come to its senses and return to the Union (Russell, 1861). Those administration allies also told Russell that the British and other foreign powers needed to stay out of the conflict and not recognize the South. Yet, when he talked to friends of the new Confederacy, Russell heard something different—that the South would never compromise and return to the Union. Russell also noted that Sam Houston in Texas had opposed secession. The next letter would show the British reporter being more certain that the South's separation was permanent, at least until “terminated by war” or a “decay arising from inherent vices in their system” (Russell, 1861).

Russell's first five words regarding the war were these: “Sumter has fallen at last” (Russell, 1861). This concise sentence belied his usual verbosity, but he was a journalist with a sharp eye for detail, mainly because he preferred to get out of Washington and go to the scene of the war. A conservative but an opponent of slavery and therefore pro-Union, Russell started by sailing for Charleston, South Carolina, with the object of finding for himself what was actually happening in the South. Russell, who was paid £1,200 plus expenses as a Times correspondent during the war, was not there for the fall of Fort Sumter, arriving a week later. He counted soldier strength, the number of officers, the kind and number of arms, described the colors of the uniforms, and commented on the quality of the men serving in the South Carolina militias.

Russell's journalistic approach was to get out and talk to the people, and this was not a time of public relations, as we know it today. There were few if any official government sources or full-time media relations specialists. He tried not to take sides, but rather to report what he learned in his conversations with the people he met on the ground. He formed his judgments of what was happening in large part due to these conversations as well as his own personal observations. He would not rely on the propaganda of a government bureaucrat in either capital. By nature, he was critical and would freely express his opinion on how well officers performed in battle.

In those early dispatches from the Palmetto State, Russell, who was Irish, talked to South Carolinians and came away with the opinion that they would be happy to be a monarchy. Russell, who had studied law and been admitted to the bar, wrote: “The admiration for monarchical institutions on the English model, for privileged classes, and for a landed aristocracy and gentry, is undisguised and apparently genuine” (Russell, 1861).

The Times reporter, with his critical eye, did not try to spin his reporting. When he could qualify, he qualified. Early on, Lincoln courted Russell, calling the London Times “one of the greatest powers in the world—in fact, I don't know anything which has much more power, except perhaps the Mississippi” (Russell, 1863). Russell left the meeting with Lincoln “agreeably impressed with his shrewdness, humor, and natural sagacity” (Russell, 1863). Russell also tried to interpret Seward, whom the British journalist called a man “rejoicing in power, given to perorate and to oracular utterances” and that the Secretary of State relished “state mysteries” (Russell, 1863). Seward used Russell to let the European powers know through the Times of London that the United States would be dissatisfied with any of them recognizing the Confederacy (Stahr, 2012).

Lincoln and his secretaries closely read Russell's Times letters, including his description of the South after Fort Sumter. However, when First Bull Run occurred on July 21, 1861, the British
journalist called it as he saw it, including the “stampede” from Manassas back to Washington (Russell, New York, 1861). Russell wrote: "What occurred on the hill I cannot say, but all the road from Centreville for miles presented such a sight as can only be witnessed in the track of the runaways of an utterly demoralized army" (Russell, New York, 1861). Clearly, the Union Army, green and undisciplined, had lost the battle, and it ran chaotically back to the capital. For example, Russell described ambulances full of uninjured men—the kind of reporting that made it sound like the Union Army did not know how to act like a professional fighting organization. Russell also reported a soldier told him that his commanding officer had told all in his regiment to flee for their lives. For Russell, the behavior of the Union soldiers was disgraceful. It must be noted that Henry R. Raymond, editor of the New York Times, also covered the battle and was similarly disgusted with the Union retreat (Andrews, 1955).

This straight-on reporting incurred Lincoln's wrath, as well as that of the Republican press. One criticism is that he was never closer than three miles from the battle, meaning that he did not exactly have a hands-on experience at Manassas. Joined by a member of British legation to Washington, Russell watched the battle on a hill at Centreville, Virginia. General Irvin McDowell, who was in charge of the Union Army at the Battle of Bull Run, had invited Russell to accompany him to the front for the battle, but the London journalist decided to go alone because the Army did not give him what he seemed the proper provisions. He rented a two-horse in Washington and made his way to Manassas fully fortified with tea, wine, sandwiches, and cigars (Starr, 1987). This rather opulent lifestyle did not endear Russell to American journalists, some of who accused him of somehow causing the very panic that he described in the aftermath of Bull Run. Indeed, both American journalists and Russell were nearly part of the story that July day, as they were swept in the panic retreat of the Union Army. Russell for one was disgusted that in the retreat the journalists' materials were being tossed aside in the panic. Yet in no way did he cause the retreat. He was simply stuck in the middle of it.

In addition to being called a “paid slanderer” by one critic of his journalism, Russell received death threats. Russell countered: "Let the American journals tell their stories their own way. I have told mine as I know it" (Russell, New York, 1861). Thereafter, the administration made it more difficult for Russell to cover the war. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton barred him for military camps. Russell directly appealed to Lincoln to let him return to the front with the Union Army, but the president denied the request.

Russell would be gone by 1862, but the Times continued to be a thorn in the Union's side. The newspaper was stunned by the “exceedingly remarkable” result of Antietam on September 1861—a narrow Union victory that forced the invading Lee to return to Virginia; the Times observed that “the Confederates have suffered their first important check exactly at the period when they might have been thought most assured of victory” (London Times, 1862). Antietam came only a month after another Union defeat at Bull Run, and Great Britain was getting closer to intervention. However, Antietam, the bloodiest battle in U.S. history to that point, made the British government reconsider, and at that point Prime Minister Lord Palmerston backed down from becoming militarily involved in the American conflict.

Having it both ways, the Times, which had formerly condemned the administration for not making the first cause of the war slavery, would curse Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation as being an incitement to slave revolution. The Times wrote that Lincoln’s proclamation appealed to the “pleasures of spoil and of yet the gratification of yet fiercer instincts,” implying that slaves would act in a lawless fashion in their freedom, assaulting their former owners and going on a crime spree (London Times, 1862). Lincoln, meanwhile, would let it all happen and not prosecute criminal acts. This would be his revenge on the white slave holders of the South. On the other hand, the London Morning Star characterized the Emancipation Proclamation as a “gigantic stride in the paths of Christian and civilized progress” (London Morning Star, 1862).

Northern newspapers, especially Democratic journals, often ran long pieces from the Times, solidifying the sense in Washington that it was more pro-Southern than pro-Union. In September 1863, it portrayed Lincoln as follows: “That such a man should have been called upon to guide the destinies of a mighty nation during a grand historical crisis is surely strange enough, but that he should have blundered and vacillated he has, without for a moment losing confidence in himself, or altogether forfeiting that of his countrymen, is stranger still (London Times, 1862). Ironically, those words were published on the very same day as Antietam, the narrow victory that gave Lincoln the opportunity to make public is Emancipation Proclamation.

Another British writer whose coverage of the war received sizable audiences was that of Edward Dicey, who worked for both the London Spectator and Macmillan's Magazine. Dicey visited America 1862, and the highlight of his trip was the Union Army's failed Peninsula Campaign. Dicey wrote the following about Lincoln. “You would never say he is a gentleman,” Dicey wrote. “You
would still less say he was not one ... Still there is about him a complete absence of pretension, and an evident desire to be courteous to everybody, which is the essence, if not the outward form, of high breeding” (Dicey, 1863).

The London Spectator correspondent also wrote at length about Russell’s treatment in America. Dicey singled out Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton for blocking Russell from the Army of the Potomac. Dicey wrote that no other Cabinet official was involved. The British journalist also noted that he had heard that Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward, and General George B. McClellan all opposed Russell being banned from the army, although Lincoln and Seward did not want to over-ride Stanton.

In defense of Russell, Dicey observed that nothing the Times reporter wrote could have given aid to the Confederacy. He also noted that the London Times was not even available in Washington, although it could be found in New York and Boston. Moreover, those American newspapers that re-printed Russell’s long letters never did so in full, often picking out the pieces that might later be easiest to condemn as being anti-Union. Dicey maintained the New York Herald was the most virulently anti-Russell, and because the Herald was so highly circulated public opinion turned on the British writer. Dicey added: “There was a general, though unfounded impression, among the American people, that his whole mission was to misrepresent their country, depreciate their victories, vilify their public men, and support, indirectly, the cause of disunion, by creating an unfavourable feeling towards the North throughout England” (Dicey, 1863).

Slavery was a key issue for Dicey. He wrote at length about both slavery and Lincoln’s desire to emancipate the slaves. Dicey said that the English—who had outlawed slavery in 1834—generally believed slavery was not the key issue in the war. However, he ascertained the exact opposite from his observation in America: that slavery was the issue. Furthermore, Dicey observed: “The national vote which brought Lincoln into power was a vote against the extension of slavery, not a vote against its maintenance” (Dicey, 1863). After Fort Sumter, preserving the Union became the object of the war because the united country was an “overwhelming national instinct” for Americans, Dicey remarked. The British journalist noted that there was tension for the Northerner because on the one hand the whole reason for putting down the rebellion was enshrined in the Constitution and yet, on the other hand, ending slavery without a constitutional amendment went against the law-and-order approach the Republicans championed. “To the written letter of the Constitution they clung with a, to me, surprising tenacity—partly, I fancy, because the national reverence for the founders of the Union is a matter of almost religious sentiment,” Dicey wrote of the Americans (DICEY, 1863).

Writing after Lincoln in March 1862 had floated an idea of gradual emancipation in the rebellious states, Dicey said that he thought the abolitionist wing of the Republican Party would only eventually get its way under the right circumstance—and because of the obstinacy of the slaveholders never to give into emancipation. In other words, the freeing of the slaves was going to be a process, a struggle. For the African American, none of this was much consolation, as Dicey remarked that Northerners who wanted to get rid of slavery also wanted to rid the nation of blacks. The British journalist implied that slavery might be defeated, but not racism. Furthermore, the British writers spoke of blacks as the only agents for their own freedom. In a December 1861 cartoon, Matthew Somerville Morgan shows a sleeping black man being urged to wake up by a woman who wears a crown bearing the name Liberty (Morgan, 1874).

For the most part, the London press was either anti-Lincoln or skeptical about his leadership and the Union cause. Punch magazine made fun of Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, in May 1861 with juicy language and then encouraged the president to end the tariff and end the Morrill Act. The London Fun magazine saw reunion as a lost cause and poked fun at the president (Harper, 1951). Morgan, who also had covered war in Italy, depicted Lincoln in an April 1862 cartoon as a professor who has concocted a drink that he pours for Americans. It is full of information and is meant to ridicule all of the war coverage but with very little sense of what ultimately is happening.

In another Morgan caricature from August 1862, Lincoln is shown as a doctor hovering over McClellan after Second Bull Run. McClellan’s feet are in hot water, and Lincoln is nursing the general. A third cartoon, also from August 1862, shows Lincoln and cabinet member Salmon P. Chase as fishermen angling for potential recruits. That same month, Punch showed a cartoon of Lincoln urging a black slave to take up arms for the Union Army. Lincoln says: “Why I Do Declare It’s My Old Friend Sambo! Course You’ll Fight for Us” (Punch, 1862). The black man has his arms folded and appears unmoved by Lincoln’s words.

Morgan would also show Lincoln as “Penny Jove,” who is riding on an eagle and preparing to hurl the thunderbolt of “Emancipation” on a slave master out in a cotton field overseeing his slaves. In another cartoon, Morgan showed that Death was the real president during the Civil War. In this drawing, Death looks down at two horribly maimed soldiers, one in the blue uniform of
the Union Army and the other in the grey of the Confederate Army. Yet another, from November 1862, shows Lincoln upset down as an acrobat with a single foot in a ring named “Emancipation,” barely holding on before falling to the ground. Another cartoon, coming after Lincoln’s annual message to Congress in December 1862, pokes fun at the president’s list of accomplishments for the nation at a time when the war news generally was not good. Lincoln is in a tub with Columbia, whom Morgan used as a character to represent the nation, in a storm-tossed sea. The tub appears headed toward turning over in the choppy waters.

Perhaps the best Morgan cartoon, coming in July 1863, shows Lincoln as a cowering, card-playing fool in striped pants. The president is facing a soldier in full regalia standing straight and grasping a flag. Clearly, the soldier is a Confederate, and on the front of his uniform are the names of key C.S.A. victories—Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Port Hudson. In that same month, after the draft riots in New York, Morgan published a cartoon showing King Mob with his feet on a black man on the ground. King Mob is carrying a large hammer, and an arm leans against the Constitution. An American flag covers the black man. Lincoln watches from a distance and tells King Mob that he will eventually have to bow to the president.

The Liverpool press, led by editor Henry Hotze’s *Index*, was pro-Southern. This position was based on what the scarcity of Southern cotton was doing to textile manufacturing in Liverpool. Accordingly, Hotze became a propagandist for the Confederacy, and he published an “Address to the Christians throughout the World” in which ninety-six clergymen from Richmond, Virginia, stated their opposition to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Hotze claimed more than two million readers for the pamphlet.

Writing from the perspective of its Indian colonies, British newspapers and magazines were mainly concerned about the effect of the American Civil War on the world’s cotton supply. *Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette* noted in April 1861: “The disruption of the American Union threatening to diminish for a time the supplies usually drawn from the Southern States, the Indian authorities have wisely turned their attention to the prevention of inconvenience and loss to the Lancashire millowners” (*Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette*, 1861). Two weeks later, *Allen’s* reported that “the latest news from North America increases the urgency” for Indian cotton (*Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette*, 1861). Indeed, expanding the cotton market in India was surpassed in importance only by the development of the iron market.

In September 1861, *Allen’s* reported on a stimulus program to increase Indian cotton production. The British government decided to give each Indian state a thousand-pound reward to the most productive—with the highest quality—cotton-producing estate of less than thirty acres throughout the country. *Allen’s* reported that local chambers of commerce would be responsible for judging the cotton harvests, and noted “it is questionable if they will undertake such a troublesome and invidious task” (*Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette*, 1861). In July of 1862, editor William H. Allen reported the supply of cotton coming from India would be less than the previous year. He added: “The only assistance from that quarter to be looked for by our starving operations in Lancashire is in the unsatisfactory form of pecuniary subscriptions” (*Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette*, 1861). By November, after the Battle of Antietam and Lincoln’s announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, the news was much better on the Indian cotton front. *Allen’s* reported that the native Indian leaders had been persuaded to grow more cotton because of the high demand back in England. “A large breadth of land will, consequently, be cultivated with cotton during the ensuing year, and even now a more than ordinary quantity is gradually tending towards the sea-coast” (*Allen’s Indian Mail and Official Gazette*, 1861).

The international press also saw what was happening in America as part of global diplomacy. Covering Seward and the State Department was an essential part of international journalism in the war years. The press in Great Britain fixated on various events in American-British relations. For example, the *Trent* crisis would become a seminal moment in the war. An American Naval captain, Charles Wilkes, acting independently, fired on an unarmed British commercial vessel, the *Trent*, and captured two Confederate envoys, James Mason and John Slidell, both of whom were headed for Europe to promote the C.S.A. cause for recognition as a nation. The November 1861 incident was a disaster for American foreign policy, although Secretary of State Seward approved of Mason and Slidell’s capture. Clearly, though, Lincoln was worried that the British would be more than a little upset and would lead to some sort of response, perhaps military in nature. The British were aghast, and London sent eight thousand troops and materials to Canada as it considered its response. The governor general of Canada was told to prepare for war (Foreman, 2010). *Times* correspondent Russell was planning to move on to Canada to cover the next war. (Foreman, 2010).

Plans were drawn up to take action against the northern-most states, beginning with Maine. A blockade would be undertaken against Northern ports. However, while the *Times* agreed that
naval action would be possible, the London newspaper said that a British army would have no chance to conquer the vast territory of the North—hundreds of thousands of square miles, and at the same time Lincoln now was amassing a big enough army of his own to go and capture, say, Montreal. Some writers believed Lincoln would make peace with the South if the British became involved and then the newly reunited nation would make war on the invaders from Europe.

Fortunately, Lincoln and his cabinet came to see that Wilkes had been wrong to seize contraband from a neutral ship, although it took an agonizing month to turn the corner—which drew the wrath of Punch, whose artist drew a female warrior next to a cannon named Britannia with the caption “Waiting For An Answer.” In effect, Lincoln and his cabinet eventually came to the point of view that Wilkes he had violated Great Britain’s neutrality. Both sides agreed to an amicable conclusion to the crisis. Seward wrote a letter to the British government saying that the United States had free Mason and Slidell. The New Yorker also admitted that Wilkes was wrong to capture the two Southerners at sea. He should have sent them into port and then a court could make a determination about their status.

The British backed down, in part because they knew the French would be ecstatic at an Anglo-American war. However, the behavior of Northerners in response to the arrest of the two Southern commissioners almost caused the British to act, and this included the celebrations in the press. Northerners hailed Wilkes a hero. In fact, New York Times editor Henry J. Raymond wrote that there should be a national holiday made in Wilkes’ name (New York Times, 1861). Pro-Lincoln supporters tended to cheer this on. The Chicago Tribune, perhaps the newspaper closest to Lincoln, remarked that the British call for the release of Mason and Slidell had been met with universal “defiance” in the North (Chicago Tribune, 1861).

Meanwhile, the British press was defiant, though in the opposite political direction from the American journalists. The humor journal Punch called Wilkes’ action “a violation of all international propriety” (Punch, 1861). The London Morning Post wrote that Britain deserved reparations for Wilkes’ action (New York Times, 1861). In the Times of London, Russell took a dim view of American patriotism over the Trent affair: “There is so much violence of spirit among the lower orders of the people,” he reported (Mahin, 1999). Russell’s letter back to the Times after the detention of the two Southern commissioners made it sound like that U.S. government would be forced to keep the men because public opinion overwhelmingly supported their seizure (London Times, 1861).

Yet his editor, Delane, questioned whether Lincoln and Seward would “force a quarrel” on the European powers (Mahin, 1999). The London Standard ran a letter from an American living in the British capital saying that ninety-nine out of hundred on the street would “declare for war immediately” against the Americans (Warren, 1981). Punch magazine had a political cartoon in which John Bull is telling an American, Lincoln, that he better “Do What’s Right, My Son, Or I’ll Blow You Out of the Water” (Punch, 1861). Oddly, Thurlow Weed was in London in the weeks after the Trent seizure, and he wrote a letter to the Times of London defending Secretary of State Seward, who was generally seen as being undiplomatic by the British press (Foreman, 2010).

In a December 7, 1861, cartoon, Punch has John Bull preaching to Lincoln, who is dressed as an Admiral. The caption read: “Now Mind You, Sir—No Shuffling—an Ample Apology—or I Put the Matter into the Hands of My Lawyers” (Punch, 1861). On December 26, the U.S. government had Mason and Slidell release. Punch had already gone to press for its next edition, and the magazine had a cartoon of a British man with a sword labeled “Peace” asking an American with merely a stick, “Which end will you have” (Punch, 1862).

The following week, with the crisis finally over, Punch ran a cartoon of President Lincoln as a raccoon on a tree limb with Colonel Bull (the British) taking aim at him with a shotgun. The title of the illustration is “Up a Tree,” and Lincoln tells Colonel Bull not to fire and that he will come down out of the tree (Punch, 1862). In other words, Punch was making fun at the American president’s expense for giving into the British. Indeed, many Northerners, including Republican newspaper editors, felt embarrassed that Lincoln and his cabinet had caved into the British (McPherson, 2002).

In January 1863, Punch ran a cartoon in which King George III is asking George Washington, “What do you think of your fine republic now?” The first American president replies with a single word: “Humph” (Punch, 1863). In August of that year, Punch published a cartoon of Lincoln under the headline “Rowdy’ Notions of Emancipation.” This drawing was in reference to the draft riots in New York in which African Americans were murdered by Northern whites who opposed the draft. A black man in the foreground is appealing to Lincoln while whites are assaulting the man and dragging him away from the president, but the commander-in-chief merely ponders the situation with his head turned away from the mob action (Punch, 1863). The Punch editors in effect are saying that the president is not really serious about protecting blacks from angry white mobs. The
following week, *Punch’s* American cartoon featured Lincoln, a black man, and his son. Lincoln is portrayed as Brutus and the black man as the ghost of Julius Caesar, who tells the president that he, Caesar, is an evil genius and that his son is quite impressive (Punch, 1863).

In September, *Punch* had a cartoon that made fun of emancipation as a military policy. The drawing has two black soldiers meeting, and the caption reads: “When Black Meets Black Then Comes the End of the War” (*Punch*, 1863). Both men are extremely happy, and one appears to be dancing. The implication is that neither makes a serious soldier ready to exact revenge on former masters. The next month brought a cartoon in which the prime minister, Lord Palmerston, is the captain of a ship caught between Scylla and Charybdis (Jefferson Davis and Lincoln, respectively). Palmerston’s ship is labeled “Neutrality,” and the caption calls him the “New Ulysses” (*Punch*, 1863).

As for the German press, there was strong interest in the American war. The Germans were major trade partners with the United States, and the North had a large German immigrant population. Furthermore, Germany, having just seen a revolution in 1848, was itself going through a precarious period of unification. Of course, there were many German-language newspapers all over the North.

Some German newspapers sided with the Union perhaps in part because the Germans had envos in Washington and Lincoln sent commissioners to Germany. Others sided with the South because their ownership was part of the German aristocracy, and such owners had a sense of sympathy with the slaveholders. No newspaper in Germany covered American events during the Civil War better than *Hamburger Nachrichten*. Starting with comprehensive coverage of Fort Sumter, the Hamburg newspaper provided nearly daily accounts of the war (Eichhorn, 2008). The *Augsburger Allgemeine* attempted to be neutral, as it had two pro-Union correspondents and a pro-Southern reporter.

Another journal that examined the American war was *Kladderadatsch*, a satirical magazine. It had its first mention of the war with a drawing in which black Americans are asking President Lincoln to come closer while a Southerner looks on in disgust (Eichhorn, 2008). A later cartoon in the newspaper showed concern for the drop in the world cotton supply caused by the Union blockade of the South. The cartoonist wondered how much this decrease in cotton supply would hurt the German textile industry. During the *Trent* affair, the German press took the side of the British but hoped the Americans and British did not go to war. The Germans did not want a weakened Great Britain, needing its strength to keep France in its place. A *Kladderadatsch* shows John’s attention fully on the American war while Napoleon III works in the background to overtake a part of Switzerland (Eichhorn, 2008).

In the final two years of the war, international coverage waned a bit. However, the British press maintained a close watch on matters in North America. While the Britain leadership never seriously contemplated taking sides after Antietam and Lincoln’s announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, the British press kept a close eye on the American conflict all the way to war’s end.

In August 1864, after several Union defeats in Virginia during the summertime campaign, *Punch* had a cartoon of Lord Palmerston talking to Lord Punch, a fictional character. The latter tells the prime minister that the man behind him is Jefferson Davis, adding: “Don’t Your Recognise him” (*Punch*, 1864). The Palmerston character says he does not, but that he might have to one day. *Punch* ran a cartoon in February 1865 in which Lincoln is reading a bill from the Senate, as represented by an eagle dressed in the American flag, which would abrogate a treaty with Canada, which of course was part of the British Empire. Lincoln tells the eagle that he may drive John Bull—that is, Great Britain—“over to That Cuss, Davis” (*Punch*, 1865). As was the case in several *Punch* cartoons, the president is portrayed as an attorney giving advice to his client, the U.S. Senate.

In October of that year, *Punch* had a cartoon of Miss Britannia sitting next to Miss Columbia, who represents the United States, with the former giving advice to her younger companion. Miss Britannia is telling Columbia, who is sewing a rent garment named America with “Northern States” stitched at the top and “Southern States” at the bottom, it will be difficult to re-join those two parts of the cloth “neatly” (*Punch*, 1864). After Lincoln won re-election in November, *Punch* depicted the American president as a phoenix rising from the ashes. In the fire beneath the firebird are the names of various things that the artist believed the president has sacrificed, including the Constitution, freedom of the press, states’ rights, and habeas corpus. The head of Lincoln rests on top of the body of the “Federal Phoenix” (*Punch*, 1864).

In that same edition, *Punch* published a satirical “Inaugural” speech from Lincoln—from the “Ultramarine Telegraph”. The president tells his fellow Republicans “Bully for us” and “this almighty Union will be conserved to shine throughout the countless ages an effable beacon and symbol of blessed and everlasting light and glory if you will only mind the proverb of Sancho
Panza, which says, ‘Pray to God devoutly and hammer on stoutly’” (Punch, 1864). The speech is full of Lincolnesque homely sayings and stories and clearly pokes fun at the president, who frequently provokes laughter and applause.

The Times of London covered both the Northern and Southern perspective on the war, and Francis C. Lawley was its correspondent in the Confederacy. Lawley gave a description of the CSA Army after the surrender at Appomattox in which the now veteran soldiers pay homage to their military leader, Robert E. Lee, one last time: “Whole lines of battle rushed up to their beloved old chief, and, choking with emotion, broke ranks and struggled with each other to wring him once more by the hand” (Lawley, 1865).

The Hamilton Spectator, while conservative, tended to see the results in the last two years of the American Civil War as being healthy for Canada. A Union victory and a lasting peace were desirable outcomes. Then came the assassination of Lincoln. The Newmarket Era announced the assassination of Lincoln with the headline “Frightful Scenes in Washington.” In its editorial on April 21, 1865, the Newmarket Era called Lincoln’s murder “diabolical.” The editor observed: “The sudden death of any great or good man, always casts a gloom over the community; but when a man like Lincoln, high in authority—in the prime of life—and enjoying the confidence and respect of millions of people, is suddenly struck down by an assassin, the event is painful in the extreme, and the sorrow and shock are too much for words to express” (New Market Era and North York General Intelligencer and Advertiser, 1865). The editor said that few men were as qualified to be president during the time of such a grave national crisis as Lincoln was. The Newmarket newspaper also wondered if the assassination was the culmination of a plot that Southern and pro-slavery newspaper had been predicting. The Era also reported on a church service in honor of Lincoln in Newmarket at the Mechanics’ Hall.

The assassination was a turning point, as suspicion toward the United States began to take shape in Canada. The Hamilton Spectator editors wrote: “Canadians who are deeply interested in the restoration and maintenance of peace on this continent, cannot but deeply sympathise with the Americans in the hour of their great calamity” (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1865). However, the Canadians worried about the United States as a major military power without their victorious and moderate president. Canada would have to build its defenses to prevent the Americans from launching a war of aggression. While no attack was imminent, the newspaper noted, Canadians must “be able to rely on its own strength” to deter an American power grab (Hamilton Weekly Spectator, 1865).

In Punch, the British humor magazine, the assassination produced a cartoon in which the female personification of Britannia lays a wreath on Lincoln’s bed with a crying woman, Columbia (the embodiment of America) on her left and a crestfallen black man on her right. The caption reads, “Britannia Sympathises with Columbia.” On the previous page is a poem titled “Abraham Lincoln, Fouly Assassinated, April 14, 1865.” The poet calls Lincoln “the rail-splitter a true-born king of men,” and adds: “The Old World and the New, from sea to sea/ Utter one voice of sympathy and shame” (Punch, 1865). The Times of London reported on the reaction to the news of the assassination in the House of Commons. The members resolved: “We, the undersigned, members of the British House of Commons, have learnt with the deepest horror and regret that the President of the United States of America has been deprived of life by an act of violence; and we desire to express our sympathy on the sad event with the American Minister now in London, as well as to declare our hope and confidence in the future of that great country, which we trust will continue to be associated with enlightened freedom and peaceful relations with this and every other country” (London Times, 1865). Outside the British capital, the Times reported, there was general shock at the news, including this report from Birmingham: “The news of the assassination of the President of the United States has produced a profound sensation here, and as much of sympathy, consternation, and dismay as can be conceived in fact, as to all of these feelings, second only to one other calamity which might have afflicted this nation and the world” (London Times, 1865).

In an attempt to interpret Lincoln’s death, the Times’ editors wrote that the United States and Great Britain shared a “sorrow” and that somehow the two nations were now “better acquainted with each other, and more inclined to friendship” than they had been before Lincoln’s arrival on the American national scene (London Times, 1865). The Economist editors remarked that the fallen president’s four years in office had improved both his mind “and elevated his character” (The Economist, 1865).

The last drawing about the Civil War in the German journal Kladderadatsch does not make direct reference to Lincoln but does give an overall assessment of the war, including depictions of freed slaves while a Northerner is sitting upright and bandaging himself and a Southerner is being assisted with his food. Watching all of this is John Bull and Napoleon III. There also is an American
character named Jonathan who is buried beneath a purse marked “Debt” (Eichhorn, 2008). The German journalists clearly saw the freeing of the slaves as the major positive outcome of the war, while the economic situation was a negative consequence.

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