

THE MANCHESTER PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1853

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On Thursday 27 January 1853, delegates from all over the British Isles assembled in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, for a two-day conference on peace, the fifth of six major peace congresses held between 1848 and 1853. The previous four had been in Brussels (1848), Paris (1849), Frankfurt (1850), and London (1851), while the sixth was held at Edinburgh in October 1853. The boundaries of this mid-century international movement were the 1848 Revolutions and the Crimean War — the former generating considerable optimism among the radical liberal bourgeoisie and breathing life into the peace cause, the latter creating division and pessimism among radicals and effectively laying the peace congress movement to rest.

Historians have in general regarded the Manchester and Edinburgh conferences as little more than footnotes to the more serious business that had gone before. Paris has been portrayed as the movement's high-water mark, the most important congress of the series, whereas Manchester and Edinburgh are normally seen as purely domestic affairs — an attempt by the British peace movement to rescue a flagging and moribund cause. While there is much truth in this assessment, it has meant that the Manchester conference has not merited the attention it deserves, and is now little remembered, even by local historians. The conference did, however, have an important impact on the trajectory of the nineteenth-century British peace movement. It was an important step in a process that saw the weight of support and influence behind that movement shift between the 1840s and the 1860s away from London and towards the north of England in general and Manchester in particular. In this mid-century period, then, Manchester's contribution to the peace cause came to at least rival if not eclipse that of London.

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Prior to 1848 the peace movement had been primarily the preserve of religious and philanthropic organisations. They promulgated their cause largely via the dissemination of peace pamphlets, prize essay competitions, and lecture tours. By the early 1840s peace propaganda was dominated by proposals to establish a Congress of Nations and to insert an arbitration clause into all international treaties, and these were the main items debated at the very first general peace convention, held in London in 1843.¹

However, it needed something more than religious and millenarian sentiment to sustain an effective international peace movement. It was the groundswell of confidence among European radicals in the heady revolutionary atmosphere of 1848 which inspired the first international congress in Brussels in September of that year. At this and the subsequent congresses the religious case for peace was supplemented by rather more mundane arguments. In particular, three broad perspectives were presented. From continental Europe came proposals from the disciples of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Mazzini for a peaceful federation of independent, democratic states. American



Richard Cobden at the age of 57.

pacifists remained committed to the establishment of a permanent Congress of Nations backed by a code of international law. Finally, an influential group of British middle-class political economists saw the spread of liberalism as the prelude to international free trade and, thereby, as a logical corollary of their theories, to the establishment of international peace.

By 1850 the peace congress movement had come to be dominated by the British perspective, and especially the views of Richard Cobden. However, in order to allay continental suspicions that free trade was simply a cloak for British economic interests, Cobden pressed for a series of practical and incremental changes in the conduct of international relations — above all, for arbitration, non-intervention, abolition of war-loans, and disarmament. And this, in essence, was the content of the peace programme by the time the series of congresses reached Manchester in 1853.

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At the conclusion of the London congress in July 1851 it was proposed to hold a further continental congress the following year.² The atmosphere of the London congress, timed as it was to coincide with and draw upon the attendance and publicity of the Great Exhibition, had been one of great optimism in the growing scale of the



First Corn Exchange, 1837.

international peace movement and its likely future success. It had been the largest and most cosmopolitan gathering so far, with delegates from the United States, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Holland, Sweden, and Norway joining the thousand-strong British representation. This optimism was, however, shattered by the French invasion panic which followed Louis Napoleon's coup d'état of 2 December 1851 and the passing of the Militia Act in the spring of 1852. The plans for an international conference were therefore abandoned in 1852 and a substitute-meeting arranged for Manchester in January 1853.

Why Manchester? In the first place, Manchester had a small but active and influential group of peace activists. The Manchester and Salford Peace Society had been set up in 1833 as an auxiliary of the London Peace Society (hereafter LPS). By 1842 Joseph Brotherton, the MP for Salford whose wealth had been made in cotton textiles, was its chairman and Richard Cobden was on its committee.³ Impetus behind the movement came from Quakers, pacifists by faith. Three Mancunian Quakers were especially active — Joseph Crosfield, George Bradshaw, and Peter B. Alley, along with a Presbyterian William P. Cunningham. Crosfield, a local businessman was a strong advocate of peace through free trade. Bradshaw, an engraver and printer by trade, achieved lasting fame as the originator in 1839 of the railway guides and timetables that bore his name. Alley, an architect, had been at school with John Bright. He was later to serve on the committee that organised the conference of 1853. Cunningham was a Scotsman who had moved to Manchester in 1832 and gained rapid promotion as a banker. He had been present at the meeting which established the Anti-Corn Law League in 1838, being one of its seven original promoters.

In 1845 Britain and the United States were embroiled in the so-called "Oregon Question" - a dispute over the latter's north-west frontier with the British empire in

Canada. In a letter to the *Manchester Times* of December 6 Crosfield made a plea for an arbitrated settlement. It was followed up by an attempt to inaugurate with the co-operation of the American peace activist Elihu Burritt, a new peace movement based upon an exchange of "International and Friendly Addresses" between British and American towns. In their correspondence with Burritt, Crosfield and his associates stressed the links between free trade and peace, while the friendly address from Manchester, dated 2 February 1846, argued for the insertion of an arbitration clause in international treaties.⁴

These links were consolidated by the establishment of Burritt's League of Universal Brotherhood. In June 1846 he came to England and visited Crosfield, arriving in Manchester in time to attend the last meeting of the Anti-Corn Law League on July 2. Burritt conceived the Brotherhood as the moral successor to the Anti-Corn Law League, which "would be to Slavery, War, Intemperance, Ignorance, Political and Social Inequalities" what the League had been to "Monopoly".⁵ The Brotherhood was provisionally established that summer and formally so one year later. By October 1847 its membership stood at nearly 15,000 with approximately 130 branches. Crosfield, Cunningham, and Bradshaw were active from the outset in publicising the Brotherhood, establishing a large branch in Manchester, and arranging for Burritt to address free trade meetings across the country. The Manchester branch was particularly well-supported by the recently victorious free traders, including the president of the Anti-Corn Law League George Wilson. Burritt was particularly pleased by the allegiance of Wilson, noting in his Journal on 12 October 1846 that "This truly is a great acquisition. Perhaps some day he may become President of the 'League of Universal Brotherhood', when its circumference shall embrace thousands of every civilized nation on the globe."⁶ Burritt's judgement was not misplaced for Wilson, a starch and gum manufacturer,

was an extremely able campaign organiser, a very effective chairman, and the most prominent Manchester radical of the mid-nineteenth century.

It was out of the Burritt-Manchester connection that the idea for an international peace congress arose. According to Burritt, it was while making a railway journey with Bradshaw from Manchester to Bolton on 23 February 1848 that the project was first mooted. That evening and the following day, the scheme was firmed up in discussions between Burritt and his Manchester friends. The original intention was for English members of the Brotherhood to meet in Paris with sympathetic French colleagues. In the end, however, there were two significant changes to this plan. Because of the revolutionary events in France it was felt expedient to move the location of the conference from Paris to Brussels; and the organisational basis of the conference was broadened by the involvement of representatives of the LPS. The latter were perhaps somewhat jealous and certainly rather suspicious of the independent new line emerging from Manchester. After the success of the Brussels congress an organising body, the Peace Congress Committee, was set up embracing both the Brotherhood and the Peace Society, and it took the leading role thereafter. But in its genesis, the congress movement was undoubtedly the product of Burritt and the Manchester Quakers⁷ — and it is important to register this fact in order to understand why Manchester was a natural choice for the 1853 conference.

If the early and important history of the peace movement in Manchester goes a long way towards explaining its selection as host to the gathering of 1853, a second crucial factor was the real and symbolic importance of the city as the centre of the free trade triumph against the Corn Laws. Burritt deliberately strove to mobilise the successful free trade agitators behind the new, but not unrelated, peace campaign. He had noted in his Journal on 12 June 1848: "I was anxious that the Manchester League will (sic) be to the movement what its Free Trade Association was to that great enterprise."⁸ One significant consequence of Manchester School theory, therefore, was the close involvement with the peace movement that it entailed of prominent radical free trade acolytes — such as George Wilson, John Bright, and, above all, Richard Cobden.

Neither Cobden nor Bright were out-and-out pacifists. Both held that a resort to arms was occasionally justified, and that it was necessary to maintain sufficient armaments for defensive purposes. They opposed the majority of wars on the grounds that they were costly, unnecessary, and unjust; that they hampered economic, political, and social progress; and that generally, therefore, they served the interests not of society at large but solely of the landed class. Despite his prominent part in opposition to the Crimean War, however, Bright did not play a significant role in the peace congress movement. He attended none of the overseas congresses, declined to contribute to the subscription launched at the Manchester conference, and only appeared at Edinburgh under protest.⁹

Cobden, for his part, had early recognised and was quick to acknowledge the important role in the peace movement played by the peace societies and their preponderantly religious clientèle. At the Manchester congress he claimed that he had never been "a subscriber or a member of the Peace Society, strictly so called".¹⁰ Perhaps he was referring here to the LPS for, as we have seen, he was a committee-member of the Manchester and Salford Peace Society in 1842 and there is a receipt, dated 22 May 1849,

for his subscription to that body in the archives at Manchester Central Reference Library.¹¹ Cobden's great skill lay in developing a peace programme that was both attainable and acceptable to the multifarious interests that comprised the peace movement. For these reasons, he was always careful to cultivate those who opposed war purely on religious grounds, for in his opinion "without the stubborn zeal of the Friends, there would be no Peace Society and no Peace Conference."¹² At the same time, however, he recognised the necessity of mobilising this religious sentiment behind a practical and realisable programme — arbitration, disarmament, non-intervention, and the abolition of warloans. He summed up this tactic in a letter of 1851 to the secretary of the LPS, Henry Richard: "...the object of the Peace Congress movement, as I understood it, was to put forward some plans, the advocacy of which might prepare men's minds, step by step, to look upon the abolition of war as a possible thing."¹³

After the victory of the Anti-Corn Law League in 1846 Cobden was a highly-regarded figure in European liberal circles and Manchester was symbolical as the centre of a successful bourgeois campaign — what Cobden and Manchester had achieved for free trade, might they not now achieve for peace? In the dark days of 1852, when the international peace movement had stalled, Manchester was chosen for a holding conference, to demonstrate to compatriots in France that there was a genuine and not uninfluential alternative to the belligerent noises emanating from the central government in London.

Moreover, the Manchester bourgeoisie had been stirred back into activity in early 1852 by the proposal of Lord Derby's administration to revive protectionism by reimposing a moderate duty on corn. The Anti-Corn Law League was revived under Wilson's chairmanship and having quickly squashed Derby's plans, the same gentlemen were able to turn their attention to the peace question.

The decision to abandon plans for a continental congress and to meet instead at Manchester was taken at a conference of the friends of peace on 21 May 1852. The original intention was to organise a peace campaign to coincide with the general election of July. Preparations, however, took longer than anticipated. Joseph Sturge and his nephew Charles Gilpin, in their capacity as emissaries of the LPS, visited Manchester in the autumn to discuss these arrangements with Wilson. On October 1 Richard wrote to Wilson emphasising his conviction that with the support of "the spirited men who acted with you on the Anti-Corn-Law League" they would have "a powerful & triumphant demonstration at Manchester".¹⁴ Cobden was less certain. Following a meeting in London with Richard and Sturge on December 3 at which he learnt that the conference organisers were having difficulty obtaining names to the requisition calling the meeting, he wrote a pessimistic letter to Wilson. The lack of success in collecting names did not surprise him "seeing how much the war spirit, & the invasion panic have spread amongst all classes". And, he added, "I should be sorry to be the cause of dragging some of my colleagues in to the agitation at a moment when the popular tide seems setting in the other direction."¹⁵ Wilson's reply sought to reassure Cobden and he pressed ahead with Sturge, Gilpin, and Richard in finalising the arrangements.¹⁶ Wilson's confidence was rewarded. In the event nearly 200 "gentlemen of high character", including 18 MPs, signed the circular of invitation.¹⁷ The peace conference



Mr. Cobden addressing the League Council.

(From the Painting by J.R. Herbert, R.A. Reproduced by permission of Messrs. T. Agnew & Sons.)

The Reader is recommended to examine the Picture with a magnifying glass. The likenesses of Mr. Cobden and others will be far more distinct, and many details also.

met on 27-28 January 1853 with approximately 500 delegates in attendance and it proved to be, despite Cobden's earlier misgivings, a satisfactory and constructive meeting. "Though full of apprehension," Richard recorded, "the event rebuked and belied my fears. I don't think we ever had an assembly on the whole so weighty and influential, and pervaded by a spirit so earnest and courageous."¹⁸

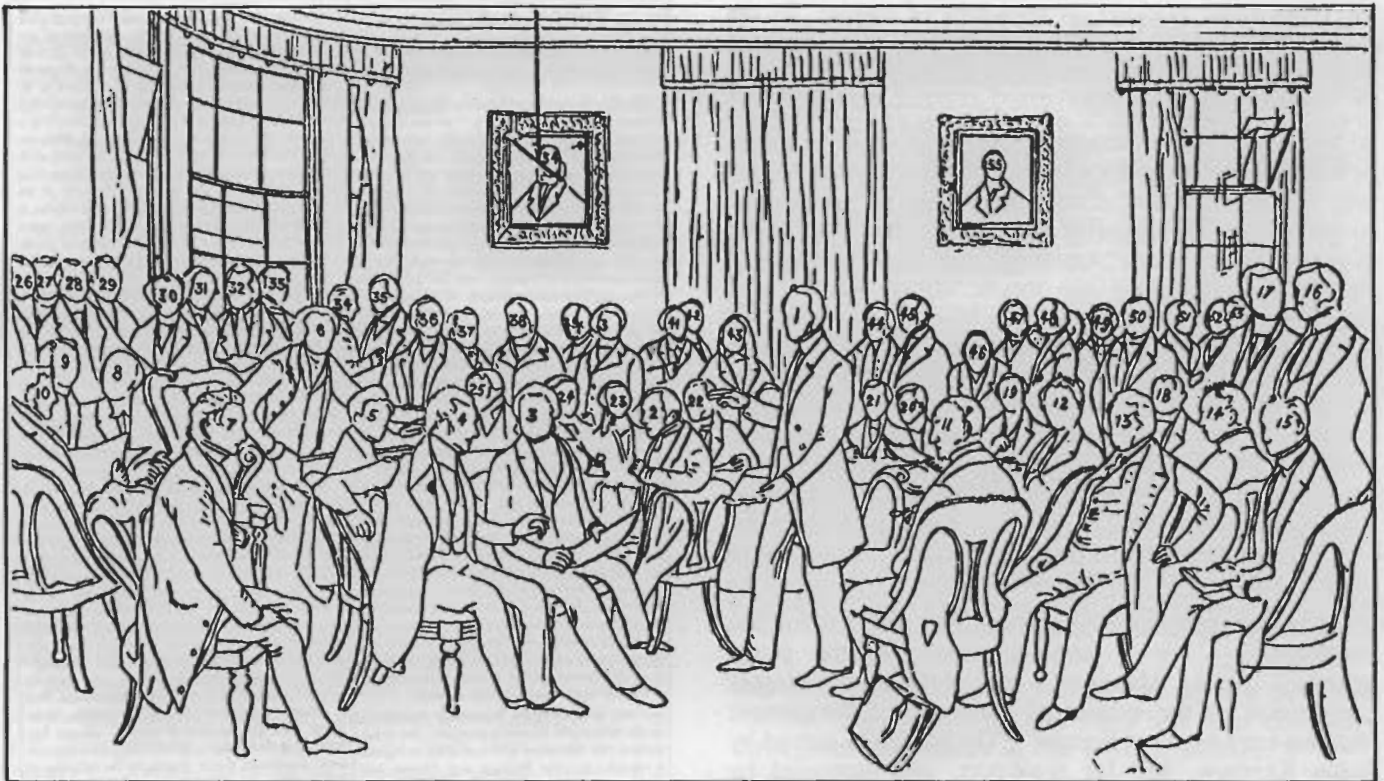
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Among the delegates who assembled in the Corn Exchange on the morning of January 27 were 17 MPs,¹⁹ over 70 ministers of religion, important representatives of the commercial and manufacturing class of north-west England, and middle-class radical delegates from the length and breadth of Britain. George Wilson took the chair and in his opening remarks connected the issue of peace with that of financial reform and free trade. After the secretary of the conference, Henry Richard, had read out a number of letters from absent friends, the meeting got down to debating the substantive resolutions.

The first, moved by George Hadfield, MP for Sheffield, was a plea to ministers of religion, parents, teachers, and the press to use their influence to disseminate pacific principles. There was nothing new here — similar resolutions had been carried at every conference bar Brussels. The second resolution, in favour of arbitration clauses in international treaties, was also an established plank in the congress platform. On this occasion it was moved by the Rev. John Burnet of London who, in an able little speech, satirised the chauvinistic fervour stirred up by the recent appeals to loyalism and royalism. Bright, who had not intended to speak at that day's meeting, was

prevailed upon to second the resolution, and in his *extempore* speech gave examples of how arbitration had been utilised to good effect in international disputes, and suggested how Britain might set the world an example by making it a permanent arrangement in international affairs. Brotherton wound up the session with a speech in which he described free trade as the "best security" for peace.

The conference reconvened at 6pm. After some minor matters, most of the evening was taken up with a lengthy speech by Cobden calling for general disarmament.²⁰ It was a typical Cobden performance — erudite and trenchant but leavened with sardonic humour directed at the British government. Disarmament, like peace education and arbitration, had been a familiar part of the congress programme from the outset, despite minor disagreements among peace-workers over such questions as total versus partial disarmament (Cobden supported the latter for defensive reasons; non-resisters wished to beat all armaments into pruning-hooks and ploughshares), and universal versus unilateral disarmament (with contending voices as to which country should take the initiative). These differences were usually resolved by way of a resolution stressing general and simultaneous disarmament. On this occasion Cobden ridiculed the invasion panic. Drawing on the research he had undertaken for his pamphlet *1793 and 1853*, he sought to demonstrate that the French had no reason whatsoever to want to invade Britain. Further to this he calculated that savings on wasteful armaments' expenditure and the resultant reduction in taxation would have almost as beneficial an effect on industry and trade as had repeal of the Corn Laws. This did not mean he was unwilling to pay



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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 R. Cobden.* | 15 Hamer Stansfeld. | 29 Robt. Ashton. | 43 W.J. Fox. |
| 2 Wm. Rawson. | 16 Thos. Bazley.* | 30 Duncan McLaren. | 44 Francis Place. |
| 3 John Bright.* | 17 Hy. Ashworth.* | 31 Jas. Wilson (London) | 45 Edwd. Baines. |
| 4 C.P. Villiers. | 18 Jas. Chadwick. | 32 A.W. Paulton. | 46 Edwd. Baxter (Dundee). |
| 5 T.M. Gibson.* | 19 Wm. Bickham. | 33 Wm. Biggs. | 47 P.A. Taylor. |
| 6 Geo. Wilson.* | 20 Hy. Rawson. | 34 John Petrie. | 48 Dr. Bowring. |
| 7 R.H. Greg. | 21 Saml. Lees. | 35 C.E. Rawlins, junr. | 49 John Cheetham. |
| 8 John Brooks. | 22 Thos. Woolley. | 36 Jas. Garth Marshall. | 50 Jos. Brotherton.* |
| 9 J.B. Smith.* | 23 Wm. Evans. | 37 Robert Munn. | 51 Saml. Bean. |
| 10 Earl Ducie. | 24 Jas. Lumsden. | 38 John Dixon (Carlisle)* | 52 Jas. Kershaw.* |
| 11 Earl Radnor. | 25 Jos. Hickin (Secretary). | 39 Jos. Scholfield. | 53 W.R. Callender. |
| 12 Archibd. Prentice. | 26 Lord Kinnaird. | 40 Fredk. Schwann. | 54 Sir Thos. Potter. |
| 13 Col. Thompson. | 27 Rev. Dr. Massie. | 41 Lawrence Heyworth.* | 55 Thos. Ashton. |
| 14 Wm. Brown (Liverpool). | 28 John Whitaker. | 42 Robt. Milligan. | |

* Asterisks indicate those also involved later in the 1853 Conference.

taxes for necessary defence; nor was he a non-resister — “...an unprovoked attack would find, I dare say, as resolute a resistance from me as many of those who are now crying out in a panic, and who, I suspect, would be very likely to run away from the enemy.” Finally, he outlined plans for enlarging the scope of the peace movement by way of a publicity campaign organised in Manchester on the back of a £10,000 fighting fund. In this way the real lesson of the Manchester peace conference would be driven home — “if it be only known in France that here, in Manchester, — in the centre of the free trade agitation, surrounded by the very men who won that battle, — there are men here now who are prepared to commit themselves”, then they would have a tremendous effect upon French opinion and go a long way to counteracting the mischievous influence of the warmongering press.

A resolution in favour of non-intervention by one country in the affairs of another was debated next. Non-intervention was a comparative newcomer to the congress programme having been added to it for the first time at Frankfurt in 1850. Its inclusion, against opposition from European liberals who favoured armed intervention in support of national liberation movements, demonstrates

more than any other single issue the extent to which Cobden and his British supporters had come to dominate the peace congress movement by 1850. On the home ground of Manchester it occasioned no dissension and was quickly carried. Its mover, Samuel Bowly, asked Cobden to press in parliament for a return of all the treaties committing Britain to foreign intervention, and he was supported by the financial reformer, Lawrence Heyworth, who advocated direct taxation as a substitute for customs duties in order to facilitate commerce and thereby peace. Henry Richard rounded off the day’s business by reading from an essay designed to show that France did not want war with England, sent to the conference by Louis de Cormenin, a vice-president at Frankfurt and a noted French pamphleteer.

When the delegates re-assembled the following morning, the chair was taken by the Rev. Dr. Davidson of the Lancashire Independent College. The fifth resolution of the conference — advocating reform of the colonial system — was a new addition to the congress programme, reflecting the strong anti-colonial sentiments of the Manchester School free traders. It had also, perhaps, been too sensitive an issue to be raised in an international gathering — many Frenchmen, for example, did not share

the Manchester position on questions of empire. In the debate that ensued, the only contribution of any import came from Richard, who ridiculed British involvement in the current war in Burmah.

At this point Joseph Sturge intervened in order to solicit contributions to the subscription fund, and to propose that the Peace Congress Committee hold a continental congress (Sturge suggested Paris) later that year. That proposal having been approved, the sixth substantive resolution — opposing the recent Militia Act — was introduced. This was specific to Manchester being, of course, the very issue that had inspired the conference. It was moved by Charles Gilpin and supported by, among others, Charles Hindley, MP for Ashton-under-Lyne. Gilpin criticised the government's attempt to prosecute four men for distributing a Peace Society handbill which, by depicting the continuing practice of flogging in the militia, had done much to undermine the success of the recruitment campaign. The government subsequently backed down.

Two further proposals completed the business of the conference — for a peace-deputation to the prime minister, Lord Aberdeen, and for a prize-essay competition on the subject of "the evil of the present standing armaments of Europe". The latter was moved by James Kershaw, MP for Stockport, and supported by Thomas Thomasson, a wealthy cotton spinner from Bolton who had been the largest subscriber to the funds of the Anti-Corn Law League, and who had bailed Cobden out financially at critical periods in his public career. The conference was wound up with thanks to the presiding officers, and adjourned at 2.40pm.

That evening a large public meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall to which the conference resolutions were put and carried and at which Cobden, Bright, and Thomas Milner Gibson (who shared with Bright the representation of Manchester in the Commons) were the principal speakers. The thrust of Milner Gibson's speech was to call for economies in armaments' expenditure and to use the savings to pay for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge. Cobden too spoke of the benefits, especially to commerce and industry, and thereby to domestic contentment, that would accrue from a policy of disarmament. His speech was in general unremarkable apart from two observations in it: a suggestion that Napoleon III should take the initiative by convening a European conference; and a reference to the aristocratic system of government which, through its manipulation of diverse "privileged monopolising interests" and its control of "the great emoluments of your army, navy, and ordnance", constituted a powerful vested interest that operated against the public interest. What Cobden was here describing was the pernicious influence of a sort of agrarian-military complex — one hundred years before Eisenhower identified its twentieth-century counterpart, the military-industrial complex, though the latter was perceived as advantaging industry, whereas Cobden clearly saw the former as working to industry's detriment. Bright completed the trio of speeches on the wastefulness of military and colonial expenditure. His own contribution blended statistical information with humorous illustration, and concluded with a peroration that anticipated his moving speeches against the Crimean War.

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In the circumstances of 1852-3, the Manchester peace conference had quite legitimately focused its energies on

THE GUARDIAN.

MANCHESTER,
SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1853.

MR. COBDEN AND THE NATIONAL DEFENCE.—Mr. COBDEN has been "coming out" on the subject of national defence,—we cannot say very strongly but certainly at very great length. A pamphlet of 140 octavo pages, and we do not as yet know how many long speeches, are devoted to the very hopeless task of convincing the people of England that they may make themselves perfectly easy about the designs of the very unscrupulous gentleman whose iron will and inscrutable purposes wield the vast aggressive power of France,—who has got an army of four hundred thousand men on the other side of the Channel, and who is straining every nerve in the dockyards of France to accumulate a large force of powerful steam-ships, which will enable him, at any time, in a single night, to transport forty or fifty thousand of those troops to the gates of Portsmouth or Sheerness. In all these things Mr. COBDEN sees nothing but peace, as he tells us a great length through numerous pages and columns,—too numerous, both, for the exposition of a good case, and not quite numerous enough to conceal a bad one. When we were told that Mr. JESSÉ had spoken four hours and a half in spreading his budget, we said at once that it not only must be a bad budget, but that Mr. JESSÉ saw it to be bad, or he would not have employed such a cloud of words to conceal its defects. So, when we saw the bulk of Mr. COBDEN'S pamphlet, stating a comparison between the years 1793 and 1853, we strongly suspected that we were to be set off with words instead of facts and arguments bearing upon that great question which, as we can see Mr. COBDEN, public opinion in this country as already most unmistakably decided.

As our readers would necessarily conjecture, on the title of Mr. COBDEN'S pamphlet, the writer compares the two years 1793 and 1853, as regards a relation between England and France; and spends upon an exposition of the occurrences of former year just one-half of his 140 pages. But by or wherefore we really cannot tell: for the resemblance between the two periods is about as great as that detected by FLEURET between Monarch and Macedon. In that case there was a river each country, with "salmons in both;" just as the parallel instituted by Mr. COBDEN each of 2 years indicated begins with a 1 and ends with 2. But, Mr. COBDEN'S ingenuity would have added him to compare with equal force and meaning, 1853, or any year presenting a similar resemblance of figures, with the present year of war. In 1793, as Mr. COBDEN labours to show, very unnecessary length, the English government spared no pains to stimulate the then existing loyalty to France and Frenchmen, and to excite a desire for war which was at that time so ardent in the breasts of Englishmen. Now, the

preparing for a re-arrangement of the parliamentary campaign at an early day. No body of men can be better entitled than they are to give the signal for a renewal of activity in the suspended agitation. They bore the heat and labour of the day, at a time when the discussion of the question was far less popular and less agreeable than it is at present; they collected and arrayed the facts, and cultivated the interest which form the hold of the movement upon public attention; and if anything is to be done in the matter, the credit of the achievement will be due, in a principal degree, to their assiduous and persevering efforts. With regard to the merits of the particular scheme of public education which they advocate there are wide differences of opinion among their well-wishers; and even among those who give entire adhesion to their principles, there must often be a mingling as to the feasibility and practicability of their plan in any state of society and public opinion which we are shortly likely to attain. But there can never be any hesitation to acknowledge the debt which is due to them from the whole country for the course which years ago paved the way for whatever efforts now promise to be successful, and struck the first path through the unpromising wild of popular ignorance and still more culpable disregard.

Our readers are aware, from the remarks we have made from time to time on this subject, that as soon as possible after the opening of the next session, the renewal of the incomplete inquiry into the educational condition of Manchester and Salford may be anticipated. It is expected, as we learn from the meeting of the National Public School Association, that Mr. MILNER OSBORN will move the re-appointment of the committee. To this proposal it is not to be conceived that any objection will be forthcoming. The investigation was abruptly broken off last year without a report, and with a brief recommendation that it should be resumed as soon as possible, since which time the tendency of political changes has been all in its favour by substituting for a government indifferent, if not hostile to the agitation of the question, an administration pledged, both by the antecedents of its leading members and by the voluntary statements of its programme, to make this one of the principal objects of its concern. We are pleased to receive the assurance of the National Public School Association that they will be early in the field, and that they have employed the armistice in collecting a body of statistics relative to the educational condition of the district. The evidence thus brought together will no doubt be of great service in the refutation of those ingenious fallacies with which the apologists of the voluntary system seek to defend the continued neglect of this branch of government. It is a pleasing circumstance in the local controversy which we have been waging for some years, that the two associations to whose keeping important divisions of opinion are confided, though rivals in the advocacy of their respective details, are colleagues in the work of dissipating

counteracting the malign influence of the invasion panic and the Militia Act — by appealing to the government, by attempting to reassure the French by demonstrating the political clout that Manchester free traders possessed, and, above all, by seeking to enlist public support behind its banner. This last was perhaps the most significant development in the British peace movement of 1852-3 and in which the Manchester conference played a pivotal role. All the peace congresses, except Brussels, had made a ritualistic plea for the dissemination of peace principles via press, pulpit, and school. And fifteen Paris workmen had made an appearance on the platform of the London congress.²¹ But these were little more than token gestures. The congress movement was indubitably a middle-class movement — bourgeois in terms both of its personnel and the methods it employed to achieve its ends. By 1852 the British peace leaders were at last coming to realise that, as with so many other middle-class radical campaigns, they could only succeed if the working classes were mobilised behind them.

Cobden, as always, was among the first to recognise the need for a change in direction. "After all," he wrote at the time of the Manchester conference, "our business must be with the masses — keep them right and we can't go wrong."²² The chauvinism stirred up by the invasion panic may have brought him to this realisation. More specifically, the popular display of affection for the Duke of Wellington which he had witnessed at the Great

Exhibition was, he told Thomasson, "one of the most impressive lessons I ever had of the real tendencies of the English character....(T)he world never knew so warlike and aggressive a people as the British." He concluded:

The moral of all this is that we have to pull against wind and tide in trying to put down the warlike spirit of our countrymen. It must be done by showing them that their energies have been perverted to a disastrous course, so far as *their* interests are concerned, by a ruling class which has reaped all the honours and emoluments, while the nation inherits the burdens and responsibilities. Our modern history must be re-written.²³

Cobden was already at work re-writing that history. The outcome was the pamphlet *1793 and 1853, in Three Letters*. It was written in the form of a reply to an anonymous clergyman's eulogising sermon on the occasion of the death of Wellington. Cobden's aim was to show that England was the aggressor against France in 1793; that the war was not fought to defend liberty but rather to sustain the old governments of Europe; that it was an offensive not a defensive war, initiated by England to put down the liberal principles of 1789-90, to prevent them spreading in England, and to restore Louis XVI "to the prerogatives of which he had been deprived by the people". Above all, Cobden's purpose was to expose the real origins of the Revolutionary Wars in order to educate people to react differently to the panic of 1853 and not to repeat the errors of sixty years earlier. He made great use of statistical information, much of it supplied by his French friend Michel Chevalier, to show that France, second only to England in industry and commerce, would not place this economic well-being at jeopardy in a war with England. Trade improved the chances of peace. Above all, neither country could possibly gain anything from the risk war would pose to their respective textile industries — cotton was "undoubtedly the great peace-preserver of the age". Finally, he underscored his motive for writing the pamphlet. A pacific policy, he argued, would "never be inaugurated by an aristocratic executive, until impelled to it by public opinion....no minister can do it, except when armed by a pressure from without."²⁴

Such was the frame of mind in which Cobden came to the Manchester conference. He was now convinced that the peace congress movement must, like the Anti-Corn Law League before it, take to "the streets and market-places" if it was to achieve success.²⁵ The pamphlet was intended to provide the necessary raw material by which the peace lecturers and publicists could begin their task. It was printed just in time to go on sale on the first day of the conference. On January 25 500 copies were rushed up from London on the overnight mail-train. The publisher had priced it at 2s., but Cobden was anxious that a cheap edition be brought out "for the people".²⁶ Events surpassed even Cobden's expectations. Both the *Manchester Examiner* and *The Times* printed the pamphlet *in extenso*. It appeared in the latter in three consecutive issues, accompanied by heavily critical editorial comment.²⁷ Cobden was surprised and delighted. He regarded it as "an abundant recompense for the little night-work, and the occasional cold feet it cost me, to see it sent to all the corners of the earth upon the *Times*' broad sheet."²⁸ With *The Times*'s circulation standing at over 40,000, Cobden had good reason to feel pleased. Moreover, the Peace Conference Committee circulated a cheap edition of the pamphlet in the spring and summer of 1853. As a result, by the time the Edinburgh conference

THE 'PEACE' MEETING LAST EVENING.

The Free-trade Hall was crowded in every part last evening, long before the hour of commencing proceedings. Amongst those in the front seats of the body of the hall, and the steps of the platform, were many ladies, chiefly (judging by their garb) of the Society of Friends. We shall not occupy space by any list of names: it may be assumed that those present consisted of the delegates, members of parliament, dissenting ministers, &c. who have been already mentioned, in connection with the 'Peace Conference.' Mr. OSBORN WILSON took the chair, amidst loud cheers, a salute or two after seven o'clock.—The Secretary, the Rev. H. RICHARDS, read the string of resolutions previously adopted at the conference, in order that this meeting might adopt them.—On the motion of Mr. ELLIS, of Leicester, seconded by Mr. BRUCE, of Birmingham, the resolutions were put on names, and adopted unanimously by the meeting.—The CHAIRMAN then intimated that subscription had been commenced to send lecturers through the country, which now amounted to £4,525; and it was proposed to augment it to £10,000. He called upon the Rev. JOHN BOAGY, of London, to move the seventh resolution:—That as it is of the utmost importance to the peace of Europe, and to the general interest of civilisation and humanity, that unity of moral relations should exist between this country and France, this conference deems it to be the special and solemn duty of all friends of peace earnestly to discuss whether it is a tendency to revive suspicions and jealousies between these two great nations, and to promote all such measures as shall serve to extinguish their commerce and multiplying their amicable relations to bind them more closely in the ties of interdependence and friendship. He said the leading type of England, much as he valued it, had done more evil than the iron axe of the guillotine. A French army that could have any momentary shade of success, would make a whole wave to land on our shores, even if obstructed. Two towers stood at Boulogne; the first erected by Caligula, the Roman emperor, the second by Napoleon Bonaparte,—both to commemorate invasions of England, which never took place.—Mr. HARRY ASHWORTH seconded the resolution, which passed unanimously.—Mr. RICHARDS read three other resolutions passed at the morning conference, and the address to the Earl of Aberdeen (it was stated by the chairman) was taken as read.—On the motion of JOSEPH CHOCE, Esq., M.P. of Bolton, and seconded by Mr. FRANK CHAMLEY, M.P. of Halifax, the three resolutions were passed together and unanimously.—The Right Hon. T. M. OSBORN, M.P. then addressed the meeting. Having been cautioned not to mix himself with

distant, to agitate at home, and to oppose parliamentary candidates who should vote for the militia bill, &c. In after years, they would be proud in having aided in the first steps of this great movement,—a greater than that for the repeal of the corn law.—(Applause.) Mr. P. rose at half-past nine, and was loudly cheered. He said he had no doubt that already certain public instructors were writing in barbers' chambers, or editorial offices, with their pens dipped in ink, perhaps in gall,—(laughter)—to comment upon the "absurd proceedings" of this great gathering. We were accused of being enthusiasts, expending our money in chasing abstract theories, without being able to overtake them, and put them in practice. He then read a paragraph in the last number of the *Athenaeum*, on the subject of this peace conference, which while avowing itself the advocate of peace and the enemy of war, said that men's minds were now agitated to be free to listen to the charming of the Peace Society,—charm it ever so wisely; that the time was out of joint; the European system broken up; and the sword in more reckless hands than fear. If he wanted an argument for standing upon that platform, or to justify him in raising his voice in favour of peace and a policy that must ensure peace, he would draw it from this paragraph,—written not by an enemy to them or to their cause, but appearing in a journal that generally took a fair view of all the questions with which it dealt. He was a practical man; and he had seen the advantages of the formation of something like a great association, which should for a moment leave abstract questions for which the world did not seem ready, to bring in every man who wished to grapple with a great and growing evil, whatever the principle or ground upon which he consented to act. He would argue the question upon grounds which their opponents admitted; which not professing Christians only, but Mahomedans, heathens, but every man of common sense and humanity would admit. He would argue it upon the ground that war was the greatest of all human calamities—that the expenditures by a government of the resources of the people over whom it ruled—and that peace was the soil upon which industry, morality, intelligence, and civilisation all prospered; and, unless confined upon this ground, he claimed the opinion of that audience and of the country. It was charged in the newspapers that because the peace party was against unnecessary armaments, and unnecessary increases of force, they were therefore against all force. No such proposition had ever been submitted by them in parliament, or defended or maintained in public.—(Great cheer.) With the most unblinking impudence, it was assumed that

met in October, Richard was able to declare that about 126,000 copies of *1793 and 1853* had been distributed throughout the country in one form or another.²⁹

The peace leaders, especially Cobden, were also preoccupied at the time of the Manchester conference with the *organisational* mechanics by which the mobilisation of public opinion would be achieved. Cobden was anxious not to alienate the Quakers for, as we have seen, he did not believe that the Peace Society or the peace conference movement could survive without them. He was equally determined, however, to continue the process, begun with the establishment of the Peace Congress Committee, of wedding a practical purpose to the idealistic zeal of the non-resisters. This was now taken further with the establishment by Manchester of its own Peace Conference Committee.

The original Peace Congress Committee, established after Brussels, had met on an irregular basis, liaising at the appropriate moments with the various other national peace committees to coordinate arrangements for the congresses. In December 1852 a provisional committee was set up in Manchester to finalise preparations for the forthcoming conference. It issued an 'Address' from its office in the Athenaeum on December 21, criticising increases in military forces, costing the tax burdens imposed by war, and appealing for support for the coming conference.³⁰ This Manchester committee was intended to be shortlived. However, on the morning of the first day of the conference, it considered turning itself into a permanent new organisation. In the event, it was decided not to set up a separate body, the reason being, Cobden informed conference delegates that evening, "because the Peace Congress Association formed the common ground on which all men might cooperate". Instead, it was decided to broaden the operations of that London-based body by placing upon it more representatives from Manchester and elsewhere. Cobden was obviously fired, at least momentarily — in the atmosphere of the successful staging of the conference and in marked contrast to his despondency only six weeks earlier — with the belief that the peace movement could take over the mantle of the Anti-Corn Law League. To that end, the £10,000 appeal fund was launched in order to set lecturers to work, inundate the country with peace tracts, and pay for the organising machinery.³¹ It is probable that members of the

LPS had resisted any split with Manchester. Sturge for one announced that he was "glad to see their friends in Manchester had no wish to make a separate organization".³² The initial intention therefore was to coopt the additional Manchester men onto the committee primarily to supervise the fund-raising. And coordination between its London and Manchester halves was reached by the expedient of having its secretary, Henry Richard, reside in Manchester for two or three months.³³

At a joint meeting of the London and Manchester men on 14 February 1853, the committee decided to call itself the Home Peace Congress Committee and to divide the country between Manchester and London for propaganda work. Manchester, however, pressed for yet another change in title — this time to the Peace Conference Committee — and this was finally settled upon. In March the committee consisted of twelve members — the London representatives; Sturge, Cobden, and Hadfield; and Wilson (president), Cunningham (treasurer), and Thomasson of Manchester. Richard remained secretary. In April and May a further nine men were added — including P.B. Alley — with the result that the Mancunians were now in the majority.³⁴

The new committee set to work. It issued an address signed by Wilson and Richard spelling out its aims — primarily to counter the "dangerous spirit" created by the invasion panic and the build-up of armaments. It would seek to encourage general disarmament and arbitration. Finally, Manchester and, more particularly, Cobdenite, influence over the committee was underlined by reference to the broad platform adopted — broad enough to embrace out-and-out pacifists along with those who did not subscribe "to an abstract principle which they cannot conscientiously affirm".³⁵ It was a difficult balancing act as Cobden was only too well aware. The peace movement needed its "soul...the Quaker sentiment against all war". Yet, at the same time the enemies of the movement were quick to brand all peace-workers as "Quakers, because the Non-Resistance principle puts us out of court as practical politicians of the present day".³⁶ Cobden and his Manchester supporters were determined to show that they were nothing if not practical. In the course of the nine months between the Manchester and Edinburgh conferences, in addition to the massive circulation of *1793 and 1853*, the Peace Conference Committee supervised the distribution of approximately half-a-million anti-war tracts; £8,000 of the proposed £10,000 was raised; the peace lecturers commenced their work and around 160 public meetings were held in England and Wales; the prize essay on standing armies was advertised; and the deputation to Lord Aberdeen took place.³⁷

Some extremely able men were recruited as peace lecturers, many having had experience during the campaign against the Corn Laws. Among them were George Thompson, the MP for Tower Hamlets, the Revs. G. Conder, Benjamin Parsons, and Arthur O'Neill, Henry Vincent, Thomas Beggs, Robert Charleton, Samuel Bowly and, probably the most assiduous of all, William Stokes. Stokes, a Baptist pastor, had been centrally involved in the organisation of several of the peace congresses, and he was a prolific writer as well as speaker. From the time of the Manchester conference until his death in 1881, he was a major figure in local peace activities.

The deputation to Lord Aberdeen met the prime minister at Downing St. on February 26. It consisted of 16 MPs

(including Cobden, Milner Gibson, Joseph Hume, Brotherton, Edward Miall, and William Ewart) and peace representatives from across the country. Milner Gibson pointed out that their purpose was to persuade the government to work for international disarmament. Richard then read out the resolution of the Manchester conference to that effect, along with a supporting statement from the Peace Conference Committee. Aberdeen, while sympathetic, thought the existing climate unpropitious. Cobden and Hume, like Gibson before them, were keen to stress the practical nature of what they were proposing, but the Quaker Samuel Gurney could not resist reminding them all that peace was a fundamental Christian principle.³⁸

The Peace Conference Committee followed up this deputation with a similar one in early May to Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office. Cobden, Hume, and Ewart were again present, along with Hindley, Edward Baines and others. The aim on this occasion was to press for the inclusion of an arbitration clause in a treaty then being negotiated with the United States. A similar memorial on the part of American peace-workers to the U.S. government had been received sympathetically. Clarendon appeared less than enthusiastic on this occasion, but perhaps the seed was here sown for the more positive position he was to take up at the Paris peace conference in 1856.³⁹

The Peace Conference Committee had, in the first few months of its existence, good reason to be pleased with its work. The anti-French hysteria was subsiding, and the massive propaganda machine launched on the back of the Manchester appeal, seemed to be having some effect. By June Richard was reporting that the peace lecturers were obtaining a hearing "beyond their most sanguine expectations".⁴⁰ However, all this was soon to change, as the anti-French panic gave way to the anti-Russian campaign. Delegates at Edinburgh were able to mock this rapid about-face. Cobden, for example, in a marvellously entertaining speech, asked his audience what a traveller who had left Britain in January by boat for Australia would make of matters on returning nine months later only to find that France, instead of being about to "come and ravage your coasts, burn down your houses, seize the Bank, and carry off the Queen", was now an ally.⁴¹ But such knockabout humour could not disguise the seriousness of the new situation. If Manchester had helped to assuage anti-French feeling, Edinburgh was helpless in stopping the run-up to war with Russia. The Crimean War, which began in March 1854, was a major setback to the British peace movement, reducing its ranks of supporters and ending once and for all any attempts to revive the international congress movement.

* * *

The Crimean War and the valiant opposition of a small rump of peace-workers, notably Cobden and Bright, is well-documented elsewhere and is outside the scope of this essay. However, it is possible by way of conclusion to say something about the fate of the mid-century Manchester peace movement and to make some assessment of its significance.

Opposition to the Crimean War demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses of the peace movement in Manchester. The seizing of the initiative by the Manchester men in the period 1852-3 and the determination to push forward a practical and realisable

programme prepared the way for the prominent stand taken against the war by their parliamentary representative, John Bright. Set against that, of course, it has to be said that for much of the war Bright was almost alone in his campaign of opposition,⁴² and that Manchester repaid his courage by rejecting him at the general election of 1857. Bright became the butt of numerous vitriolic pamphlets. He was attacked in one, penned by "a Manchester Tradesman", as the "chief" of "the Russian party" and "an anti-Englishman". The anonymous pamphleteer concluded: "That a change in the representation of this city is imperatively called for no intelligent Englishman will deny."⁴³ But there were others who, though they disagreed with Cobden and Bright on this one question, could not forget their contributions to social progress in other areas. "A Lancashire Man" therefore came to a quite different conclusion as to Bright's future, arguing that he should be returned by the Manchester electorate "not on account of, but in spite of, his 'peace-at-all-price' principles".⁴⁴ Perhaps the propaganda activity undertaken by the Peace Conference Committee⁴⁵ had done something to mitigate the otherwise deep-seated chauvinism, and allowed more reasoned voices to be raised which, if they did not support Cobden and Bright, were prepared to acknowledge their honesty and integrity. Certainly a public meeting held in Manchester on 17 December 1854 against Bright drew at least as many supporters as critics.⁴⁶

Moreover, as news about the war and about conditions in the Crimea began to accumulate, the anti-war movement grew in confidence. A peace meeting was held in Bolton early in 1855 chaired by Edmund Ashworth and addressed by the Rev. W.H. Davidson, Thomasson, and Thompson. By the spring of 1855 weekly meetings were being held in Manchester — at first in Newalls' Buildings, and later in the Town Hall, and usually presided over by Wilson.⁴⁷ The peace lecturers employed by the Peace Conference Committee were kept busy, and 40-50,000 copies of their lectures were circulated. At the height of the war, seven large meetings were held in Manchester. When, three years later, Stokes wrote a brief account of the committee's activities, he was firmly of the opinion that these Manchester meetings served to moderate "the violent war mania then prevalent", and paved the way for a peace settlement.⁴⁸

There is no doubt then that by the 1850s Manchester had emerged as a leading, if not the leading, centre of the British peace movement. Even Richard was forced to admit in his annual report for the LPS in 1855 that "the bolder line of action" in the spring "was due to the faith and courage of our friends at Manchester".⁴⁹ Manchester men were at the heart of the main peace ventures. For example, George Thompson became co-proprietor of a London weekly paper, the *Empire*, in December 1854, which gave much space to the policies and activities of the Manchester movement; Frederick W. Chesson left his post as secretary of the Manchester Peace Conference Committee in November 1855 to take over as secretary of the shortlived Stop-the-War League; and Cobden, Bright, and Wilson were the principal movers behind the establishment of a daily peace paper, the *Morning Star*, in March 1856, its purpose being, in Cobden's words, "to advocate the doctrine of the 'Manchester School'". Finally, it was at the insistence of the Manchester committee that the Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, was lobbied to press for an arbitration clause in the Paris



Bright and Cobden at the Third Peace Conference in Paris, 1860.

peace treaty. In the event, a protocol was added recommending arbitration, which must be counted a triumph, however small, for the peace movement.⁵⁰

Manchester's central role therefore deserves acknowledgement. But, in the final analysis, a distinction has to be made between the achievements of the middle-class activists and the more general apathy or antipathy of Manchester's population as a whole. For, in 1857, the electorate was at last able to pronounce its verdict on the peace-workers. Palmerston had appealed to the country following Cobden's successful Commons' motion demanding an inquiry into the events in China relating to the Arrow affair and the bombardment of Canton. In the jingoistic general election that followed, both Bright and Milner Gibson were defeated in Manchester, and Cobden at Huddersfield. Cobden appeared more concerned about Bright's defeat than his own. He complained to one correspondent about "the atrocious treatment Bright has received from the people at Manchester. They are mainly indebted to him for the prosperity which has converted a majority into little better than Tories, and now the base snobs kick away the ladder!"⁵¹

The defeat of Bright and the peace party generally in 1857 demonstrates the limits of the Manchester peace movement in the face of the chauvinistic nationalism mobilised by the Crimean and China wars. By 1856 the funds of the Peace Conference Committee were running low. Sturge wanted to revive the pre-war series of conferences and wrote on behalf of the committee to solicit Cobden's support. But Cobden refused. The "old plan of agitation totally failed", he told Sturge, and he would never again waste his time exchanging "the same generalities with the same people".⁵² As the committee had agreed to go ahead only with Cobden's blessing, this reply effectively killed the idea. The only alternative now



Richard Cobden's statue in St. Ann's Square, unveiled 1867.

was to wind up the Manchester Peace Conference Committee. It met for that purpose on 20-21 July 1858. Stokes had prepared for the meeting a 'Brief Statement' of its work since 1853. The final balance sheet showed that it had spent £3,522.2s.2d during the five-and-a-half years of its existence.⁵³ It had already been decided to revert to a purely local organisation to carry on the peace agitation.

On the day that the Manchester Peace Conference Committee was dissolved, therefore, the Peace Conference and Arbitration Society came into existence. It set up a sub-committee to draft a circular address. That address was issued on September 22, signed by Wilson, Thomas Bazley (who was elected to Parliament for Manchester in November and who subsequently became president of the society), and by fifty-four others.⁵⁴ The society hoped to encourage the membership of those who believed in peace on Christian grounds, as well as those who pursued "the same object through the channels of Financial Reform, International Arbitration, and a Mutual Disarmament throughout the nations of the civilized world". Its plans of action included tracts, lectures, the establishment of auxiliary societies, deputations to ministers as and when necessary, and an attempt to get local constituencies to return MPs pledged to peace. Its first achievement was to print 50,000 copies of a tract entitled *War and Christianity*, which was distributed nationally as well as locally. Further, it printed 12,000 handbills seeking to dissuade people from joining the

newly-established Rifle Corps. Peace lecturing continued. Stokes was a particularly sedulous speaker, delivering numerous lectures throughout the north-west.⁵⁵ When Austria and Sardinia, backed by France, went to war in April/May 1859, Stokes persuaded the Mayor to allow the Town Hall to be used for a public meeting at which an address urging neutrality on the part of the British government was unanimously adopted.

But these were the limits of the society's achievements. It quickly ran into debt. The membership subscription had been fixed at 1s. "to suit the means of the working classes". But the working classes were not, unfortunately, forthcoming. The society appealed to the London committee in October 1859 for financial help, but London would only bail it out on condition it gave up its independence. The Manchester men were still reluctant to revert to being an auxiliary of London because of fears of having to swallow the non-resistance principle.⁵⁶ They therefore held out for a further twelve months but, faced with insolvency, the Peace and Arbitration Society finally decided to wind itself up at a general meeting, chaired by Bazley, in the Free Trade Hall on 11 September 1860. The leading role taken by Manchester in the mid-century peace movement was finally over.

This was not, however, quite the end of the story. The ground prepared by the Manchester peace-workers of the 1850s did not lie fallow. New activists emerged in the 1860s, and Manchester, according to the historian of peace A.C.F. Beales, was "the scene of animated conferences on arbitration".⁵⁷ Moreover, when the Peace Society began to revive nationally in the late 1860s, it did so largely as a result of a commitment to it on the part of northern manufacturers — the very class that Cobden had come to believe to be incorrigibly conservative. One historian has calculated that 20% of the 203 most generous subscribers to the Peace Society in 1873 and 1874 lived in Lancashire, and that these were preponderantly manufacturers, with a sizeable proportion engaged in textiles. And of the 255,880 signatures to the petitions in support of Henry Richard's parliamentary motion on international arbitration in 1873, fully one-quarter appeared on petitions sent from Lancashire.⁵⁸

The contribution of the middle-class radicals of north-west England to the mid-nineteenth century movement is an honourable one which for the most part has gone unrecognised. This is not normally the case with middle-class reform movements. But the cause of peace is an unusual one. The requirements of the twentieth-century capitalist state have meant that peace movements and peace activists have generally been either frowned upon or ridiculed. Apart therefore from the misconceived attempt of Joseph Schumpeter to associate capitalism with peace, and war with the survival of an aristocratic atavism in the social structure, there has been a tendency on the part of the British capitalist ruling class to disown or at least expunge from its collective memory, the peace exertions undertaken by certain of its Victorian forebears. This essay has been an attempt to do justice to those peace-workers, and especially to give overdue recognition to the contribution of Mancunians who strove to eradicate the scourge of war.

NOTES

1. *The Proceedings of the First General Peace Convention: held in London, June 22, 1843, and the two following days* (1843).
2. *Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth General Peace Congress, held in Exeter Hall, London, on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th July, 1851* (1851), p.76. (Hereafter *London Report*.) Amsterdam was considered a possible venue.

3. Its expenditure for 1842 was £43.6s and income £34.13s. *The Progress of Peace and the Miseries of War, for 1842: being the Report of the Manchester and Salford Peace Society, for that year* (London and Manchester, n.d. — 1843?).
4. A. Tyrrell, *Joseph Sturge and the Moral Radical Party in Early Victorian Britain* (1987), p.163, and W.H. van der Linden, *The International Peace Movement 1815-1874* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp.274-6. Both Linden and Tyrrell wrongly describe Cunningham as a Quaker.
5. *Ibid.*, p.277
6. *Ibid.*; and P. Tolis, *Elihu Burritt: Crusader for Brotherhood* (Hampden, CT, 1968), p.155.
7. And Manchester published its own abridged report of the Brussels congress: *The Peace Congress at Brussels (Abridged from the journals of the day)* (Manchester, n.d.).
8. Quoted in Linden, *International Peace Movement*, p.324.
9. See George Wilson Papers M20/10/10/53.
10. *Herald of Peace*, Feb.1853, p.179.
11. M87/4/2/9.
12. To McLaren, 19 Sept.1853, quoted in J. Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (1903), pp.608-9.
13. 18 Nov.1851, quoted in J.A. Hobson, *Richard Cobden. The International Man* (1919; repr. 1968), pp.81-2.
14. M20/1/10/52.
15. M20/4/12/52. Cobden concluded by remarking that the recent budget had "finally closed the controversy with Protection....The League may be dissolved when you like."
16. See Sturge to Wilson, M20/7/12/52.
17. *Herald of Peace*, Jan.1853, p.145.
18. C.S. Miall, *Henry Richard, M.P. A Biography* (1889), p.92.
19. According to *The Times*, 28 Feb.1853. Only eleven are mentioned by name in the conference report. The following account of the conference is based upon *Report of the Proceedings at the Peace Conference held in Manchester, on Thursday the 27th, and Friday the 28th of January, and at the Great Peace Demonstration in the Free Trade Hall, on the evening of Friday, the 28th of January, 1853* (Manchester, 1853); *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 29 Jan., 2 Feb.1853; *Herald of Peace*, Feb.1853, pp.158-84.
20. The wording of this resolution was unaccountably excluded from the reports of the conference.
21. *London Report*, p.56.
22. 25 Jan.1853, quoted in W.H. Dawson, *Richard Cobden and Foreign Policy* (1926), p.127.
23. 27 Sept.1852, quoted in Morley, *Life of Cobden*, pp.596-7.
24. See *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden* (1886), pp.273-379, especially pp.277-81, 290, 293, 313, 329, 335, 343-6, 358-60, 363, 373-4.
25. *Ibid.*, p.374.
26. Cobden to Richard, 25 Jan.1853, quoted in Hobson, *Richard Cobden*, p.97.
27. *The Times*, 28, 29, 31 Jan.1853.
28. To his wife, 31 Jan.1853, quoted in Morley, *Life of Cobden*, pp.605-6.
29. *Report of the Proceedings of the Peace Conference at Edinburgh, October 12th and 13th, 1853* (Edinburgh, 1853), pp.4-5. (Hereafter *Edinburgh Report*.)
30. A copy of the 'Address of the Manchester Committee' is in the *Herald of Peace*, Jan.1853, pp.148-9.
31. Cobden's speech at Manchester, 27 Jan.1853, *ibid.*, Feb.1853, p.168. Cobden's spirits had obviously been raised by the fact that at a meeting earlier that day, four men (including Thomasson and Sturge) had agreed to pledge £500 each. By October the despondency had returned and Cobden was asserting once again that Manchester could not repeat its free trade success: "It would be about as rational to argue that the tree which has yielded a good crop of oranges must be able to give you some apples also....*Fresh men* must be found for each distinct movement." To Richard, 17 Oct.1853, quoted in Hobson, *Richard Cobden*, p.105.
32. Speech at Manchester, 28 Jan.1853, *Herald of Peace*, p.171.
33. Miall, *Henry Richard*, p.93.
34. *Peace Society Committee Minute Book 31st October 1848 — 8th February 1856* (in possession of the International Peace Society, Fellowship House, Browning St., London), minutes of 14 Feb., 1 April 1853; Linden, *International Peace Movement*, p.457.
35. *Address of the Committee Appointed at the Manchester Conference of the Friends of Peace* (n.d. — 1853?). Copy in Manchester Central Reference Library.
36. To McLaren, 19 Sept.1853, quoted in Morley, *Life of Cobden*, pp.608-9.
37. *Edinburgh Report*, pp.4-5. The fact that the conference was held at Edinburgh shows that Sturge's resolution at Manchester for a further continental congress that year was unfulfilled — the Peace Conference Committee having decided, in view of the continuing war hysteria, that much work still remained to be done at home. *Ibid.*
38. *The Times*, 28 Feb.1853.
39. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1853; and below.
40. Quoted in Tyrrell, *Joseph Sturge*, p.207.
41. *Edinburgh Report*, p.11.
42. Even Cobden despaired of speaking out against the war — see his speech of 29 Oct.1862, quoted in Morley, *Life of Cobden*, p.623.
43. *A Glance at the Sayings and Doings of the Russian Party in Manchester*, by a Manchester Tradesman (Manchester, April 1855), especially pp.3, 5, 11-12.
44. *Observations on the Policy of the War and The Present Position of the Reform and Free-Trade Party in Lancashire*, by a Lancashire Man (1855), especially p.44.
45. As war-fever developed in 1853 it had sent packets of tracts to electors in major cities across the country, and to every home in Manchester. Tyrrell, *Joseph Sturge*, p.210.
46. Linden, *International Peace Movement*, p.463.
47. *Ibid.*, p.468. See also, Sturge to Wilson, 3 Jan.1855: "I think there is no doubt that war feeling is cooling down." Sturge proposed that a soirée planned for later that month and to be addressed by Bright and Gibson, be turned into a more general peace demonstration. (M20/3/1/55).
48. *Brief Statement of the Labours of the Manchester Peace Conference* (1858). Copy in Manchester Central Reference Library. On 22 March 1855 a peace memorial from Manchester, with 11,000 signatures, was presented to the prime minister Palmerston. It recommended the inclusion of an arbitration clause in the future peace treaty. *Ibid.*
49. Quoted in Linden, *International Peace Movement*, p.469.
50. Details of the various activities described in this paragraph are in *ibid.*, pp.469-74. Stokes replaced Chesson as secretary of the Manchester committee.
51. To Moffatt, 7 April 1857, quoted in Morley, *Life of Cobden*, p.661.
52. Quoted in Tyrrell, *Joseph Sturge*, p.222. Bright was of like mind. "I am disposed to think that all we have done as a 'Peace Conference' or 'Peace Society' of late years has been of no use. I am not sure that it has not done positive harm." Quoted in K. Robbins, *John Bright* (1979), pp.131-2.
53. *Brief Statement of the Labours of the Manchester Peace Conference*. Richard had visited Manchester in October 1857 and found the committee effectively moribund. *Peace Conference Committee Minute Book 18th February 1856 — 14th October 1859* (International Peace Society), minutes of 27 Nov.1857.
54. Stokes to Wilson, 28 Aug. 1858, M20/28/8/58. Information about the Peace and Arbitration Society has been obtained from cuttings located in the Local History Room of the Central Reference Library, Manchester.
55. One of which was published as *A Permanent European Congress as a Substitute for War in the Settlement of International Disputes* (Manchester, 1860).
56. See the letters of Richard to Stokes, 25 Oct., 4 Nov. 1859, 9 Oct. 1860, *Peace Society Letter Book 22nd May 1851 — 28th January 1889* (International Peace Society).
57. A.C.F. Beales, *The History of Peace* (1931), p.112.
58. Eric W. Sager, 'The Social origins of Victorian Pacifism,' in *Victorian Studies*, 23 (1980), p.235.