

Joseph Sturge and the Crimean War. 2.

The Founding of *The Morning Star*

EARLY in 1855, Joseph Sturge wrote to George Wilson concerning "the arrangements for the paper".¹ The inquiry was just a passing reference to a projected daily newspaper devoted to the peace cause which had been discussed casually, from time to time, by Wilson and Richard Cobden. By midsummer, plans for this, the first London daily ever to support the ideal of peace, were to become Sturge's major pre-occupation. For the first six months of 1855, however, he had remained relatively uninvolved in the project, and continued to search for a way to make his anti-war views effective.

During this period, one's impression is that Sturge was often restrained from direct action by his co-workers in the cause. For example, as early as September, 1854, Sturge had wanted to call a conference on the war, presumably to be modelled on the Peace Congresses. Bright discouraged the enterprise, advising him "that it may be best to rest quiet at present".²

In January, 1855, the Manchester supporters of John Bright and Thomas Milner Gibson³ planned to hold a *soirée* in their honour. To Sturge, this seemed to be the opportunity for a public demonstration on behalf of peace. He wrote to George Wilson to inquire whether the *soirée* might be the occasion of a little more general gathering of the Friends of the Peace Cause? at which some resolutions might be passed stating what terms the Meeting thought England & France should

¹ Sturge to Wilson, January 12, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. George Wilson (1808-1870) of Manchester, chairman Anti-Corn Law League, active in movement for parliamentary reform; *D.N.B.*

² Bright to Sturge, September 4, 1854, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

³ Thomas Milner Gibson (1806-1884) was also M.P. for Manchester; *D.N.B.*

be willing to accept as conditions of Peace with Russia as I expect most unreasonable ones will be required.¹

Sturge also wrote to Richard Cobden with the same proposal. Cobden replied that he did not see "how the *soirée* to Gibson and Bright at Manchester can be made into a Peace Congress Meeting". He felt that there was "hardly strength enough amongst our friends to give it that character" and that the best that could be hoped for was that the affair would give the "*appearance* at least of considerable support for the peace cause in Manchester".² Most of those who attended the *soirée* would go simply to honour the two M.P.s and certainly not to affirm peace principles. Sturge withdrew the request in favour of a private meeting to be held the morning after the *soirée*.³ A meeting was held on January 27, but it is not known what was there decided.⁴

In January, the cause of peace received what Sturge considered to be a serious setback. Ever since the first rumblings of war, Sturge and the other proponents of peace had had great faith in the pacific intentions of the prime minister, Lord Aberdeen. Even as the war progressed and Aberdeen sent more and more troops to the Crimea, those in the peace movement remained convinced that it was the prime minister's intention to make peace as quickly as possible, and that he was kept from doing so because of the hawkish mood of the people and the pro-war views of the majority of his cabinet. In January, lacking the confidence of the British people and his own ministers, Aberdeen was forced to resign. Palmerston, the worst possible man in the eyes of the peace band, became prime minister. Sturge wrote to Samuel Rhoads of Philadelphia:

We had the greatest hope of Lord Aberdeen in regard to peace and had he remained in office a few weeks longer, there was a fair prospect

¹ Sturge to Wilson, January 3, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

² Cobden to Sturge, January 5, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722. Cobden's reticence is understandable considering that two months earlier John Bright had been burnt in effigy by his constituents, specifically for his stand on the war.

³ Sturge to Wilson, January 6, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. The *soirée* was originally scheduled to be held on Friday, January 19, but the date was changed to January 28.

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, January 25, 1855, *ibid.*

of its being attained, but now I fear we shall have a terrible slaughter again ere long at Sebastopol.¹

It was Sturge's opinion, too, that the possibility of peace became more remote when, a few weeks after the fall of Aberdeen, Nicholas I of Russia died. For over a year the British press had vilified Nicholas; and in the popular mind it was not so much the Russian people as their Emperor who was responsible for the war. One might have thought, therefore, that the death of Nicholas would have removed an obstacle standing in the way of peace. Sturge thought differently. The day after the event he wrote to Wilson concerning "this remarkable Providence the death of the Czar". His attitude remained consistent with the impression he had formed as a member of the deputation to St. Petersburg in February, 1854. He wrote:

I am by no means certain that the Death of Nicholas will facilitate Peace for I have long been persuaded that he was more anxious for it than most of his subjects if he could see how to attain it without any sacrifice of what he thought was due to the honour of his country.²

Other supporters of peace in Manchester took the death of Nicholas and the accession of his son, Alexander II, as an opportunity to present to Palmerston a memorial, urging that there be an immediate armistice based on the "four points".³ Palmerston replied politely to the petition, but

¹ Sturge to Rhoads, February, 1855, in Henry Richard, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, London, 1864 (hereafter cited as *Memoirs*), p. 489. Samuel Rhoads (c. 1806-1868) was a Philadelphia Quaker who had been active in the anti-slavery movement. Whether or not Sturge exaggerated the probability of peace, he was not mistaken in Aberdeen, who had consistently sought a peaceful settlement to the conflict. By his own later admission, Aberdeen sometimes followed weakly behind, instead of leading, public opinion. Nonetheless, he never abandoned himself to jingoism in order to maintain his political position. Since August, 1854, he had worked actively for a peace treaty centred around the well-known "four points": (1) that there should be a European rather than a Russian protectorate in the principalities; (2) that the navigation channels at the mouth of the Danube should be improved; (3) that the Straits Convention of 1841 should be revised to maintain the balance of power; (4) that Russia should abandon her claims to any official right of protection over Christians in the Turkish Empire. Nicholas had accepted the "four points" in principle as early as November, 1854, so Sturge's hopes for peace were not merely wishful thinking.

² Sturge to Wilson, March 3, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

³ See note 1 above.

there was no armistice, and Sturge's fears proved justified. The war had still a year to run.¹

Early in February, Sturge looked to London for something to do, but Cobden wrote "I do not know what you could do in town for the good cause at present".² Sturge found a temporary project nearer home. On behalf of the Rev. Arthur O'Neil, he arranged a series of anti-war lectures in the environs of Birmingham. Between February 19 and April 20, O'Neil spoke also in neighbouring towns like Worcester, Wolverhampton, and Coventry, where, according to Henry Richard, he was listened to "with respect and favour".³ Richard was unduly optimistic, for Sebastopol was still in Russian hands and the war fever still raged in England. Although there were a number of public meetings and private caucuses on behalf of peace that spring, the end of the war was not in sight.⁴ In March, Sturge wrote of being so discouraged by the state of affairs "as not to see our way to [do] more in the Peace Cause especially as R. Cobden had so strong an opinion that nothing could be done".⁵ Bright wrote likewise, "I see no chance of peace".⁶

For some time Sturge had considered that a way out of the conflict might be to secure the mediation of a neutral power, but by May this scheme had come to nothing. As Bright had pointed out, the problem would be to find an impartial arbitrator.⁷ The Americans were for a while cast as the peacemakers, but Cobden finally ruled them out as having no moral authority in England. He felt that it was the impression in London that the United States would

¹ *The British Friend*, XIII (April, 1855), p. 97; *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LVIII (April, 1855), p. 194.

² Cobden to Sturge, February 2, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

³ *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LIX (May, 1855), p. 205 and LX (June, 1855), p. 211.

⁴ A detailed list of the public meetings arranged by Sturge is found in *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LIX (May, 1855), p. 205. The correspondence between Cobden, Bright, Wilson and Sturge indicates that there were a number of small, private gatherings to discuss the prospects for peace, but it would appear that little came out of these meetings—except, of course, that they would have boosted the morale of the peace faction.

⁵ Sturge to Wilson, March 23, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

⁶ Bright to Sturge, April 24, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

⁷ Bright to Sturge, December 28, 1854, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

itself wage a war where it could do so with advantage and impunity, "where the party attacked is not able to offer a very dangerous resistance".¹

May 22 found Sturge at another poorly-attended annual meeting of the Peace Society, where he took part in (unrecorded) "animated conversation" and was among those who made "important suggestions".² Immediately afterwards, he attended London Yearly Meeting, but there is no record of what, if anything, he said there.³

It was in July that Joseph Sturge began to be seriously involved in the plans for a peace newspaper. Concerning this project, Henry Richard tells us that at first Sturge "displayed unwonted repugnance to take the matter in hand".⁴ It will be clear, however, that, once committed, Sturge did not spare himself until the plans were realized. It is not too much to say that without Sturge the *Morning and Evening Star* would never have been published.

* * *

Richard Cobden seems to have originated the idea of a daily peace newspaper. As early as December, 1853, he had mentioned it, in passing, in a letter to Sturge:

By the way, what an advantage it would be if the newspaper stamp was abolished and we could have a daily paper circulating 30 or 40,000—advocating peace and constantly keeping before the public the evils of past wars, and the terrible consequences of future hostilities. I am quite sure, if there were no stamp, that a paper pledged to the Peace Conference views, and *free on other questions*, might have a very large circulation. It is only by a *daily* paper that we can really influence public opinion.⁵

¹ Cobden to Sturge, May 17, 1855, *ibid.*, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722. See also Cobden to Sturge, February 21, 1855, *ibid.*; Sturge to Wilson, April 14, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

² *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LX (June, 1855), 214-215.

³ Yearly Meeting was held May 23-June 2. See *The Friend*, XIII (June, 1855), 99-103; *The British Friend*, XIII (June, 1855), 129-142.

⁴ *Memoirs*, p. 520.

⁵ Cobden to Sturge, December 14, 1853, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 50131. The *Herald of Peace* had been publishing for forty years, but it failed to satisfy Cobden in that (1) it was a monthly, (2) it dealt exclusively with peace matters, and (3) its extreme views would always keep it from having mass circulation. Concerning the newspaper project, Cobden wrote Richard that "nothing of the kind will answer our purpose until we can get rid of the stamp". Cobden to Richard, September 22, 1854, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43657. As for the newspaper stamp, this "tax on knowledge" was finally abolished in 1855 and it became possible to publish the *Morning and Evening Star* for one penny. Before publication, it was decided that the paper would represent the general political opinions of Cobden and Bright, not simply their pacifist beliefs.

A few months later, shortly after the outbreak of the Crimean war, Cobden returned to the subject. After noting that the *Morning Chronicle* was up for sale, he expressed the wish that there were "a London Daily paper to advocate the principles of the Peace Congresses. I have no doubt we could support such a paper well, if we could get rid of the stamp".¹ Joseph Sturge's first (surviving) word on the subject was in a letter to George Wilson, in January, 1855.² He made his first concrete suggestion a month later, namely, that Bright, Cobden and Wilson should be the directors of such a paper if it were started.³ On March 29 he wrote to Cobden concerning Edward Collins, as a prospective editor for this still-highly hypothetical newspaper. Cobden agreed with him "that Collins would be one of the best men that could be found".⁴

Further correspondence shows that Sturge's interest in the project continued to develop,⁵ and from July, 1855, onward it is evident that he was firmly committed to it. In July, Cobden wrote that he was going to discuss the possibility of a peace paper with Henry Richard and James Bell.⁶ Like Sturge, he believed that "it would be very desirable to have Richard's pen at work in a London paper".⁷

Sturge, in turn, wrote to Wilson to ask if there were "no chance of an able paper being brought out daily at 1d. representing the opinions of the 'Manchester party'".⁸

Cobden continued to be enthusiastic. In July, he was "sure that in a few months there will be an excellent opening

¹ Cobden to Sturge, April 24, 1854, *ibid.*, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722. Cobden's certainty here contrasts with his vacillation late in 1855, when, but for the determination of Sturge, the newspaper project might well have fallen through.

² See p. 335, note 1.

³ Cobden to Sturge, February 16, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

⁴ Cobden to Sturge, March 29, 1855, *ibid.* Edward Francis Collins (1807-1872), one time private secretary to Joseph Hume, M.P.; editor of the *Hull Advertiser*, 1842-1866; a Roman Catholic.

⁵ e.g. Cobden to Sturge, May 15, 1855, *ibid.*

⁶ James Bell (1818-1872), M.P. for Guildford, 1852-1857.

⁷ Cobden to Sturge, July 6, 1855, *ibid.* Note that although it was agreed that Richard would benefit the new paper, it would also be the policy of those who promoted the project that under no circumstances should the paper become a daily version of the *Herald of Peace*.

⁸ Sturge to Wilson, July 7, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

for such a paper".¹ He was convinced not only of the desirability, but also of the practicability of establishing this newspaper, and by the end of the month Henry Richard, too, was well into the project.²

SEARCH FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A meeting was arranged for August 4, to consolidate the plans,³ and Sturge reported afterward to Wilson:

At Richard Cobden's request I went to London on Friday night [August 3] respecting the question of a penny daily paper and met him and Jno. Bright and J. Bell and H. Richard the next morning when we went pretty fully into the subject. Jno. Bright . . . said he expected to be in Manchester about Thursday and would see some of you about it⁴

A few days after the meeting, Cobden suggested to Sturge that £5,000 would be sufficient capital to begin the enterprise; and that, as far as the paper's management was concerned, he (Cobden), Bright and Wilson should act as "a sort of Trustees", to guarantee the political soundness of what was published. What political principles would the new paper avow? According to Cobden, they "could hardly be more simply defined than by making use of the past votes and proceedings of Bright and myself in the House and the Country as an illustration of what views the paper should support".⁵

Sturge travelled to Manchester, probably on August 20,⁶ where he and Wilson pursued a number of practical matters concerning the policy, management, and financing of the proposed paper. After he had returned to Birmingham,

¹ Cobden to Sturge, July 10, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656.

² Cobden to Sturge, July 28, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722. Henry Richard writes in the *Memoirs* that Sturge wrote many letters to him concerning plans for the paper. I have not been able to locate any of these letters. Richard discusses the founding of the *Morning and Evening Star* very briefly in the *Memoirs*, pp. 519-521.

³ Cobden to Sturge, August 1, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, August 6, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

⁵ Cobden to Sturge (copy), August 8, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656.

⁶ Sturge to Wilson, August 19, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Sturge implies that he will be leaving for Manchester the following morning.

Sturge sent a memorandum to Wilson which embodied the understanding the two men had come to. The following had been decided:

1. Cobden, Bright and Wilson would have "a preponderance of pecuniary investment" in the paper.

2. £2,000 toward the capital needed to found the paper would be placed at the disposal of Cobden and Bright.

3. The chief objects of the new paper would be to oppose the Crimean war, to advocate, in future, a policy of British non-intervention in the affairs of foreign states, and to promote the settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

4. The paper would, in general, represent the political opinions of Cobden and Bright, "as known by their votes and speeches in the House of Commons".

5. Wilson, Bright and Cobden would have a veto concerning what the paper should and should not advocate.

6. In case the venture should fail, the subscribers would suffer only the loss of their original investment.

7. Should the paper succeed, (a) two-fifths of the profits would be at the disposal of Cobden and Bright, for them to apply to whatever "public objects" they wished, and (b) the original subscribers would have their principal returned to them, with interest.¹

Two days later, Sturge again wrote to Wilson to say that, although John Bright's views on education might mean that one or two possible supporters might not subscribe, he nevertheless believed that £500 could be raised in Manchester. He intended to return to that city in a few days to visit potential contributors, since he thought it "best to make a personal call upon nearly all I apply to".²

On September 1, Sturge could report subscriptions of £250 each from Robert Charleton and George Thomas of Bristol.³ At the same time, he urged that the paper should appear as soon as possible and suggested that a "competent and suitable person" be sent to New York to look into a

¹ Sturge to Wilson, August 22, 1855, *ibid.* John Bright made the modifications that (a) the paper would support the views which he and Cobden expressed in *and* out of Parliament, and (b) while he, Cobden and Wilson would share in directing the paper's policy, all money raised by Sturge should be advanced to the paper in Wilson's name only. (See Bright to Sturge, August 23, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.)

² Sturge to Wilson, August 25, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Bright supported secular schools.

³ George Thomas (1791-1869) was a Quaker philanthropist, particularly active in the temperance movement. (See *Annual Monitor*, 1871, pp. 125-131.) Robert Charleton (1809-1872); *D.N.B.* See *J.F.H.S.*, 52 (1969), 78-96.

printing press.¹ Cobden was satisfied that Sturge had a clear picture of what was ahead.²

On September 6, Sturge wrote that he had received subscriptions of £100 each from the sisters of James Bell. His friend George Thompson, co-owner of the *Empire*, had been to see him concerning that journal's financial difficulties. Sturge did not feel competent to give Thompson any advice, but suggested that Wilson might want to consider the possibility of taking over the *Empire's* premises to use for the new paper.³ On the 10th, Sturge wrote of a probable £200 subscription from a donor who would prefer to remain anonymous. He also said that he was ready to come to Manchester, in order to relieve Wilson of the delicate task of applying to local associates for contributions.⁴

As an indication of the earnestness with which the associates were now pursuing the project, we see that on September 12, Bright and Wilson took time off from their respective affairs to travel to London to inquire about a printing press there.⁵ But in spite of the enthusiasm of Sturge, Cobden, Bright and Wilson, there are reminders that the public was still as warlike as ever, and that it would not be easy for any newspaper to change the direction of public opinion. Cobden, who was perhaps the least steadfast of the associates as far as the paper was concerned, wrote to Sturge just after the battle of Sebastopol (September 8-9). It seems that Sturge had expressed doubts "whether the success of the allies at Sebastopol [would] not diminish the chances of peace". Cobden felt that while this might not be the case as far as the politicians were concerned, the people were still hungry for war. While he praised Sturge's "never-tiring energy in collecting so much money", he said that it was just as well that the paper could not come out

¹ Sturge to Wilson, September 1, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Sturge thought it possible that the paper might even be brought out on November 1. If his hopes for early publication were unduly optimistic, it can at least be said that it was his constant pushing which kept the plans moving.

² Cobden to Sturge, September 4, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

³ Sturge to Wilson ("private"), September 6, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, September 10, 1855, *ibid.*

⁵ Bright to Sturge, September 12, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

immediately. Cobden, himself, declined to undertake anything publicly in behalf of peace because, he said, "the people are stark staring mad just for the moment and it were folly to treat them as rational beings until the fit is over—they would only 'turn and rend' us".¹

Cobden did well to praise his friend's efforts in raising money for the paper. In one week, Sturge noted that he had been on "a begging trip as far as Bradford" and that he intended to go to Darlington and Manchester. Largely as a result of his travels, the subscription fund now had £1,800 "as good as promised".² A week later, Sturge wrote that the Darlington trip had been fully as successful as he had hoped it would be.³

Money continued to come in from members of the Society of Friends. Edward Backhouse⁴ subscribed £150 and Joseph⁵ and Henry Pease⁶ each sent £100. As well as raising funds, Sturge involved himself with plans for the management of the paper. He noted, after a trip to Manchester, that S. P. Robinson,⁷ Henry Bradford and Henry Rawson⁸ would probably be associated with Wilson in carrying on the paper. Sturge still favoured Collins as editor.⁹ He believed it to be important that the editor be a man with an emotional commitment to the cause of peace, who would not undertake the job simply as a matter of business. Sturge felt that Collins was such a man, and that John Hamilton would answer as second editor. "I fear thou wilt think I am too particular on this point", he wrote to

¹ Cobden to Sturge ("private"), September 15, 1855, *ibid.*, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

² Sturge to Wilson, September 17, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

³ Sturge to Wilson, September 23, 1855, *ibid.*

⁴ Edward Backhouse (1808–1879) of Sunderland; *Annual Monitor*, 1880, pp. 21–25; *D.N.B.*

⁵ Joseph Pease (1799–1872) of Darlington; *Annual Monitor*, 1873, pp. 101–110; *D.N.B.*

⁶ Henry Pease (1807–1881) *D.N.B.*; accompanied Joseph Sturge to St. Petersburg, 1854.

⁷ Smith Phillips Robinson (1808–1885), Anti-Corn Law Leaguer; worked for Cobden's election in the West Riding, 1847.

⁸ Henry Rawson (*d.* 1879), Manchester stock broker and chairman of the Manchester Stock Exchange, 1847–49 and 1861–69.

⁹ Sturge to Cobden, September 27, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

Wilson, "but I consider it to be a vital one in fairly carrying out the object we all have in view".¹

Cobden did not share Sturge's opinion about the importance of the editor. He felt that the true guarantee of the paper's orthodoxy would be the "trusteeship" of himself, Bright and Wilson. It would even be better, he said, if the editor "were not too eager and enthusiastic an advocate of our principles". Certainly the paper would fail if an attempt were made "to convert it into a daily *Herald of Peace*". Cobden told Sturge that for the new paper to reach the desired circulation of 30,000 copies daily, it would be necessary "to *manage* the peace question in its columns with some of the 'wisdom of the serpent'." Although "not one word should be admitted into its columns to sanction this or any other war", wrote Cobden, "it may be necessary to temporise a little as to the times and circumstances where and how the peace policy shall be advocated".²

This playing down of the editor's role seems to have alarmed Sturge. Shortly after he received Cobden's letter, he wrote to ask Wilson to keep the position of editor open until they had had a chance to talk the matter over together. He noted that he had written to John Bright, to say that he intended to confer with Wilson about a prospective editor.³

Bright wrote to Sturge that he would not be able to join him and Wilson in Manchester to discuss the problem, but that, in any event, it was "premature" to decide who the editor should be. Bright echoed Cobden, saying that he was not sure that it was "desirable that the editor should hold the abstract peace principle" and that "the paper must not be a *Daily Herald of Peace*—there requires wisdom as well as zeal in the attempt to write people into common

¹ Sturge to Wilson, September 28, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. John Hamilton (1821?-1860), was joint proprietor of *The Empire* with George Thompson and edited the *Morning and Evening Star* to 1860.

² Cobden to Sturge, September 30, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656. In time, Cobden came to feel that the paper was too obviously reflecting his and Bright's views; see John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden*, Jubilee edition; London, 1896, ii, 385.

³ Sturge to Wilson ("private"), October 1, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

sense".¹ Sturge seems to have bowed to the judgment of Bright and Cobden, for when he next wrote to Wilson (about plans for circulating the paper in the country), he asked merely that he should be informed once the choice of editor had been made.²

In a letter of October 13, Sturge stressed the importance of bringing the paper out as soon as possible. To expedite early publication (in which effort he was supported by his remaining friends in the peace cause), he suggested that the American printing press should not be used.³ About a week later he reiterated his concern, but added that failure must not be risked for want of considering the difficulties involved in publication. Sturge also made it clear that he did not want to encourage subscribers who would not easily be able to absorb their loss should the newspaper fail—that is to say, he believed that no one should subscribe to the venture just in the hope that it would turn out to be a good investment.⁴

On the other hand, Bright told Sturge that he believed no one should be disqualified from subscribing simply because he happened to be ruled by the profit motive.

¹ Bright to Sturge, October 2, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723. The fact is that Bright himself, was never committed to the "abstract peace principle". For his comments on the subject, see *Mr. John Bright and the Peace Society* (London [1887?], p. 9.

² Sturge to Wilson, October 8, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Sturge had discussed the problem of circulation with John Ellis (1789–1862), chairman of the Midland Railway. In this letter, Sturge also says that he does not think that "public feelings is in half so bad a state as Richard Cobden seems to suppose".

³ Sturge to Wilson, October 13, 1855, *ibid.* Sturge also discussed the possibility of anti-war lectures in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the idea of friends in London to circulate, among the merchants and bankers, a memorial on behalf of ending the war. The *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LXIV (October, 1855), p. 265, contains a letter from "Pacifcus" advocating a peace paper which would appear more frequently than the *Herald*. In the *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LXV (November, 1855), p. 72, it is reported: "We have received several letters in reference to the suggestion of 'Pacifcus' in our last number, as to the more frequent appearance of *The Herald*. They have been, generally, in support of that suggestion, and have been extremely satisfactory and encouraging to us. We hope to have the gratification before long of announcing to our readers, that though this particular proposal may not be carried into effect, some other means will be taken for making a wider use of the press in advocacy of peace principles".

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, October 22, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

Bright wanted all the subscribers he could get, probably in view of his discouraging observation toward the end of October that the Manchester people were "rather lukewarm" about the paper.¹ Bright also reported that difficulties with the paper would cause Wilson to suspend plans for publication. This was a blow to Sturge, who immediately wrote to Wilson to arrange an early meeting to discuss the problems.² The "difficulties" were apparently financial ones. Sturge remained convinced that enough money could be raised to launch the paper, and told Wilson so.³ Helped along by Cobden (now in a more confident frame of mind than after Sebastopol), plans for the paper proceeded.⁴

Sturge attended a meeting with Wilson and Bright in Manchester on November 10.⁵ On returning to Birmingham, he wrote a confidential letter to Wilson, saying that he had sent a list of the subscribers to Gregg and Thomasson, and that he had asked both men "if they could spare £500".⁶ He said that he favoured a suggestion made by Henry Rawson, now Wilson's equal in the project, that all the subscribers be required to put up cash, adding that he doubted that many could be induced to part with more than half of their pledge at the outset. At least, Sturge promised, all the money which he personally raised would be available whenever it was wanted, and he asked Wilson to arrange for a bank where the subscription money could be deposited. He hoped that the first issue of the new paper might come out on January 1, 1856, perhaps under the editorship of W. T. Haly,⁷ with Collins and Hamilton

¹ Bright to Sturge, October 26, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723. Sturge never said that a desire for profit should disqualify any potential subscriber, but implied strongly that it should not be the main motive of anyone who wished to support the paper.

² Sturge to Wilson, October 27, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

³ Sturge to Wilson, November 5, 1855, *ibid.*

⁴ Cobden to Sturge, November 3, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656.

⁵ Sturge to Wilson, November 8, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Arrangements for the meeting were made in this letter.

⁶ Thomas Thomasson (1808-1876), manufacturer, financial supporter of the Anti-Corn Law movement; *D.N.B.* Gregg declined to subscribe. See Sturge to Wilson, November 21, 1855, *ibid.*

⁷ William Taylor Haly of London; author of *The Opinions of Sir R. Peel . . .* (London, 1843).

as assistant editors. Sturge's attitude toward the paper was, at this time, more than usually encouraging; and his hopes for peace were bright. Above all, he felt the need for action. "The tide is I think setting the right way", he wrote, "if we make the most of it".¹

Writing to Sturge, John Bright seconded his friend's optimism. His opinion was that "a section, if not a majority" of the Government wanted peace.² Cobden continued to be hopeful, too. He encouraged Sturge in planning for early publication, noting that the *Press*, "said to be Disraeli's", had had "some excellent peace matter" in its most recent issue.³

Cobden also conferred with Sturge "*in strict confidence*" about Henry Rawson, who had come to share with George Wilson the responsibility of planning for the paper. Cobden felt obliged to say that Rawson was "a selfish, money-loving chap [who would] not put £500 any where without looking well after it".⁴ Not that Cobden felt that this was a serious disadvantage, it was just that he agreed with Sturge in not wanting anyone to invest in the paper merely to make money. As for editing the paper, Cobden preferred the likes of Haly "ten times before any body in Manchester".⁵ Sturge agreed that Haly might make a good editor, although he still hoped that a place might be found for Hamilton.⁶

By the beginning of December, 1855, it looked as though the paper would be adequately financed, mostly as a result of Joseph Sturge's tireless canvassing for funds. A tally which Bright sent Sturge showed:

¹ Sturge to Wilson ("private"), November 12, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

² Bright to Sturge, November 20, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

³ Cobden to Sturge, November 21, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656. The "peace matter" to which Cobden referred was in the *Press* of Saturday, November 17, 1855.

⁴ Cobden to Sturge ("private"), November 22, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

⁵ Cobden to Sturge ("strictly confidential"), December 2, 1855, *ibid.*

⁶ Sturge to Wilson, November 28, 1855, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library.

Thy [Sturge's] subscription including what we have already got here	£ 3,000
H. Rawson	500
Our further subscription	1,000
	<hr/>
	4,500
I think M. Gibson is likely to do something and we expect to make up another	500
	<hr/>
	£5,000. ¹
	<hr/>

CHOICE OF EDITOR

There was no problem with money, but there were difficulties about who the editor should be. Bright wanted the choice left entirely to Wilson and Rawson and was against taking money from Haly. He said that Haly represented a group which held unacceptable political principles.² Sturge could not contribute to the discussion at this point because he had fallen seriously ill.³ For several weeks he was unable to work, but by December 20, in spite of Cobden's feeling that he was making a mistake "in commencing brain work so early", Sturge was again corresponding with his associates.⁴

It has not been possible to locate anything written by Sturge at this time, but there are several letters to him from Bright and Cobden which indicate the main concern of the principals in the newspaper project.

According to Bright, there had arisen a "strange misunderstanding" as to who should manage and edit the proposed paper. Bright tried to make his own position clear to Sturge: Haly might be a suitable editor, but it would be disastrous to entrust the business management to him. The financial end of things should be left to Wilson and Rawson, who were "men of the soundest political principles". Bright disagreed with Cobden in that he saw no problem in having

¹ Bright to Sturge, December 4, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

² Bright to Charles Sturge, December 7, 1855, *ibid.*

³ Sturge probably became ill around December 1. The first mention of his illness is in Bright's letter to Joseph's brother, Charles Sturge.

⁴ Cobden to Sturge, December 20, 1855, *ibid.*, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

the paper's ostensible proprietors in Manchester; but he and Cobden had resolved this difference of opinion. "Cobden is quite willing to adopt this plan", Bright told Sturge, "and I have no confidence in any other".¹

A few days later, Bright responded to a request from Sturge that the latter be allowed to send Bright's letter along to Cobden, saying that he had no objection to this being done. Sturge had also suggested that Bright and Cobden sign some sort of memorandum, detailing their involvement in the newspaper. Bright saw no reason to do this, because, as he told Sturge, he conceived of his and Cobden's function as nothing more than "referees in case of difference of opinion among the proprietors or managers".²

There followed a rather strange letter to Sturge from Cobden, in which Cobden confessed that he had felt uneasy about the proposed newspaper from the start. He blurted out his misgivings:

I don't see where we are to find a market for our peace views to the extent required to sustain the paper. People seem pretty nearly as mad as ever for the war, and I don't see the chance of peace if any thing like the terms put forth in the *Post* are insisted on.³

Cobden's behaviour was unexpected, considering that five weeks earlier he had been pressing for the paper to appear as soon as possible.⁴

The following day, however, Cobden sent Sturge another letter which indicated that he had cooled down;⁵ but it was to the discouraged and discouraging letter that Sturge,

¹ Bright to Sturge, December 22, 1855, *ibid.*, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723. It is probable that Cobden would have given way in financial matters to Bright. Bright was a successful cotton spinner, Cobden a failure who had to give up his business in 1847. It is probable, too, that Joseph Sturge would not give nearly the weight to Cobden's business advice which he gave to his political opinions.

² Bright to Sturge, December 25, 1855, *ibid.*

³ Cobden to Sturge, December 27, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656. The *Morning Post*, which supported Palmerston, had always been one of the most warlike dailies in London. At the time Cobden wrote this letter, it had been talking in terms of a Russia "stripped and ruined" (December 19), whose ambitions would be "in perpetuity limited" (December 20).

⁴ See Cobden to Sturge, November 21, 1855, Cobden Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43656. See also Cobden to Sturge, November 7, 1855, *ibid.* Remember, too, that the original idea for having such a newspaper was Cobden's.

⁵ Cobden to Sturge, December 28, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

convalescing in Torquay, replied. Sturge's tone was conciliatory. He admitted to Cobden that he, too, had had "great doubts" that the newspaper would succeed, but that he could not agree that "the people are as mad as ever for the war". Sturge suggested (for the problem of Manchester *vs.* London management seemed still to have been a sore point) that henceforth Cobden communicate directly with Bright, rather than continue to use himself (Sturge) as a middle man. In any event, Cobden's nominee Haly would be one of the editors, and this would have made more acceptable to Cobden the fact that the ostensible owners of the paper would reside in Manchester.¹ The whole problem was easily resolved when it was made clear that Bright, Wilson and Rawson did not object to Haly personally, but that they just did not want him to be financially involved in the paper that he was going to edit.²

By the new year, Bright felt that there could be no further difficulty about raising funds. He suggested to Sturge that there be no more canvassing, because the more subscribers there were, the greater the chance of some "unpleasantness" occurring.³

On January 3, 1856, Sturge wrote to Wilson that he and his brother Charles were about to put their £300 and Robert Charleton's £250 into Henry Rawson's account at the London and Westminster Bank. Sturge had also written to all the subscribers whom he had canvassed, calling in their pledges.⁴

Cobden's flashes of pessimism notwithstanding, the paper was definitely to be published. No exact date had been set for the first issue, nor had a name been chosen. The

¹ Sturge to Cobden, December 29, 1855, *ibid.* There is also a copy in Cobden Papers 53, West Sussex County Record Office, Chichester.

² Bright to Sturge, December 28, 1855, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723.

³ Bright to Sturge, December 31, 1855, *ibid.* Thomasson had subscribed £100 and there had been an offer of a contribution from Sir Arthur Hallam Elton. (Sir Arthur Elton, baronet (1818-1883), M.P. for Bath, 1857-1859; author of *Poems of Past Years*, 1856, and the novels *Below the Surface*, 1857, and *Herbert Chauncey*, 1860.)

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, January 3, 1856, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. As a result of his illness, Sturge had not corresponded with Wilson since November 25. He apologized for his neglect; Sturge to Wilson, January 5, 1856, *ibid.* John Morley erroneously describes Joseph Sturge as "a principal subscriber" to the *Morning Star* fund. See *The Life of Richard Cobden*, London, 1896, ii, 173, n. 8.

format had been decided upon, however. The new paper would be "precisely the size of the *Globe*".¹

Sturge wanted the first issue to appear on March 1, and an official announcement to that effect published immediately. Rumours about the paper had begun to circulate, and Sturge wanted the public to be given correct information about the venture. There was, moreover, a new complication. One of the primary aims in founding the new paper had been to take a stand against the Crimean war. At this time, it looked as though the war would be over shortly, because the Russians had just given tentative assent to the peace terms presented by the Allies. Would this hurt the chances of the new paper? Sturge thought not. "Should our present hopes of Peace be realized", he wrote to Wilson, "it will not I think lessen the importance of having such a paper while it will probably increase its chance of success". Perhaps Sturge agreed with Cobden more than he was prepared to admit, that it would have been difficult to launch the new enterprise while the war fever was running high.²

Sturge felt that a name should be chosen for the paper (the *National* was tentatively suggested) in order that publicity might proceed. The time was ripe, he wrote Wilson, for the new paper to do good work in the cause of peace: If the news of Peace is confirmed should we not take steps forthwith to promote an arbitration treaty between the different powers of Europe for the settlement of all future differences?³

To begin promoting the paper, he wanted a proof copy sent to all those who contributed money toward its founding.⁴

THE *MORNING STAR* APPEARS

The paper had been well launched, the first edition of the *Morning Star* (and the afternoon edition, the *Evening*

¹ Bright to Sturge, January 14, 1856, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43723. Both the *Globe* and the *Morning Star* were approximately 18in × 25in.

² Sturge to Wilson, January 17, 1856, Wilson Papers, Manchester Central Library. Although the fighting continued for a time, Russia had indicated agreement with the Allies' terms on January 16. Sturge was informed of the good news when his brother interrupted him in the middle of a letter to George Wilson, in order to show him a telegraphic message to this effect. See Sturge to Wilson, January 18, 1856, *ibid.*

³ Sturge to Wilson, *ibid.*

⁴ Sturge to Wilson, January 21, 1856, *ibid.*

Star) were to appear on Monday, March 17. Cobden wrote to Sturge: "You ought to be proud of your work. It is the most successful effort in the cause of peace & intelligent progress which even you have ever made".¹ Having been largely responsible for raising the money which made the enterprise possible, Joseph Sturge, characteristically, did not intrude himself further in the plans. He had agreed that Wilson and Rawson should be in charge of all business decisions, and that Cobden and Bright should act as unofficial referees in case differences of opinion should arise among the principals. Satisfied with these arrangements, he turned to other matters.

On January 23, the powers named Paris as the place where the peace negotiations would be held. Sturge's concern had been to see the war finished as quickly as possible. For the next few months he would be occupied with the problem of securing a lasting peace.

* * *

Even before the first issue of the *Morning Star* appeared, Joseph Sturge and his friend Henry Richard set out for Paris to see whether they could induce the powers assembled there to include an arbitration clause in the treaty of peace. In this they were successful, largely through the good offices of Lord Clarendon.² Upon returning to England, Sturge became interested in another project connected with the Crimean war. The British navy, in the course of hostilities, had bombarded the coast of Finland, killing a number of Finns and destroying the means of livelihood of many more. Having heard rumours of the plight of these non-combatants, Sturge decided to investigate the situation at first-hand. With Thomas Harvey of Leeds he visited Finland, and what they found so distressed them that they founded a committee for Finnish relief. The committee raised the impressive sum of £9,000, which it forwarded to the suffering fishermen.³

¹ Cobden to Sturge, March 19, 1856, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

² For the story of their trials and tribulations—and ultimate success—see Stephen Frick, "Henry Richard and the Treaty of Paris of 1856", *National Library of Wales Journal*, XVII (1972), 299–313.

³ *Memoirs*, pp. 503–518; see also Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *Report of a visit to Finland in the autumn of 1856*, Birmingham, 1856, and Sarah G. Harvey, *Memorials of Thomas Harvey*, 1886, pp. 21–24, where likewise is printed Whittier's "The conquest of Finland".

In 1858, upon the death of Charles Hindley, Joseph Sturge was elected president of the Peace Society. He himself had but a short time to live. He died in 1859, and the story of his death and funeral service (which was treated as an occasion for public mourning in Birmingham) is affecting to read.¹

Although the *Morning Star* remained in business for thirteen years, it never managed to do very well. As James Grant noted, the *Morning Star* never managed to sell 15,000 copies daily, let alone the "30 or 40,000" copies which Cobden felt necessary if the venture was to succeed.² This was at a time when the *Telegraph* and the *Standard* were each selling upward of 120,000 copies per day. When the *Morning Star* ceased publication in 1869, its total losses were estimated at over £80,000.³

AFTERWORD

How best can one sum up Joseph Sturge's achievements during the war? We have seen how Sturge, in the best tradition of Quaker pacifism, had resisted not only the temptation to support the war, but the more subtle one of not supporting, yet saying nothing against the conflict. While his colleagues in the Peace Society were defecting from that organization *en masse*, Sturge became involved in the founding of the world's first peace daily; and it is certain that without his having canvassed for funds, and his constant bolstering of the sagging morale of his co-workers in the endeavour, the *Morning Star* would never have seen the light of day.

¹ *Memoirs*, pp. 567-572. In view of the treatment Sturge received during the war at the hands of his fellow townsmen, it is interesting to read some of the eulogies written after his death. Some examples are: Peter Sibree, *Memorial of Joseph Sturge and the Inauguration of His Monument* [Birmingham?, 1862]; William Wilkinson, *Lines in Memory of Joseph Sturge, the Birmingham Philanthropist, Who Died May 14th, 1859*. [Birmingham?, 1859]; and J. A. James, *Christian Philanthropy as Exemplified in the Life and Character of the late Joseph Sturge* (London, 1859).

² B.M., Add. MS. 50131 (Cobden to Sturge, 14 Dec. 1853).

³ James Grant, *The Newspaper Press*, London, 1871, i. 376-79. Grant's view was that the paper failed because of its unpatriotic policies and its "peace-at-any-price" attitude. A more sympathetic consideration of the *Morning Star* may be found in H. R. Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers*, London, 1887, ii, 238-239 and 271-272. (Two errors in Grant's account should be noted: (1) John Bright did not raise £4,500 on behalf of the paper, Joseph Sturge did; (2) the *Morning Star* stopped publishing in 1869, not 1870.)

At the conclusion of hostilities, Sturge travelled to Paris where, along with Henry Richard, he painstakingly applied to the powers for the insertion of an arbitration clause in the treaty. Their success was, as Beales says, "a landmark in the history of Peace in so far as it was the first clause of its kind to be inserted in a multilateral treaty".¹

Yet a mere recital of the facts concerning Sturge's anti-war activities does not adequately convey the nature of his accomplishment. His actual achievements were commendable; but even more commendable was his courage under attack, his equanimity in a potentially soul-destroying situation. He was functioning positively at a time when, according to the *Herald of Peace*

we [the pacifists] cannot open a newspaper, we can scarcely listen to a sermon or speech, without finding ourselves assailed with the bitterest opprobrium, our views misrepresented, our motives impugned, and principles and maxims inculcated which in our conscience we believe to be revolting to reason, injurious to the best interests of mankind, and utterly dishonouring to our common Christianity.²

What was it that enabled Joseph Sturge to retain his balance in those trying times? Perhaps it was the very simplicity of his peace views (some may think of him as a bit doctrinaire) which saved him from the bitterness and despair which were visited upon his more famous friends, Richard Cobden and John Bright. Consider what happened to them as a result of the Crimean war.

Cobden, for whatever reason, acted equivocally on several occasions, refused to confront the war machine directly, and failed to support Sturge fully when the latter was searching for a practical way to express opposition to the conflict. With regard to the *Morning Star*, Cobden's initial enthusiasm for the venture gave way to feelings of despair.

Public opinion, which had destroyed Aberdeen and raised Palmerston to power, was from the first directed against the peace men. Joseph Sturge, buoyed up by an absolute and uncomplicated commitment to the anti-war ethic, was relatively undaunted by the violence which

¹ A. C. F. Beales, *The History of Peace*, London, 1931, p. 100.

² "Dr. Morrison on War", *Herald of Peace*, n.s. LXVI (December, 1855), p. 284.

surrounded him. Richard Cobden, whose views were more complex than Sturge's and seemingly more contradictory (possibly a result of holding public office), was dismayed by public opinion, fell a victim to its pressures, and was thereby rendered a less effective advocate of the principles which he professed. Eventually Cobden became downright defeatist about the possibility of influencing public opinion on behalf of peace during a war.¹

And what of John Bright? What was the fate of the author of the "Angel of Death" speech and many of the most telling orations against war ever delivered in the Commons? He was broken, even before the signing of the Treaty of Paris, completely shattered by his experience of the war. The symptoms, as described by Trevelyan, were "great physical weakness, frequent severe headaches and inability to do mental work". As a result of the war, Bright suffered a crippling nervous breakdown which lasted a year.² I suggest that Bright's difficulties arose from a certain ambivalence in his pacifism, an ambivalence which was only revealed in his later years. Whereas Joseph Sturge was committed to (and drew strength from) the view that all war, no matter what its motive, was wrong, John Bright, in spite of the fact that he, too, was a Quaker, did not share this belief. In 1887 he made the following statement:

I have been asked this on several occasions, "What do you think about the doctrine of the Peace Society, or of your own Religious Body in their opposition to all war?" . . . I have never troubled myself very much about that abstract principle . . . I believe that without touching upon that abstract principle at all, it is conceivable that . . . there is probably not a single war in which we [need] have been engaged from the time of William III . . . I do not discuss the abstract principle, I say that if you will tell me a war, I will tell you my opinion about it.³

Certainly there are many variables and I would like to avoid simplistic psychologizing, but some sort of conclusion is in order. Enough to say that there is here evidence that one's equanimity and effectiveness in supporting a cause

¹ See his speech on the American civil war, given at Rochdale, October 29, 1862, in John Bright and J. E. Thorold Rogers, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P.* (London, 1870, Vol. II, pp. 314-315.

² G. M. Trevelyan, *The Life of John Bright*, London, 1913, pp. 254-258.

³ *Mr. John Bright and the Peace Society*, London [1887?], p. 9.

vary inversely with the complexity of one's support of that cause.

* * *

The mass defections from the Peace Society at the outbreak of the war indicated that the Society's self-congratulations, as expressed at all of the Peace Congresses from 1848 through 1853, were not in the least merited. Yet even after the debacle of 1854, the Society limped along. The movement had suffered an eclipse, but gradually, during the 1860s, began to recover. Today the original Peace Society is nearly defunct, but its descendants are many and thriving. The few triumphs which the movement enjoyed during the dark days of the Crimean war contributed to its survival; and those triumphs were largely the result of the efforts of a few men such as Joseph Sturge.

Shortly before the end of the war, Richard Cobden wrote to Joseph Sturge a prophetic letter in which he predicted that

if peace should be concluded it will be found that this has been one of the most *resultless* wars ever known. Every thing for which every body thought he was fighting will be unattained. The Turk will be a dying man, the Poles worse off by the hundreds of thousands, dragged into the Russian army and half of them killed—the Circassians and Hungarians just where they were and Austria more firmly fastened on the back of the Italians than ever.¹

This view has been substantially vindicated. W. E. Mosse points out that the attempt of the powers meeting at Paris to construct a treaty which would "maintain the independence and integrity of the Turkish empire" was doomed from the start. From the very signing of the treaty, Napoleon III let it be known that he would seek a *rapprochement* with Russia, and within three years he was at war with Austria, one of his "allies". Turkey, of course, continued to decay for decades.²

In 1871, Earl Granville made the startling disclosure in the Lords that Palmerston had expected that the Crimean settlement would contain Russia only for seven, at the

¹ Cobden to Sturge, January 21, 1856, Sturge Papers, British Museum, Add. MS. 43722.

² W. E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855-1871*, London, 1963.

most ten, years.¹ And Henry Richard pointed out that *The Times*, in 1861, contradicted its own wartime utterances completely when, speaking of the Crimean war, it said: "It is with no small reluctance we admit a gigantic effort, and an infinite sacrifice, to have been made in vain".²

Had Joseph Sturge known that posterity would come to agree with him, that the Crimean war would be seen as unnecessary and ineffectual, he might have been able to bear with even more equanimity the relentless censure of his countrymen. Because he had no such assurance, his achievement can be considered so much the greater.

STEPHEN FRICK

¹ *Hansard*, cciv, cc. 247f. and Russell to Granville, November 22, 1870, Public Record Office, Gifts and Deposits, 29/79; cited in Mosse, *op. cit.*, p. 3, nn. 1 and 2 (see also pp. 202-207).

² *Memoirs*, p. 496.