

# 1 Globalizing ideologies

## Economic nationalism and free-trade cosmopolitanism, c. 1846–1860

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The opposite economical systems should be designated as those of the nationalistic and cosmopolitan schools. The nationalistic or protective-defensive school . . . conceives of political economy as applicable only to the political bodies known as nations . . . The cosmopolitan, or so-called free trade school, ignores the existence of nations . . . Cobden would gladly see all boundary lines wiped from the map, and regards nations as necessary evils. John Hayes<sup>1</sup>

The gospel of the modern “historical” and “scientific” school, put forward in Germany sixty years ago by Friedrich List, and preached by his disciples and successors ever since, has, they say, entirely superseded the ancient doctrine which they nickname “Smithsianismus,” and “cosmopolitan Free Trade.” . . . Friedrich List and his followers declare themselves to be the only worshippers at the shrine of true Free Trade, and that Richard Cobden’s clumsy foot had desecrated her temple, his sacrilegious hand had torn down her veil, and his profane tongue had uttered her mysteries to nations who had for long ages to live and labour before they could be ready for initiation . . . Round this dogma the Free Trade and Protectionist argument in all countries of the world . . . has centered. Russell Rea<sup>2</sup>

On a January night in 1846, the triumphal stage was set within Manchester, England’s Free Trade Hall. Never before had so many come to take part in the assemblages of the ACLL (1838–1846), nor had they such reason. After seven years of ravenous agitation, the ACLL could nearly taste its long-sought “cheap loaf.” Sir Robert Peel’s Parliament stood on the verge of overturning the Corn Laws, Britain’s long-standing protective tariffs on foreign grain.

Public demand for the Manchester event was insatiable. Over 8,000 tickets had been purchased within the first hours of availability. More than 5,000 hopeful attendees would be turned away. The Free Trade Hall

<sup>1</sup> John L. Hayes, *Customs Duties on the Necessaries of Life, and their Relations to the National Industry* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1884), 36–37.

<sup>2</sup> Russell Rea, *Two Theories of Foreign Trade* (London: Henry Good & Son, 1905), 6–7.

was filled to capacity, the mad rush at the doors overwhelming. Ladies wore their finest dresses, gentlemen their sharpest suits. The hall gleamed with garish magnificence. Crimson draperies hung upon the platform wall. Crimson panels covered the end walls. The ceiling was white scattered with crimson ornaments and octagonal crimson shields bordered with gold. The gallery balconies were decorated with ornate trelliswork. Over the central iron columns hung a shield, behind which sprung the robed female statue of the Caryatides. A spectator could easily imagine, wrote a *Manchester Times* reporter at the scene, “that the great leaders of the League movement, fresh from new and yet more successful campaigns than any which they have heretofore achieved, had been met by their grateful fellow-citizens to be honoured with a ‘TRIUMPH.’”<sup>3</sup>

At precisely half past seven, Richard Cobden, John Bright, and the other ACLL leaders entered the hall amid deafening cheers. Cobden, exuberant, was first to speak once the expectant crowd fell still. He observed that the free-trade feeling was spreading rapidly across the globe, especially to the United States: “There is one other quarter in which we have seen the progress of sound principles – I allude to America . . . I augur . . . that we are coming to the consummation of our labours.” Loud applause greeted his prophetic vision for Anglo-American free trade.<sup>4</sup>

About six months after this cosmopolitan celebration, a German gentleman – dark-haired, bespectacled, with a receding hairline counterbalanced by a rather heavy beard – arrived in London. He coincidentally witnessed the expiration of the Corn Laws in the Upper House. A few hours later, this same man found himself in the House of Commons to watch Sir Robert Peel’s ministry “receive its death-blow.” A voice suddenly came from behind the German: “Mr. Cobden wishes to make your acquaintance.” The man turned and Cobden, yet energetic at forty-two, with his unruly muttonchops, offered his hand. “Have you really come over to be converted?” asked Cobden. “Of course,” Friedrich List, the German-American protectionist theorist, wryly answered: “And to seek absolution for my sins.”<sup>5</sup>

Unbeknownst to either man, their chance meeting foreshadowed a worldwide ideological conflict over the future of economic globalization. Soon after meeting Cobden, List returned home. Suffering from severe depression, he had forebodingly mentioned to a friend in England just before returning to Germany: “I feel as if a mortal disease were in my frame

<sup>3</sup> *Manchester Times*, January 17, 1846.      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Margaret E. Hirst, *Life of Friedrich List* (London: Smith, Elder, 1909), 100–102. See, also, W. O. Henderson, *Friedrich List: Economist and Visionary* (London: Frank Cass, 1985).

and I must soon die.” On the morning of November 30, 1846, List went out for a walk. He did not return. His body was found that night, blanketed with freshly fallen snow. He had shot himself.<sup>6</sup> List’s 1846 depression counterbalanced Cobden’s euphoria. So too would Cobden’s cosmopolitanism meet its match in List’s legacy: the progressive advancement of economic nationalism that survived him in many parts of the globe.

Trade liberalization had certainly taken on an international cast at around this time. The major European powers began instituting freer trade throughout the mid-nineteenth century, picking up even more steam following the signing of the 1860 Cobden–Chevalier Treaty between Britain and France. In the United States, the modest 1846 Walker Tariff likewise appeared a promising start, as would further downward tariff revisions in 1857.<sup>7</sup> As the pro-free-trade *New York Evening Post* observed on New Year’s Eve 1846, “a great movement of civilized mankind” on behalf of free trade had begun.<sup>8</sup> But US economic nationalists were skeptical, to put it mildly, of Cobdenism’s promised panacea of free trade, prosperity, and peace. This looming ideological conflict between free-trade cosmopolitanism and economic nationalism was soon to play out on a global stage, but most controversially in the political arena of the United States.

Transatlantic radicals, subscribing to Richard Cobden’s free-trade philosophy, were intimately involved not only with the fight to end the English Corn Laws and American protectionism, but also to abolish American slavery. For them, free men and free trade were far from disparate goals. Conversely, leading American economic nationalists viewed the free-trading plantation South and Free Trade England as respective enslavers of blacks and American manufacturers. These conflicting ideologies would play a critical role in reshaping the Republican party and Anglo-American relations for decades to come, as would rapid American westward expansion. The differences between Cobdenite cosmopolitans and Lillian nationalists would, however, remain hidden beneath the Republican party’s political surface until after the Civil War, as both ideological camps rallied to the party’s antislavery banner.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 105, 106–107.

<sup>7</sup> The Walker Tariff included a fixed *ad valorem* duty of 30 percent, although a few exceptions were as low as 20 percent or as high as 40 percent. Duties on cotton goods and rail iron, for instance, were lowered from 70 percent (under the 1842 tariff) to 25 and 30 percent, respectively.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony C. Howe, “From Pax Britannica to Pax Americana: Free Trade, Empire, and Globalisation, 1846–1948,” *Bulletin of Asia-Pacific Studies* 13 (2003), 141–142; F. W. Taussig, *Free Trade, The Tariff and Reciprocity* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1924), 1–3; C. P. Kindleberger, “The Rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820–1875,” *Journal of Economic History* 35 (March 1975): 20–55; *New York Evening Post*, December 31, 1846.

### Globalizing economic nationalism and free trade

Friedrich List had come to distrust the cosmopolitanism of orthodox economics after engrossing himself in Alexander Hamilton's economic philosophy contained in the *Report on the Subject of Manufactures* (1791) and Daniel Raymond's *Thoughts on Political Economy* (1820). List observed how free traders had developed the "cosmopolitical idea of the absolute freedom of the commerce of the whole world." List pointed out, however, that by focusing on the individual and the universal they had ignored the national.<sup>9</sup>

List believed that these prophets of economic cosmopolitanism were attempting to go about achieving their goals in the wrong order. "It assumes the existence of a universal union and a state of perpetual peace," confounding effects with causes. The world as it existed disproved their cosmopolitan theories. A precipitous global turn to free trade would be "a universal subjection of the less advanced nations to the supremacy of the predominant manufacturing, commercial, and naval power" of Britain. The rest of the world first needed to catch up. This leveling of the playing field, List argued, could only be accomplished through political union, imperial expansion, and economic nationalist policies of internal improvements and infant industrial protectionism.<sup>10</sup>

Building upon Alexander Hamilton's late-eighteenth-century theorizing, List argued that a country's economic policies were dependent upon its stage of development, and that imperial expansion could provide much-needed security for industrializing powers like Germany and the United States. England, with a strong home market and a heavily concentrated population, could focus more on manufacturing finer products and on dumping excess goods in foreign markets. The less advanced United States of the 1820s–1840s instead needed a mixed economy of manufacturers and agrarians working side by side, brought ever closer through the publicly and privately subsidized construction of canals and railroads. According to List, Latin American nations were at an even lower developmental stage, still "uninstructed, indolent and not accustomed to many enjoyments": a lack of "wants" that undercut the

<sup>9</sup> Keith Tribe, "Natural Liberty & *Laissez Faire*: How Adam Smith Became a Free Trade Ideologue," in *Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. by Stephen Copley and Kathryn Sutherland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 28, 38–39; Tribe, "Friedrich List and the Critique of 'Cosmopolitical Economy,'" *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies* 56 (March 1988): 17–36; Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization, 1606–1865* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1946), II, 577; William Notz, "Frederick List in America," *American Economic Review* 16 (June 1926): 261–262; Friedrich List, *The National System of Political Economy*, trans. by Sampson S. Lloyd (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904 [1885]), 97.

<sup>10</sup> List, *The National System*, 102–103.



Figure 1.1 Friedrich List (1789–1846)

cosmopolitan global free-trade vision. At their lower stage of development, these nations needed to focus on exchanging “precious metals and raw produce” for foreign manufactures, and would remain colonially dependent upon more developed manufacturing nations. As to the latter, List argued that America and a unified Germany needed imperial expansion. Aggressive American westward expansion was therefore becoming ever more necessary, with growing numbers of Americans passing “over the Mississippi, next the Rocky Mountains,” to “at last turn their faces to China instead of to England.” According to List, the German states had similarly progressed to the point that, upon unification, they would require the colonial acquisition of the Balkans, Central Europe, Denmark, and Holland (along with the latter’s colonies) to more firmly establish his German Zollverein.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich List, “Letter IV,” July 18, 1827, and “Letter V,” July 19, 1827, in Hirst, *List*, 187–210; List, *The National System*, 28, 143, 327–328, 332, 342–344; Joseph Dorfman, *Economic Mind*, II, 575–584; Bernard Semmel, *The Liberal Ideal and the Demons of Empire: Theories of Imperialism from Adam Smith to Lenin* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 67–68; Jens-Uwe Guettel, *German Expansionism, Imperial Liberalism, and the United States, 1776–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 63–64; Henryk Szlajfer, *Economic Nationalism and Globalization*, trans. by Maria Chmielewska-Szlajfer (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 56.

List thereby enunciated an international system of developmental stages coupled with “infant industrial” protectionism, coercive economic exploitation, and imperial expansion that Anglo-American imperialists in decades to come would work to implement at the local and global level. In 1897, Johns Hopkins political economist Sidney Sherwood would label it “young imperialism,” when national political union was coupled with “a tariff wall of fortification around the imperial boundaries.” And Sherwood laid much of the credit for America’s own “youthful” imperialism at the feet of none other than “the successor of Hamilton,” Friedrich List, whose protectionist doctrine “is rightly regarded as American in its origin.”<sup>12</sup> This Listian imperialism of “young” industrializing nations – the imperialism of economic nationalism – would become manifest within late-nineteenth-century America.

In contrast to the imperialism of economic nationalism, List argued that England was practicing what historians have since termed the “imperialism of free trade.” The leading industrially advanced island-nation sought to “manufacture for the whole world . . . to keep the world and especially her colonies in a state of infancy and vassalage . . . English national economy is *predominant*; American national economy aspires only to become *independent*.” List believed that it was unfair to let the English reap the world’s wealth. “In order to allow freedom of trade to operate naturally,” underdeveloped nations needed to first be lifted up through artificial measures so as to match England’s own artificially elevated state of cultivation.<sup>13</sup> List described one of the most “vulgar tricks of history” as “when one nation reaches the pinnacle of its development it should attempt to remove the ladder by which it had mounted in order to prevent others from following.” He granted that universal free trade was the ultimate ideal, but first the world’s infant industrial economies would need a combination of private and public investment, protectionism, and imperial expansion in order to catch up.<sup>14</sup>

List’s protectionist prescription for the perceived pandemic of Victorian free-trade ideology found wide-ranging patients. Listian disciples spread and multiplied throughout the globe in subsequent decades.

<sup>12</sup> Sidney Sherwood, *Tendencies in American Economic Thought* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1897), 12, 16.

<sup>13</sup> List, quoted in Tribe, “List and the Critique of ‘Cosmopolitical Economy,’” 28; List, *The National System*, 106–107.

<sup>14</sup> List quoted in Leonard Gomes, *The Economics and Ideology of Free Trade: A Historical Review* (Cheltenham, UK, and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2003), 78; Friedrich List, *Professor List’s Speech Delivered at the Philadelphia Manufacturers’ Dinner* (s.l.: s. n., 1827), 5; Dorfman, *Economic Mind*, II, 581. See, also, Christin Margerum Harlen, “A Reappraisal of Classical Economic Nationalism and Economic Liberalism,” *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (December 1999): 733–744.

List's desire for a German Zollverein, or customs union, would fall out of favor from the 1840s to the 1860s, but would be revived and fully implemented by the 1880s. List also became a source of inspiration for imperial protectionists in England, Australia, and Canada in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Japanese economists "imbibed" List's economic elixir following various Japanese tours of Europe in the 1870s and the translation into Japanese of List's work in the 1880s.<sup>16</sup> Russia's finance minister during the late-nineteenth century, S. Y. De Witte, would also look to List for inspiration when he reformed Russian finances and encouraged the construction of a trans-Siberian railway. Anglophobic French protectionists similarly leaned upon List's theories.<sup>17</sup> His work in turn received an avid audience among late-nineteenth-century South Asian anticolonial nationalists, to whom American and German industrial ascendancy merely confirmed the value of List's work.<sup>18</sup> His writings thus found a welcome global audience, especially among modernizers beyond Western Europe.

List's economic philosophy would germinate first within the antebellum United States, where it would flourish by century's end. Exiled from Germany in 1825, he had fled to the United States, and was indebted to the earlier protectionist principles of Alexander Hamilton, Daniel Raymond, and Mathew Carey, the famous Philadelphia publisher, former president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanic Arts, and father of Henry Charles

<sup>15</sup> See Chapters 6 and 8.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Metzler, "The Cosmopolitanism of National Economics: Friedrich List in a Japanese Mirror," in *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local*, ed. by A. G. Hopkins (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1989), 50–55; Tamotsu Nishizawa, "The Emergence of the Economic Science in Japan and the Evolution of Textbooks 1860s–1930s," in *The Economic Reader: Textbooks, Manuals, and the Dissemination of the Economic Sciences During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Massimo M. Augello and Marco E. L. Guidi (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Szlajffer, *Economic Nationalism and Globalization*, 62; *The Current Encyclopedia* (Chicago, IL: Modern Research Society, 1901), 447; W. O. Henderson, "Friedrich List and the French Protectionists," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 138 (1982): 262–275; David Todd, *L'identité Économique de la France: Libre Échange et Protectionnisme, 1814–1851* (Paris: Grasset, 2008), chap. 13. On French protectionism, see Michael Stephen Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860–1900: The Politics of Economic Interest* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Tiebout McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), 270; Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 215, 216, 337; Metzler, "Cosmopolitanism of National Economics," 104–105; P. K. Gopalakrishnan, *Development of Economic Ideas in India, 1880–1950* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1959), chap. 3.



Carey (1793–1879). List would become a key player in the development of nineteenth-century Philadelphian protectionist thought.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the century, his influence would culminate in the creation of “the German-American school of economics.”<sup>20</sup>

List became a leading defender of the American System of economic nationalism. It was fair to say, observed the editors of Boston’s news organ the *Protectionist* in 1919, “that List the economist was ‘made in America.’” In the fall of 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette introduced his friend List first to Mathew Carey and then to Henry Clay. After making a good first impression, List thereafter frequently gave protectionist speeches at conventions organized by Clay’s friends. In the early decades of the century, Clay himself would become an arch-proponent of the “American System” of internal improvements and protectionism and would come to see free trade as but a new way for Great Britain to recolonize the United States through commercial domination.<sup>21</sup>

List exerted a great deal of influence not only on Clay’s American System but also on Pennsylvania’s progressive economic nationalist philosophy. In 1826, List became a newspaper editor in Pennsylvania, where he gained national recognition for his defense of the American System. He took part in the development of coal and railways in the area, and became a propagandist for the Pennsylvania Society of Manufactures. His letters to its vice president, Charles Ingersoll, were published in the United States as *Outlines of American Political Economy* (1827). List’s published letters were then distributed to American congressmen later that year, influencing the 1828 tariff debate, and were at hand to be read by Mathew Carey’s young and intellectually hungry son, Henry. Some scholars have even speculated that the timing of List’s protectionist publications and the 1828 passage of the “Tariff of Abominations” was more than coincidental.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Hirst, *List*, 113–117; Kenneth V. Lundberg, “Daniel Raymond, Early American Economist” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin Madison, 1953), 16; Tribe, “Natural Liberty & *Laissez Faire*,” 37–38; H. Parker Willis, “Friedrich List: Grundlinien einer Politischen Ökonomie und Andere Beiträge der Amerikanischen Zeit, 1825–1832,” *American Economic Review* 22 (December 1932), 700.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Ellis Thompson, *Social Science and National Economy* (Philadelphia, PA: Porter and Coates, 1875), 132; Luigi Cossa, *An Introduction to the Study of Political Economy*, trans. by Louis Dyer (London: Macmillan, 1893), 477.

<sup>21</sup> Roland Ringwalt, “Friedrich List’s American Years,” *Protectionist* 31 (October 1919): 372; Henry Clay, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, ed. by James F. Hopkins, 4 vols. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959–), IV, 629; Maurice Glen Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 199, 200; James Barret Swain, ed., *The Life and Speeches of Henry Clay* (New York: Greeley & M’Elraith, Tribune Office, 1843), II, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Friedrich List, *Outlines of American Political Economy* (Philadelphia, PA: Samuel Parker, 1827); Gomes, *Economics and Ideology*, 73; Notz, “List in America,” 248, 255–256.



After List's death in 1846, Henry Carey would take up List's forward-looking approach to the American System. Carey would become Pennsylvania's "Ajax of protectionism," a man well known for his imposing height, penetrating gaze, propensity for obscenities, and intellectual intimidation.<sup>23</sup> In his younger days, Carey had been a devout disciple of Adam Smith. Like List, Carey came to consider free trade an ultimate ideal for any country, but only after the proper implementation of economic nationalist policies – even England, he suggested, had jumped too far ahead when it abolished the Corn Laws.<sup>24</sup>

Carey began enunciating his progressive Listian nationalist creed by the late 1840s, noting that "war is an evil, and so are tariffs for protection," but "both *may* be necessary, and both *are* sometimes necessary." He had expressed similar sentiments to abolitionist senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts in 1847: "Nobody *can* admire free trade more than I do . . . I never in my life was more surprised than to find myself brought round to be a protectionist. It is all wrong – as much so as any other sort of war – but it is a necessary act of self defence." A temporary period of protectionism was needed, he suggested, and then the world might obtain free trade and peace.<sup>25</sup>

Carey's opposition to free-trade cosmopolitanism echoed List's. Carey thought that the country's vast expanse of available lands and a protective tariff were the twin panaceas to solve American economic ills. Protectionism was a cure-all that would increase morality and diversify labor productivity, invigorate the southern economy, and someday free the slaves. Like List, Carey also believed that the protective tariff remained essential only so long as American industries remained in

<sup>23</sup> William Elder, *The Memoir of Henry C. Carey* (Philadelphia, PA: Henry Carey Baird & Co., 1880), 32–35. Elder, while working for the Treasury Department, succinctly enunciated the Listian argument when he urged the imperial acquisition of new markets in the "tropical regions" for Western farm surpluses, in *How the Western States Can Become the Imperial Power in the Union* (Philadelphia, PA: Ringwalt & Brown, 1865), 18.

<sup>24</sup> On List's influence upon Carey, see, also, Thompson, *Social Science and National Economy*, 132; Sherwood, *American Economic Thought*, 14, 16, 22; Hirst, *List*, 118–122; Ernest Teilhac, *Pioneers of American Economic Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by E. A. J. Johnson (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), 79–80; Mark Thornton and Robert B. Ekelund, *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2004), 16–17; William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 320–321; Szlajifer, *Economic Nationalism and Globalization*, 55; Andrew Dawson, "Reassessing Henry Carey (1793–1879): The Problems of Writing Political Economy in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American Studies* 34 (December 2000), 479; Frank A. Fetter, "The Early History of Political Economy in the United States," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 87 (July 14, 1943): 55–56.

<sup>25</sup> Henry C. Carey, *The Past, the Present, and the Future* (Philadelphia, PA: Carey & Hart, 1848), 302; Carey to Sumner, November 20, 1847, microfilm, reel 5, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

infancy. In proper Listian fashion, by the 1870s Carey would even tout restrictive trade reciprocity – a key US component of the imperialism of economic nationalism – alongside protective tariffs to aid in US regional economic integration.<sup>26</sup>

Carey saw the South's domestic slavery as but one manifestation of human bondage; the southern cotton growers themselves, with no home market to speak of, were slaves to the global cotton market. He expressed his dismay to Charles Sumner that antislavery men could simultaneously claim to be free traders. For Carey, free trade meant economic subservience to England. Britain wanted the people of the world to "have but one market in which to sell their produce, and one in which to buy their cloth linen – paying what she pleases for the one and charging what she pleases for the other. This is precisely what the planter desires his negro to do." Carey felt that free trade and southern slavery were therefore two sides of the same coin: "The one is just as much slavery as the other."<sup>27</sup> He believed that slavery and premature free trade were interconnected, an antislavery line of argument that postbellum American protectionists would continue to utilize. He thus came to view the British Empire's advocacy of free trade not only as an impediment to American maturation, but an evil – a threat to America's home industries and economic freedom.

Carey found a sympathetic national outlet for his Anglophobic brand of progressive economic nationalism. From around 1850 to 1857, he became the economic consultant of Horace Greeley, the editor of the widely disseminated *New York Tribune*.<sup>28</sup> Carey was now able to promote his Listian nationalist ideology as an editorial writer for Philadelphia's *North American* and the popular *Tribune*.<sup>29</sup> In recognition of his newfound

<sup>26</sup> Henry C. Carey, *Principles of Social Science*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1858), I, 28–31; III, 440–445, esp. 442; Sidney Fine, *Laissez Faire and the General-Welfare State: A Study in American Thought, 1865–1901* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), 16–17; A. D. H. Kaplan, *Henry Charles Carey: A Study in American Economic Thought* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1931), 30; Arnold W. Green, *Henry Charles Carey: Nineteenth-Century Sociologist* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951), 137, 140–141; Stephen Meardon, "Reciprocity and Henry C. Carey's Traverses on 'the Road to Perfect Freedom of Trade,'" *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 33 (September 2011): 307–333.

<sup>27</sup> Carey to Sumner, November 20, 1847, microfilm, reel 5, Sumner Papers.

<sup>28</sup> On Greeley's mixture of radicalism and conservatism, see Adam-Max Tuchinsky, *Horace Greeley's New-York Tribune: Civil War-Era Socialism and the Crisis of Free Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Paul K. Conkin, *Prophets of Prosperity: America's First Political Economists* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), xi; Elwyn B. Robinson, "The *North American*: Advocate of Protection," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 64 (July 1940): 346; Nathan A. Baily, "Henry Carey's 'American System'" (MA Thesis, Columbia University, 1941); Jeter A. Isley, *Horace Greeley and the Republican Party, 1853–1861: A Study of the New York Tribune* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 59.

influence, the *Tribune's* European correspondent Karl Marx described Carey at that time as “the only American economist of importance.” He thereafter joined the Republican party and helped shape its protectionist platform, and was often consulted on economic matters by Lincoln, Lincoln’s treasury secretary, Salmon P. Chase, and numerous other influential Republican politicians.<sup>30</sup> Carey’s progressive Listian nationalism had thus found a sympathetic press and an attentive American readership. So too did List’s *National System of Political Economy* (1841), especially once Carey’s close friend Stephen Colwell solicited an American translation in the 1850s.<sup>31</sup>

Listian nationalism could not claim a monopoly upon American economic thought. Richard Cobden’s cosmopolitan ideology was also finding American accommodation. Like List’s doctrine, Cobdenism spread rapidly, making its way across the English Channel and spreading to France, Italy, Germany, Greece, and Spain during the 1840s. By the 1860s, Cobdenism would be propagated as far afield as Egypt, Siam, China, and Australia.<sup>32</sup> But Cobden’s cosmopolitan ideology enlisted the most international recruits across the Atlantic, from within America’s

<sup>30</sup> Michael Perelman, “Political Economy and the Press: Karl Marx and Henry Carey at the New York Tribune,” *Economic Forum* 16 (Winter 1986): 111–128; Marx, quoted in Andrew Dawson, *Philadelphia Engineers: Capital, Class, and Revolution, 1830–1890* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 129; Green, *Carey*, 35; Conkin, *Prophets of Prosperity*, xi; Isley, *Greeley and the Republican Party*; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 19.

<sup>31</sup> See Frederick List, *National System of Political Economy*, trans. by G. A. Matile, preliminary essay by Stephen Colwell (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1856), esp. vi, lx; Henry C. Carey, *A Memoir of Stephen Colwell* (Philadelphia, PA: Henry Carey Baird, 1872), 14.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846–1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), chap. 3; Alex Tyrrell, “‘La Ligue Française’: The Anti-Corn Law League and the Campaign for Economic Liberalism in France during the Last Days of the July Monarchy,” in *Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Liberalism: Richard Cobden Bicentenary Essays*, ed. by Anthony Howe and Simon Morgan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 99–116; Robert Romani, “The Cobdenian Moment in the Italian Risorgimento,” *ibid.*, 117–140; Detlev Mares, “‘Not Entirely a Manchester Man’: Richard Cobden and the Construction of Manchesterism in Nineteenth-Century German Economic Thinking,” *ibid.*, 141–160; Pandeileimon Hionidis, “Greek Responses to Cobden,” *ibid.*, 161–176; *New York Evening Post*, November 18, December 31, 1846; Gabriel Tortella Casares, *Banking Railroads and Industry in Spain, 1829–1874* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 506–550; Ernest Lluch, “La ‘Gira Trionfal’ de Cobden per Espanya (1846),” *Recerques* 21 (1988): 71–90; Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, “National Economy and Atlantic Slavery: Protectionism and Resistance to Abolitionism in Spain and the Antilles, 1854–1874,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78 (November 1998): 607–608; David Todd, “John Bowring and the Global Dissemination of Free Trade,” *Historical Journal* 51 (June 2008): 373–397; Craufurd D. W. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1966), 11–12.

rapidly industrializing northeastern states – and from among the country's most radical abolitionist reformers.

Cobdenism's mid-century American arrival introduced a new free-trade tradition. Studies of nineteenth-century American economic thought have nevertheless tended to associate the US free-trade tradition solely with Jeffersonianism.<sup>33</sup> Yet Jeffersonianism represented a free-trade ideology based primarily upon agricultural production, Anglophobia, and a doctrine that had become tied to the defense of the southern slave system by mid-century.<sup>34</sup> Cobdenism instead took root within northeastern financial and manufacturing centers like New York and Boston, and its first American disciples were Anglophiles and abolitionists. Cobdenism was a very different free-trade ideology than that of Jeffersonianism.

Cobden's own classical liberal belief in the benign and universalizing principles of free trade, inspired by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), contained a strong moral message that struck a familiar chord in transatlantic abolitionist ears.<sup>35</sup> Cobden believed that international commerce, when ultimately unfettered of the shackles of protectionism, would bring with it "the grand panacea, which, like a beneficent medical discovery, will serve to inoculate with the healthy and saving taste for civilization all the nations of the world." He had faith that the tools of globalization – among them free trade, cheap postage, and steamboats – would one day make the world so integrated and interdependent that war would become obsolete.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> By mid-century, Jeffersonianism was in fact beginning to lose some ideological ground, even in the South. See John Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of the Confederate Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Majewski, "Who Financed the Transportation Revolution? Regional Divergence and Internal Improvements in Antebellum Pennsylvania and Virginia," *Journal of Economic History* 56 (December 1996): 763–788; Brian Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Nicholas Onuf and Peter Onuf, *Nations, Markets, and War: Modern History and the American Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), chap. 8, 324–333; Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System*; Robert Royal Russel, *Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1924), 37, 40, 55–56, 151, 177; Jay Carlander and John Majewski, "Imagining 'a Great Manufacturing Empire': Virginia and the Possibilities of a Confederate Tariff," *Civil War History* 49 (December 2003): 334–352.

<sup>34</sup> See Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union*; Lacy K. Ford, "Republican Ideology in a Slave Society: The Political Economy of John C. Calhoun," *Journal of Southern History* 54 (August 1988): 405–424; Bruno Gujer, *Free Trade and Slavery: Calhoun's Defense of Southern Interests against British Interference, 1811–1848* (Zurich: aku-Fotodruck, 1971).

<sup>35</sup> On the influence of *The Wealth of Nations* upon subsequent British imperial debates, see Marc-William Palen, "Adam Smith as Advocate of Empire, c. 1870–1932," *Historical Journal* 57 (March 2014): 179–198.

<sup>36</sup> Richard Cobden, *Political Writings* (London: W. Ridgeway, 1867), I, 46; Frank Thistlethwaite, *America and the Atlantic Community: Anglo-American Aspects, 1790–1850*

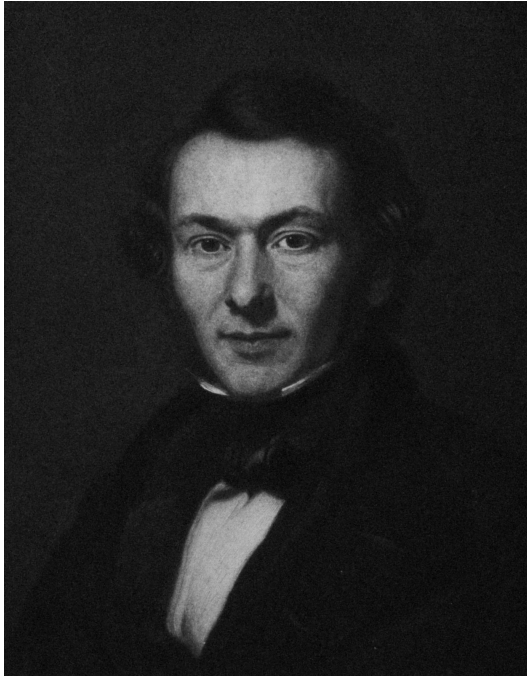


Figure 1.2 Richard Cobden (1804–1865)

US Cobdenites, imbued with a similar moral underpinning, numbered among the mid-century leaders of the transatlantic free-trade and abolitionist movements. America's northeastern Cobdenites took inspiration from the seven-year struggle and ultimate success of England's ACLL, and quickly became cosmopolitan thorns in the side of not only the slave-ridden Jeffersonian, but also the northeastern Hamiltonian and

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1959), 155. On Cobden's foreign policy, see Peter Cain, "Capitalism, War, and Internationalism in the Thought of Richard Cobden," *British Journal of International Studies* 5 (October 1979): 229–247; William Harbutt Dawson, *Richard Cobden and Foreign Policy* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1926); Nicholas C. Edsall, *Richard Cobden, Independent Radical* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); J. A. Hobson, *Richard Cobden: The International Man* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1918); Bernard Semmel, *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy and the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism 1750–1850* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 158–175; David Nicholls, "Richard Cobden and the International Peace Congress Movement, 1848–1853," *Journal of British Studies* 30 (October 1991): 351–376; Richard Francis Spall, "Free Trade, Foreign Relations, and the Anti-Corn-Law League," *International History Review* 10 (August 1988): 405–432.

Madisonian, nationalist political traditions. For American Cobdenite radicals, free trade became entwined with free labor, free men, and free soil. Following the Civil War and the abolition of southern slavery, and ever aware of the burgeoning strength of American manufactures and the mounting need for foreign markets, much of their attention would turn to establishing free trade in the ACLL tradition and to righting the corruptive influences emanating from within the postbellum Republican party.

So how did Cobdenism take root in the Northeast, the heartland of mid-century American industrialism and protectionism? The Victorian free-trade tradition spread directly from Cobden, Bright, and other leaders of the ACLL to their radical counterparts in the United States. They did so by explicitly tying free trade and free labor together. Cobden asked his transatlantic disciples to “remember what has been done in the Anti-Slavery question. Where is the difference between stealing a man and making him labour, on the one hand, or robbing voluntary labourers, on the other, of the fruits of their labour?”<sup>37</sup> The ACLL would even begin replacing “repeal” with “abolition,” as the latter contained more effective transatlantic resonance. The ACLL leadership also made sure to present their free-trade movement in universalist religious and humanitarian terms to transatlantic abolitionist correspondents. Cobden was quite clear on this point, urging the ACLL to appeal to “the religious and moral feelings . . . the energies of the Christian World must be drawn forth by the remembrance of Anti-Slavery.”<sup>38</sup> African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass’s news organ noted as much, recalling how the “Anti-Corn Law movement” had “but one plank in its platform, and that was taken from the system of Christianity.”<sup>39</sup> Personal friendships and a shared sense of moral economy directly led to the transatlantic germination of Cobdenism.

Added to this, the US and British economies had also become ever more interdependent throughout the nineteenth century. Through free trade, Anglo-American Cobdenites hoped to speed up this integrative process in order to cultivate greater prosperity and peace. Already, from

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Stephen Meardon, “Richard Cobden’s American Quandary: Negotiating Peace, Free Trade, and Anti-Slavery,” in *Rethinking Nineteenth-Century Liberalism*, ed. by Howe and Morgan, 212.

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, “Anti-Corn Law League,” 90–91; Howard Temperley, *British Antislavery, 1833–1870* (London: Longman, 1972), 195; Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), chap. 2; Cobden to George Combe, August 1, 1846, Add. MS 43660, Vol. XIV, Richard Cobden Papers, British Library, London, England; Richard Cobden to Peter Alfred Taylor, May 4, 1840, in Richard Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1910), 258. See, also, Stephen Meardon, “From Religious Revivalism to Tariff Rancor: Preaching Free Trade and Protection during the Second American Party System,” *History of Political Economy* 40 (2008): 265–298.

<sup>39</sup> *Douglass’ Monthly* (Rochester, NY), July 1859.



1820 to 1860 almost half of US exports went to Britain, and British goods made up around 40 percent of American imports. By 1860, Britain imported 80 percent of its raw cotton from the South, and nearly all US textile imports came from Britain. British and American commercial policies were thus indelibly linked when Cobdenism was exported to American shores.<sup>40</sup> US Cobdenites believed that free trade would link the two countries even further, to their mutual benefit. At a personal, moral, and material level, Cobdenites believed the United States required free trade.

For transatlantic Cobdenites, free trade and free labor were far from disparate goals.<sup>41</sup> Yet recent work has focused instead on the willingness of the ACLL to work with the slaveholding South for reciprocal tariffs: that by the mid-1840s the middle-class leaders of the ACLL had “subverted anti-slavery’s moral authority.” So, too, did leading Southerners encourage this perceived connection between transatlantic trade liberalization and the decline of antislavery sentiment.<sup>42</sup> But why, then, were the first Anglo-American Cobdenites a regular *who’s who* of radical abolitionists? As Richard Huzzey illustrates, the British antislavery movement had not fallen away by the 1840s. It had splintered rather than declined, fractured rather than faltered. Though perhaps not “a nation of abolitionists,” Free Trade England would remain an antislavery nation.<sup>43</sup> America’s own first Cobdenites accordingly included some of the era’s leading abolitionists, with close ties to British abolitionist free traders.

<sup>40</sup> Thistlethwaite, *America and the Atlantic Community*, 11; Scott C. James and David A. Lake, “The Second Face of Hegemony: Britain’s Repeal of the Corn Laws and the American Walker Tariff of 1846,” *International Organization* 43 (Winter 1989): 1–29; Patrick J. McDonald, *The Invisible Hand of Peace: Capitalism, The War Machine, and International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 141–155.

<sup>41</sup> Marc-William Palen, “Free-Trade Ideology and Transatlantic Abolitionism: A Historiography,” *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 37 (June 2015): 291–304.

<sup>42</sup> Simon Morgan, “The Anti-Corn Law League and British Anti-Slavery in Transatlantic Perspective, 1838–1846,” *Historical Journal* 52 (February 2009), 89; Matt Karp, “King Cotton, Emperor Slavery,” in *The Civil War as Global Conflict*, ed. by David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 36–52. See, also, Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subject: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 338–339; Christine Bolt, *The Anti-Slavery Movement and Reconstruction: A Study in Anglo-American Co-Operation, 1833–1877* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 20.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Huzzey, “Free Trade, Free Labour, and Slave Sugar in Victorian Britain,” *Historical Journal* 53 (2010): 359–379. Eric Williams famously connected the politico-ideological British turn to free trade and antislavery in *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944). See, also, James L. Huston, “Abolitionists, Political Economists, and Capitalism,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 20 (Autumn 2000): 487–521.



George Thompson, among a handful of other British abolitionists from the 1830s to the 1850s, was sent to the United States to link abolitionism and free trade together, and controversially so. Thompson was militant – some thought him mad – in his abolitionist quest. He even attempted to smuggle slaves out of Missouri in the 1830s, landing him a stint in prison. At his close friend William Lloyd Garrison's Boston home could be found a collection of handbills that had once been scattered about the city's streets, offering a \$100 reward "for the notorious British Emissary, George Thompson, dead or alive."<sup>44</sup> Within this toxic antebellum environment, firebrand Thompson toured the United States, giving hundreds of speeches emphasizing the moral connection between free trade and abolitionism.<sup>45</sup> While feared and hated by many, he was held in high esteem among the more radical members of the American abolitionist movement, who often took their cue from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in England – so much so that Anglophobic southern congressmen opined that northern abolitionists were merely mouthpieces of their British counterparts. With the support of their American abolitionist contacts, by the early 1840s ACLL members saw the possibility of an internationalization of free trade, beginning with the abolition of the Corn Laws "as a key to advances" in America. Although not all-pervasive, the transatlantic abolitionist cause had become intimately associated with that of Victorian free trade.<sup>46</sup>

Massachusetts's Reverend Joshua Leavitt played a key role in tying American antislavery to Cobdenism. From the late 1830s onward, this onetime Whig, leader of the antislavery Liberty party, and editor of the

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Yannielli, "George Thompson among the Africans: Empathy, Authority, and Insanity in the Age of Abolition," *Journal of American History* 96 (March 2010): 979–1000; Giles B. Stebbins, *Upward Steps of Seventy Years. Autobiographic, Biographic, Historic* (New York: United States Company, 1890), 99; Samuel Finley Breese Morse, *The Present Attempt to Dissolve the American Union, A British Aristocratic Plot* (New York: John F. Trow, 1862), 34–38.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Anti-Corn Law League," 90; Sam W. Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 192–199; Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, chap. 2; C. Duncan Rice, "The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834–35," *Journal of American Studies* 2 (April 1968): 13–31; Thistlethwaite, *America and the Atlantic Community*, 162; Wm. Lloyd Garrison, ed., *Lectures of George Thompson* (Boston, MA: Isaac Knapp, 1836), iii–xxxiii.

<sup>46</sup> Temperley, *British Antislavery*, 192–193; David Turley, *The Culture of English Antislavery, 1780–1860* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 126; Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Cooperation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), chaps. 10–11; January 21, 1845, *Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 28th Cong., 2nd Sess., 143; Sam W. Haynes, "Anglophobia and the Annexation of Texas: The Quest for National Security," in *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*, ed by Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 123; Meardon, "Religious Revivalism to Tariff Rancor," 268.

abolitionist *Emancipator*, came to see that overturning the Corn Laws in England could shift British trade from the importation of southern slave-grown cotton to western free-grown wheat. “Our Corn Law project,” Leavitt wrote to Liberty party presidential nominee James Birney in 1840, “looks larger to me since my return after seeing the very land where wheat grows . . . We must go for free trade; the voting abolitionists can all be brought to that . . . and the corn movement will give us the West.”<sup>47</sup> English abolitionist and ACLL leader Joseph Sturge, upon his American arrival in 1841, made sure to contact Leavitt to inform him of the status of the Corn Law agitation in England.<sup>48</sup> With Sturge’s added insight, Leavitt discovered that John Bright and a growing number of British manufacturers, weary of their dependence on southern slave-grown cotton, desired to turn instead to northern markets to sell their finished cotton cloth, but were sorely hampered in this endeavor owing to Corn Law restrictions and American protectionism.<sup>49</sup> According to his biographer, Leavitt hoped to move the antislavery movement into “independent political action” and “pounced on this antisouthern and antislavery dimension of the British league’s message.” Leavitt also denounced the English people (and by proxy the Corn Laws) for importing the products of slave labor while blocking staples produced by free labor from the American North and West throughout the early 1840s. Leavitt went so far as to propose that the people of the free states set up their own separate embassy in England in order to counteract the influence of southern slaveholders.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Leavitt to Birney, October 1, 1840, *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831–1857*, ed. by Dwight L. Dumond, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton–Century Company, 1938), II, 604; Meardon, “Religious Revivalism to Tariff Rancor,” 268, 273–275, 285–295; Edward P. Crapol, “The Foreign Policy of Antislavery, 1833–1846,” in *Redefining the Past: Essays in Diplomatic History in Honor of William Appleman Williams*, ed. by Lloyd C. Gardner (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 1986), 92–102.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Sturge, *A Visit to the United States in 1841* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1842); Martin, “Free Trade and the Oregon Question,” 471–474. Sturge was a leading member of both the ACLL and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, Bright to Sturge, 1853, in Stephen Hobhouse, *Joseph Sturge: His Life and his Work* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1919), 109; Sturge, *A Visit to the United States in 1841*, 156–158; Temperley, *British Antislavery*, 166; J. S. Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, 3 vols. (London: Fisher, Son & Co., 1842), III, 242–243. See, also, Julian P. Bretz, “The Economic Background of the Liberty Party,” *American Historical Review* 34 (January 1929): 250–264.

<sup>50</sup> Hugh Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 170; *Emancipator*, December 24, 1840; March 16, 1847. On the debate over free and slave-grown products, see, also, Thistlethwaite, *America and the Atlantic Community*, 161, 163–164; Carol Faulkner, “The Root of the Evil: Free Produce and Radical Antislavery, 1820–1860,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 27 (Fall 2007): 377–405; Louis Billington, “British Humanitarians and American Cotton, 1840–1860,” *Journal of American Studies* 11 (December 1977): 313–334; Merk, “The British Corn

Leavitt, with his newfound transatlantic inspiration, focused much of his attention upon overturning the Corn Laws. He did so by developing an American repeal strategy that would aid British manufacturers and northern farmers (suffering from scarce credit following the banking crisis of 1837), all while striking “one of the heaviest blows at slavery” by allowing the duty-free import of northern wheat to repay their foreign debts.<sup>51</sup> Leavitt then beseeched the Senate Committee on Agriculture to call for the repeal of the Corn Laws. He contended in 1840 that an antislavery American government might work toward such a repeal. “Next to the abolition of slavery,” this was “the greatest question.”<sup>52</sup> Leavitt’s Liberty party also sent Ohio’s John Curtis to Britain to support the ACLL in connecting Corn Law repeal with the abolition of American slavery. Leavitt thereafter presented to Congress another request for ending the Corn Law and for increasing northern trade with Britain by replacing the protectionist 1842 tariff with a tariff for revenue only.<sup>53</sup> He also began discussing the possibilities of Anglo-American free trade with English abolitionists while attending the 1843 antislavery convention in London. He then went on the ACLL tour circuit with Cobden and Bright, during which Leavitt claimed that a conspiracy existed between southern slaveholders and British aristocrats in opposing the Corn Law repeal.<sup>54</sup>

Leavitt reinforced his transatlantic ties through his correspondence with his English abolitionist friends and through the creation of American anti-Corn Law organizations. He encouraged his English

Crisis of 1845–46 and the Oregon Treaty”; C. Duncan Rice, “‘Humanity Sold For Sugar!’ The British Abolitionist Response to Free Trade in Slave-Grown Sugar,” *Historical Journal* 13 (September 1970): 402–418; Harold Francis Williamson, *Edward Atkinson: The Biography of an American Liberal, 1827–1905* (Boston, MA: Old Corner Book Store, 1934), 4–10.

<sup>51</sup> *Emancipator*, May 1, 1840, 2; Davis, *Leavitt*, 171; Morgan, “Anti-Corn Law League,” 95; Martin, “Mississippi Valley in Anglo-American Relations,” 212–220; Thomas P. Martin, “Cotton and Wheat in Anglo-American Trade and Politics, 1846–1852,” *Journal of Southern History* 1 (August 1935): 293–319; Martin, “Conflicting Cotton Interests at Home and Abroad, 1848–1857,” *Journal of Southern History* 7 (May 1941): 173–194.

<sup>52</sup> *Memorial of Joshua Leavitt Praying the Adoption of Measures to Secure an Equitable Market for American Wheat*, Senate Documents, 26th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 222, 1–8; *Ballot Box*, October 7, 1840, quoted in Davis, *Leavitt*, 171.

<sup>53</sup> Morgan, “Anti-Corn Law League,” 96; John Curtis, *America and the Corn Laws* (Manchester: J. Gadsby, 1841); *Memorial of Joshua Leavitt, Praying That, in the Revision of the Tariff Laws, the Principle of Discrimination May be Inserted in Favor of Those Countries in Which American Grain, Flour, and Salted Meat, are Admitted Duty Free*, Senate Documents, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 339, pp. 117–124; *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, September 7, 1842, 142.

<sup>54</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, May 27, 1843; Crapol, “Foreign Policy of Antislavery,” 98–99; Turley, *Culture of English Antislavery*, 126.

correspondents to think of American interests alongside their own, letters that were then published in the *Anti-Corn Law League Circular* in England. He also began establishing anti-Corn Law societies in the American Northwest and New York. Although in doing so he gained the disfavor of protectionists within the Whig party, his efforts provided further transatlantic moral support for the ACLL and strengthened Leavitt's connection to Cobdenism.<sup>55</sup>

Abolitionist firebrands Leavitt and Thompson were not alone in bringing the ACLL's free-trade fight to American shores. A variety of other American abolitionist free traders also took lessons from the ACLL. As W. Caleb McDaniel has recently noted, women of the ACLL staged Free Trade bazaars, giving direct and indirect encouragement to American abolitionists. Garrisonian pacifist Henry Clarke Wright similarly developed close ties with the ACLL, and the antislavery and free-trade work of Harriet Martineau fell within this transatlantic network, as well.<sup>56</sup>

William Cullen Bryant, former Barnburner Democrat, Free Soiler, poet, abolitionist, uncompromising free trader, and editor of the *New York Evening Post*, attended ACLL meetings in London during the 1840s. In admiration for Cobden, Bryant would afterward go on to edit the American edition of Cobden's *Political Writings* in 1865. He would also become an early leader of the subsequent Gilded Age American free-trade movement.<sup>57</sup>

Arch-abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison was heavily influenced by George Thompson and other British free traders. As one abolitionist (and protectionist) friend, Giles Stebbins, recollected, "Wm. Lloyd Garrison and others of the abolitionists whom I greatly respected, inclined to free trade; for their English anti-slavery friends were free-traders." In later years, Garrison became a member of, and corresponded frequently with, the Cobden Club upon its creation in 1866, avowing himself "a free-trader to an illimitable extent."<sup>58</sup> For him, free trade was but the next step to freeing mankind from bondage.

The humanitarian and religious antislavery rhetoric likewise entered the free-trade language of Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, himself a convert

<sup>55</sup> Davis, *Leavitt*, 180, 196, 202, 204; James M. McPherson, "The Fight Against the Gag Rule: Joshua Leavitt and Antislavery Insurgency in the Whig Party, 1839–1842," *Journal of Negro History* 48 (July 1963): 177–195.

<sup>56</sup> W. Caleb McDaniel, *The Problem of Democracy in the Age of Slavery: Garrisonian Abolitionists & Transatlantic Reform* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 122, 165–166; Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780–1870* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 130.

<sup>57</sup> Foner, *Free Soil*, 153; *Free-Trader* (March 1870), 170; John Bigelow, *William Cullen Bryant* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1890), 182–183.

<sup>58</sup> Stebbins, *Upward Steps*, 194; *Morning Post*, September 7, 1875, 3.

from protectionism to Cobdenism, and famous in England for his transatlantic tours. In the years to come, he would beseech American free traders to employ “the same energy and the same agitation” of the antislavery struggle toward the burgeoning American free-trade movement. He hoped that he would live long enough “to induce the American people to favor the unshackling of intercourse between nation and nation.”<sup>59</sup>

The “American Carlyle” Ralph Waldo Emerson was also involved in the abolitionist and free-trade movements.<sup>60</sup> Emerson first met Cobden in 1847 at a meeting of the Manchester Athenaeum, where he heard Cobden give an “eloquent” address, spurring Emerson to comment upon the shared traits “of that Anglo-Saxon race” that had “secured for it the scepter of the globe.” He would continue to meet with Cobden on his English visits for years to come. During one such visit in 1848, Emerson wrote to his friend Henry David Thoreau of the Free Trade Banquet held the previous night, where he “heard the best man in England make perhaps his best speech.” Cobden, “the *cor cordis* . . . educated by his dogma of Free Trade . . . as our abolitionists have been by their principle . . . It was quite beautiful, even sublime.”<sup>61</sup> Emerson’s Cobdenite sentiments even found outlet in his literary musings. In his 1857 “Concord Ode,” for example, he would beseech his country to “bid the broad Atlantic roll, a ferry of the free.”<sup>62</sup> Emerson, along with many of these first-generation Cobdenites, would exude some of his own dogmatic energy when he helped create the American Free Trade League (AFTL) in 1865.

Charles Sumner maintained perhaps the closest mid-century correspondence with Cobden and his man-at-arms, John Bright. “Conscience” Whig Sumner left that party in 1848 for the antislavery Free Soil party, before becoming an influential member of the Radical Republicans in the late 1850s. Sumner first met Cobden in 1838 during a trip to England, and they developed a friendship in the decades leading up to and during the Civil War. Not coincidentally, Sumner’s protectionist

<sup>59</sup> *New York Times*, May 27, 1882, 5; Lymon Abbott, *Henry Ward Beecher as His Friends Saw Him* (Boston and New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1904), 128.

<sup>60</sup> Len Gougeon, “The Anti-Slavery Background of Emerson’s ‘Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing,’” *Studies in the American Renaissance* 9 (1985): 63–77; Gougeon, “Abolition, the Emersons, and 1837,” *New England Quarterly* 54 (September 1981): 345–365; Gougeon, “Emerson and Abolition, the Silent Years: 1837–1844,” *American Literature* 54 (December 1982): 560–575.

<sup>61</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, November 23, 1847; Barbara L. Packer et al., ed., *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Conduct of His Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), VI, 212; Emerson to Henry David Thoreau, January 28, 1848, in *Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. by Eleanor Marguerite Tilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 145.

<sup>62</sup> Excerpt reprinted in *Free Trade Broadside* 1 (April 1905), 1.

convictions began to soften during this period, even as he came around to Amasa Walker and Richard Cobden's condemnation of international war. Henry Carey would thereafter try without success to turn Sumner away from his Cobdenite convictions. Sumner's unwillingness to shift from his Cobdenite beliefs caused Carey to beseech him one final time in 1852 – if only Sumner could just satisfy himself “that protection is the real and the only road to freedom of trade and freedom in the fate of labour,” and let go of “British free trade which leads everywhere to the subjugation of man.”<sup>63</sup> Sumner instead became a strong advocate of Cobden's quest for “Universal Peace.” In an inspirational 1849 speech before an audience of Free Soilers, for example, Sumner urged them to remember how the ACLL had successfully brought together Tories, Whigs, and Radicals to repeal the monopolistic Corn Laws. As economic historian Stephen Meardon notes, “The equation of tariff barriers with ‘monopoly,’ and their repeal with ‘Freedom’ . . . was the rhetoric of free trade. More to the point, in the broader context of peace and anti-slavery in which Sumner spoke, it was the rhetoric of Cobdenism.”<sup>64</sup>

America's first Cobdenites were thus an imposing group of abolitionists with strong transatlantic ties.<sup>65</sup> Long after Cobden's death in 1865, many of these American radicals would maintain correspondence with the Cobden Club's leadership, and continue to work toward bringing about Cobden's universal vision of free trade, prosperity, and peace. These northern subscribers to Cobdenism were the vanguard of the Victorian American free-trade movement. William Freehling suggests that Jeffersonian free trade and slavery had become “intermeshed” in the South by the time of the Nullification Crisis (1832–1833). By the 1840s, so too were Cobdenism and abolitionism enmeshed within the American North.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Carey to Sumner, July 24, 1852, reel 9, Sumner Papers. His personal free-trade proclivities did not keep him from voting the Republican party line on the 1861 Morrill Tariff.

<sup>64</sup> Sumner to Cobden, February 12, 1849, reel 63, Sumner Papers; Sumner to Bancroft, March 15, 1846, Bancroft Papers; Charles Sumner, “Address to the People of Massachusetts, September 12, 1849,” in *Orations and Speeches of Charles Sumner* (Boston, MA: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850), II, 294; Meardon, “Richard Cobden's American Quandary,” 216. See, also, Thomas P. Martin, “The Upper Mississippi Valley in Anglo-American Anti-Slavery and Free Trade Relations: 1837–1842,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 15 (September 1928): 208–211.

<sup>65</sup> Other American abolitionists who would become leaders of the postbellum free-trade movement included Edward Atkinson, Amasa Walker, Gamaliel Bradford, William Earl Dodge, Parke Godwin, Benjamin Gue, Rowland Hazard, Edward Holton, James Redpath, F. B. Sanborn, Thomas Shearman, Joseph Thompson, Francis Stout, Francis Vincent, and Horace White (see Appendix).

<sup>66</sup> William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816–1836* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 255.



### Free trade, the Corn Laws, and westward expansion

The American arrival of Cobdenite ideology was closely linked not only to abolitionism, but also to connecting the ACLL with American westward expansion, a seemingly unexpected pairing. From the 1830s, the ACLL had sought to undo the British protectionist system. England's industrialization delivered with it a double punch of prosperity and poverty. The latter attribute, argued Richard Cobden, had only been compounded by the English aristocracy's militaristic atavism and the well-to-do landowners' selfish adherence to protective tariffs. Such protectionism was exemplified by the Corn Laws, which for so long had artificially raised the price of bread stemming from the laws' protective tariffs on imported foreign grain. The ACLL therefore had clear cause for celebration in 1846 when the Corn Laws were repealed.<sup>67</sup> At long last, the promised "cheap loaf" proved politically palatable, as did Britain's ensuing free-trade policies. The era of the so-called *Pax Britannica* had arrived, yet with it came deteriorating Anglo-American relations arising from US westward expansion.

More than timing linked the rise of Free Trade England and American westward expansion. Just as Britain was turning to free trade, across the Atlantic, Jeffersonian Democratic President James K. Polk declared war against Mexico, marking the antebellum apogee of nationwide Manifest Destiny – the patriotic desire to expand the reach of the United States to every edge of North America. Antiwar Whigs tended to view the war with Mexico as an overt attempt to extend the territory of the southern "slave power." In response, as historian Sam Haynes paints the scene, western and southern expansionists tarred "the Whigs with a British brush." Antebellum Anglophobia had become a reliable "multipurpose bête noire."<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> In perhaps the first Listian response to Cobdenism in the UK, one Irish student of List wrote a defense of the Navigation Acts in 1847. "A Disciple of Friedrich List" [H. Forbes], *A Glance at the Proposed Abolition of the Navigation Laws, and the Principles of Free Trade* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1847).

<sup>68</sup> Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution*, 139, 145. On Manifest Destiny and the war with Mexico, see especially Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966); Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris, *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997); Charles G. Sellers, *James K. Polk: Continentalist, 1843–1846* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966); Walter R. Borneman, *Polk: The Man Who Transformed the Presidency and America* (New York: Random House, 2008); John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846–48* (New York: Random House, 1989); David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973).



Anglophobia – defined as fear, distrust, or hatred of the British – was a multifaceted psychological condition that permeated American politics from the American Revolution onward, and remained prevalent even after Anglo-American rapprochement at the nineteenth century's *fin de siècle*. From the country's founding, southern Jeffersonians both feared British antislavery agitation and disliked their own continued reliance upon the British market for their agricultural exports. Many northern manufacturers instead feared Britain's pronounced advantages in the way of industrial production. And all sections generally remained wary of the British Empire's geopolitical presence in North America. More than a few Northerners and Southerners even set out to create a unique national identity in an effort to differentiate the fledgling American states from their English colonial heritage. While a strong vein of Anglophilia could be found among some northeastern elites, Anglophobia proved to be an effective and malleable tool for gaining electoral advantage; for creating a new sense of national identification that buttressed the American System of protectionism; and for further justifying American westward expansion.<sup>69</sup>

The decision for war against Mexico stemmed in no small part from an American geopolitical fear of British antislavery and annexationist agitation in Texas and California, followed closely by rumors that the British would support Mexico with men and money if a quarrel were to break out.<sup>70</sup> US Treasury Secretary Robert J. Walker warned that a pro-British Texas would lead to a slave exodus from the South and would give the British Empire a convenient base from which to invade the Mississippi

<sup>69</sup> On nineteenth-century American Anglophobia, see Kinley J. Brauer, "The United States and British Imperial Expansion, 1815–60," *Diplomatic History* 12 (January 1988): 19–37; Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution*; Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union*, chap. 1; Lawrence A. Peskin, "Conspiratorial Anglophobia and the War of 1812," *Journal of American History* 98 (December 2011): 647–669; Stephen Tuffnell, "'Uncle Sam is to be Sacrificed': Anglophobia in Late Nineteenth-Century Politics and Culture," *American Nineteenth Century History* 12 (March 2011): 77–99; William C. Reuter, "The Anatomy of Political Anglophobia in the United States, 1865–1900," *Mid-America* 61 (April–July 1979): 117–132; Edward P. Crapol, *America for Americans: Economic Nationalism and Anglophobia in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973).

<sup>70</sup> Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution*, 230–250; Temperley, *British Antislavery*, 197–202; Harriet Smither, "English Abolitionism and the Annexation of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 32 (January 1929): 193–205; Ephraim Douglas Adams, *British Interest and Activities in Texas, 1838–1846* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1910); Adams, "English Interest in the Annexation of California," *American Historical Review* 14 (July 1909): 744–763; Lelia Roeckell, "Bonds over Bondage: British Opposition to the Annexation of Texas," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (Summer 1999): 257–278; Sheldon G. Jackson, "The British and the California Dream: Rumors, Myths, and Legends," *Southern California Quarterly* 57 (Summer 1975): 251–268; Jackson, "Two Pro-British Plots in Alta California," *Southern California Quarterly* 55 (Summer 1973): 105–140.

delta. Perhaps in the hope of striking a sympathetic chord with Whig protectionists, others suggested that the British might even use the recently minted Texas Republic to bypass US tariff schedules. As a complement to this British antislavery and free-trade fearmongering, still other expansionists would dangle the tantalizing possibility of accessing Pacific-rim markets – that the new territories would open up the western coastline of North and South America, as well as the markets of Russia, India, and China, for American exports.<sup>71</sup>

The war with Mexico also contained the problematic promise of acquiring massive tracts of new American territory. Would these new lands ultimately become free or slave states? This difficult question surrounding slavery's expansion fertilized the dormant seeds of sectionalism and secession: seeds that would sprout into Civil War in 1861. Yet even though slavery monopolized the era's political scene like no other issue in American history, the influence of Victorian free trade also reverberated throughout antebellum US foreign relations and domestic politics, from the Oregon boundary dispute to the formation of the Republican party.<sup>72</sup>

During this era of massive economic growth and transatlantic interconnectivity, some paternalistic Listian nationalist intellectuals in the United States also were slowly coming to accept that American infant industries would one day reach adolescence and adulthood – and that reciprocal trade and expanding foreign markets would in the near future not only become desirable, but necessary. They also viewed Britain's newly christened free-trade imperialism as a formidable stumbling block to proper American industrial maturation.<sup>73</sup>

Such Anglophobic sentiments had already begun to spill over into international politics stemming from an Anglo-American boundary dispute surrounding the Oregon territory in the early 1840s, a conflict commonly remembered by Polk's 1844 expansionist presidential campaign slogan "Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!" The pro-free-trade *New York Evening Post* even reported that some conspiratorial protectionists in Congress and the Whig press were considering "making the apprehension of war a pretext for spending large amounts of money in military and naval preparations," thereby creating enough new expenditures to justify the high tariff of 1842. The paper also speculated with less cynicism that there was now the possibility of combining the Oregon boundary question with Anglo-American free trade. A "free trade tariff on both sides will settle the

<sup>71</sup> Robert J. Walker, *Letter of Mr. Walker Relative to the Annexation of Texas* (Washington, DC: The Globe Office, 1844); Haynes, "Anglophobia, Annexation," 133; Ximenes, *Mr. Calhoun – Mr. Van Buren – Texas* (July 1, 1843).

<sup>72</sup> David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 49.

<sup>73</sup> Brauer, "United States and British Imperial Expansion."

matter quickly,” the *Post* predicted in late January, “and give us something better to do than fighting.” Such speculation received encouragement from the ACLL, with one of its member’s expressing the hope that, now that England was embracing free trade, “if your President can only carry out his sensible trade views, the extended intercourse between the two countries will be the surest guarantee for peace.” Treasury Secretary Walker, temporarily putting aside his own expansionist impulse for the sake of tariff reform, had noted in his 1845 annual Treasury report that if the US tariff were reduced, “the party opposed to the Corn Laws of England would soon prevail,” leading to Anglo-American free trade. Even as Whig antiwar politicians were being labeled pro-British, protectionist Whig opponents of Polk were quick to portray him as a paid British agent, drawing conspiratorial connections between British industrialists, free-trade propaganda, and Polk’s liberal stance on the tariff.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time, the British were also beginning to take notice of the bountiful wheat crop and the expansive agricultural development of the American West. Discussion arose on both sides of the Atlantic as to whether these vast western territories might become Britain’s next breadbasket, especially after the onset of a severe harvest shortage throughout the United Kingdom in 1845, culminating in the horrific Great Famine of Ireland (1845–1852).<sup>75</sup> Alongside potentially solving the food shortage through increased importation of American wheat, British free traders believed that repeal of the Corn Laws would create such strong commercial connections between the British Empire and the United States that future Anglo-American hostilities like the boundary issue would disappear. British free traders’ desire for western wheat as part of the promised “cheap loaf,” alongside a general British turn toward internationalism, strengthened repeal and laid the groundwork for a peaceable solution to the Oregon boundary dispute.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *New York Evening Post*, January 12, January 19, January 26, January 28, 1846; Robert J. Walker, “Report from the Secretary of the Treasury,” in *State Papers and Speeches on the Tariff*, ed. by Frank W. Taussig (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1893 [1845]), 11; Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution*, 129–131, 149–151; McDonald, *Invisible Hand of Peace*, 141–145.

<sup>75</sup> David Sim, *A Union Forever: The Irish Question and U.S. Foreign Relations in the Victorian Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014) 40–43; Harry J. Carman, “English Views of Middle Western Agriculture, 1850–1870,” *Agricultural History* 8 (January 1934): 3–19; Thomas Stirtton, “Free Trade and the Wheat Surplus of the Old Northwest, 1839–1846” (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1952), 67–139. Wheat continued to play an important diplomatic role in subsequent years. See Morton Rothstein, “America in the International Rivalry for the British Wheat Market, 1860–1914,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (December 1960): 401–418.

<sup>76</sup> *London Times*, November 11, 1845, 4; November 18, 1846, 4; Blanche Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland, 1845–49* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 40; Frederick Merk, *The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics*



Figure 1.3 “Peel and Polk.” London’s humor magazine *Punch* offers a cartoon depicting Peel [left] pelting a militant Polk [right] with “Free Corn,” so as to bring a peaceful settlement to the Oregon dispute. *Punch* (1846), X, 155

Yet support for repeal was far from universal. American protectionists preferred fearmongering to tariff reductions. Baltimore’s protectionist news organ *Niles’ Weekly Register* speculated that the Peel government

(Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), 309–336, 391; Merk, “The British Corn Crisis of 1845–46 and the Oregon Treaty,” *Agricultural History* (July 1934): 95–123; Thomas P. Martin, “Free Trade and the Oregon Question, 1842–1846,” in *Facts and Factors in Economic History: Articles by Former Students of Edwin Francis Gay* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 485–490; R. C. Clark, “British and American Tariff Policies and their Influence on the Oregon Boundary Treaty,” *Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association Proceedings* 1 (1926): 32–49; Henry Commager, “England and Oregon Treaty of 1846,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 28 (March 1927), 34–38; Howard Jones and Donald A. Rakestraw, *Prologue to Manifest Destiny: Anglo-American Relations in the 1840s* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1997), 228, 236; Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Annexation*, 417–420. For further speculation about free trade bringing a peaceful settlement, see *European Times*, November 20, December 4, 1845, in *Littell’s Living Age* (Boston, MA: Waite, Peirce & Company, January–March 1846), VIII, 54; Russell, quoted in Merk, “The British Corn Crisis of 1845–46 and the Oregon Treaty,” 104; Everett to Bancroft, February 2, 1846, carton 14, George Bancroft Papers, MHS.

would use the Oregon dispute to sway recalcitrant ministers toward repeal, and that American trade liberalization would mean that the United States “may again be courted into colonial reliance . . . the glorious old colonies are coming back to a proper dependence upon British manufactures.”<sup>77</sup> For some, free trade appeared to be bringing its promised panacea of peace through more amicable Anglo-American relations, but for others it also carried with it the possibility of British free-trade imperialism in the United States.

Cobdenite free-trade agitation in favor of Anglo-American rapprochement also met staunch opposition from some Anglophobic Jeffersonians hoping to undermine the growing transatlantic abolitionist–Cobdenite alliance. In 1842, Duff Green, a southern agent, was sent to Europe with the mission of cutting the ties between northern abolitionists and the ACLL so as to maintain the current southern–western free-trade alliance in American politics. He even claimed to have discovered a vast British conspiracy involving the repeal of the Corn Laws, British emancipation agitation in Texas, and the destruction of US commerce. Green’s allegations caused alarm back home.<sup>78</sup>

Nor did North American prosperity immediately follow transatlantic trade liberalization. In the short term, at least, the reality of Corn Law repeal meant that Canada and the United States now had to compete directly with the agricultural exports of the so-called pauper labor of Europe.<sup>79</sup> This newfound economic competition was compounded by the realization that the United States had lost its backdoor trade route through Canada, a British colony that, until repeal in 1846, had been receiving preferential commercial treatment from England. Owing to the sudden increase in European competition, agricultural prices in North America fell. By 1849, this sharp agricultural price decline produced an economic depression in Canada, and a corresponding demand from Montreal’s merchant community for American annexation of Canada. Alongside placating this annexationist sentiment, avoiding the era’s

<sup>77</sup> McDonald, *Invisible Hand of Peace*, 146–148; *Niles National Register* (Baltimore), LXIX, January 24, 1846, 322; January 31, 1846, 340; February 21, 1846, 386. On Peel’s “realist” repeal of the Corn Laws, see Anthony Howe, “Radicalism, Free Trade, and Foreign Policy in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain,” in *The Primacy of Foreign Policy in British History, 1660–2000*, ed. by William Mulligan and Brendan Simms (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 170–171.

<sup>78</sup> Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Annexation*, 22–23; Malcolm Rogers Eiselen, “Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1932), chaps. 9–10; Martin, “Free Trade and the Oregon Question,” 475–480; Karp, “King Cotton, Emperor Slavery.”

<sup>79</sup> *Cleveland Herald*, February 27, 1846; *American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art and Science* (New York: George H. Colton, 1846), III, 218; *Congressional Globe* (Washington, 1846), 29th Cong. 1st Sess., 339–340, 460.

seemingly endless Canadian–American fisheries disputes, and the loss of Canada’s preferential treatment with England, the closing of this American backdoor trade route thereafter played a sizeable role in the development of US–Canadian reciprocity in 1854. Protectionist Whigs like Daniel Webster and some western farmers – the latter still seething over the Oregon issue – instead believed that the weak increase in US wheat exports and declining agricultural prices following repeal only strengthened the protectionist home-market argument.<sup>80</sup>

The 1846 repeal of the Corn Laws, the passage of the low US Walker Tariff, and the peaceful settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute also did little to diminish American Anglophobia. All of these events held out the possibility for a new era of transatlantic trade liberalization and closer Anglo-American relations.<sup>81</sup> But these events and their aftermath also demonstrated that Anglophobia and tense Anglo-American relations were anything but dissipating. The ideological dividing wall between free traders and economic nationalists was already proving to be formidable.

So how did America’s estranged free traders and protectionists come to lie together within the Republican party? Put simply, a radical minority of northeastern Cobdenites initially gave their support to the Republican party – a party made up predominantly of former Whig protectionists – owing to the fledgling party’s ideology of free labor, free soil, and antislavery. The Republican party’s minority of Cobdenite free-trade radicals, drawing upon the ACLL’s leadership and success, hoped to bring the same promised panacea of free trade and peace to American shores. As *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* described it, the American Cobdenites’ proposed Republican doctrine was “Free Men, Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Trade.”<sup>82</sup> The Whig-Republican

<sup>80</sup> Edwin Williams, *The Wheat Trade of the United States and Europe* (New York: New York Farmers’ Club, 1846), 17–19; Merk, “The British Corn Crisis of 1845–46 and the Oregon Treaty,” 108–117; D. L. Burn, “Canada and the Repeal of the Corn Laws,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* 2 (1928): 252–272; Frederick E. Haynes, “The Reciprocity Treaty with Canada of 1854,” *Publications of the American Economic Association* 7 (November 1892): 9–12; Thomas P. Martin, “The Staff of Life in Diplomacy and Politics during the Early Eighteen Fifties,” *Agricultural History* 18 (January 1944): 1–15; Peter J. Parish, “Daniel Webster, New England, and the West,” *Journal of American History* 54 (December 1967), 535. On the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, see Robert E. Ankli, “The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854,” *Canadian Journal of Economics* 4 (February 1971): 1–20; Lawrence H. Officer and Lawrence B. Smith, “The Canadian-American Reciprocity Treaty of 1855 to 1866,” *Journal of Economic History* 28 (1968): 598–623.

<sup>81</sup> A point that Polk himself noted to Congress later that year. James K. Polk, “Second Annual Message,” December 8, 1846, *Tariff Proceedings and Documents 1839–1857 Accompanied by Messages of the President, Treasury Reports, and Bills*, 3 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), III, 1653.

<sup>82</sup> “Free Labor and Protection,” *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, March 24, 1854. The motto is similar to that adopted at the Free Soiler Herkimer Convention of October 26, 1847, led



supporters of the “American System” – revamped by Friedrich List, Henry Clay, and Henry Carey – would instead seek to move the Republican party away from antislavery and toward a platform of protective tariffs and government-subsidized internal improvements. With a tenuous thread and needle, antebellum antislavery stitched the Republican party together. Free traders and protectionists in the North and West had thus found a common cause and tenuous party loyalty under the broad Republican banner of antislavery, a northern–western alliance that was buttressed by the construction of Great Lakes canals and railroad lines.<sup>83</sup> When American Cobdenite desires for freer trade increasingly became a postbellum Republican pipedream, however, the party’s precarious free-trade–protectionist alliance would begin to wear. As examined in subsequent chapters, upon the Civil War’s conclusion and the manumission of southern slaves, the tempestuous tariff issue would tear this fair-weather friendship apart.

Moreover, the Panic of 1857 would have lasting reverberations, in both the ante- and postbellum Republican party. The moderate Democratic revenue tariffs of 1846 and 1857 appeared to have indicated a national move toward a policy of trade liberalization: a move that had partially placated both southern Jeffersonians and northeastern Cobdenites. But the low tariffs also earned the ire of Henry Carey and protectionist politicians from the infant industrial Midwest and Northeast. Economic nationalist ire was heightened following the onset of the 1857 economic panic, which coincided closely with the passage of the low 1857 tariff. The timing may have been coincidental, but it revitalized the Whig-Republican argument that only protectionism could return prosperity, stability, and high wages to the American laborer. This line of argument garnered further protectionist support in

by Cobdenite David Dudley Field: “Free Trade, Free Labor, Free Soil, Free Speech and Free Men.” See Jonathan Halperin Earle, *Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824–1854* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 71–72.

<sup>83</sup> Foner, *Free Soil*, xiv, xxiv, 9, 19, 59, 61, 105, 153; William A. Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Cleveland, OH: World Pub. Co., 1961), 248; William D. Carleton, “Tariffs and the Rise of Sectionalism,” *Current History* 42 (June 1962): 333–338; Edward Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903), II, 71–81; Charles A. Beard, *The Idea of National Interest: An Analytical Study in American Foreign Policy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), 58; Douglas Irwin, “Antebellum Tariff Politics: Coalition Formation and Shifting Regional Interests,” *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*, No. 12161 (April 2006): 1–43; Marc Egnal, *Clash of Extremes: The Economic Origins of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009); Carleton, “Tariffs and the Rise of Sectionalism”; Thomas M. Pitkin, “Western Republicans and the Tariff in 1860,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27 (December 1940): 401–420.



the West and generally intensified prevailing sectional views.<sup>84</sup> Carey and his Listian acolytes would continue to use subsequent economic panics in seeking to make the Republican party “a protective party *en bloc*.”<sup>85</sup>

The Republican party’s Cobdenite minority unsuccessfully sought to counter this Whig–Republican protectionist insurgency. They even tried to include a “tariff for revenue only” plank into the new Republican party platform. In 1857, John Bigelow wrote to William Cullen Bryant that Horace Greeley was instead “trying very hard to get up a clamor for *protection*” by “hammering at the Tariff of ’46 and the bill of last winter as the cause of all our troubles constantly.” Bryant’s *Evening Post* thereafter charged that there was a conspiracy underway “to pervert the Republican party to the purposes of the owners of coal and iron mines” through high tariff legislation. Charles Francis Adams, Sr. similarly warned that “the old Whig side” was attempting “to stuff in the protective tariff as a substitute for the slave question.”<sup>86</sup> As the outbreak of the Civil War neared, the Republican party’s free-trade–protectionist political alliance was already showing strain.

### Conclusion

The burgeoning struggle between Listian nationalism and Cobdenite cosmopolitanism over the political economic course of American economic expansion thus coincided with Manifest Destiny’s mid-century westward push and England’s own turn to free trade. Contrary to the common narrative that antebellum free trade only went hand in hand with southern Jeffersonianism and slavery, a study of the arrival of Cobdenism illuminates how Anglo-American free trade and abolitionism had also become entwined in the Northeast. American abolitionist free traders, the

<sup>84</sup> Egnal, *Clash of Extremes*, 242–244; Eiselen, “Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism,” chap. 12; James L. Huston, *The Panic of 1857 and the Coming of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 1; Huston, “A Political Response to Industrialism: The Republican Embrace of Protectionist Labor Doctrines,” *Journal of American History* 70 (June 1983): 35–57; Pitkin, “Western Republicans and the Tariff.”

<sup>85</sup> E. Pershine Smith to Carey, February 6, January 16, 1859, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. See, also, Henry C. Carey, *Letters to the President on the Foreign and Domestic Policy of the Union, and Its Effects, as Exhibited in the Condition of the People and the State* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1858); Foner, *Free Soil*, 173; Arthur Lee, “Henry Carey and the Republican Tariff,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (July 1957), 285–290.

<sup>86</sup> Bigelow to Bryant, October 12, 1857, box 1, John Bigelow Papers, NYPL; *New York Evening Post*, January 14, 1860; Adams to Sumner, August 1, 1858, microfilm reel 162, Charles Francis Adams Letterbook, Adams Family Papers, MHS; Foner, *Free Soil*, 175–176, 203.

country's first Cobdenites, worked closely with their British counterparts in the overthrow of both the English Corn Laws and American slavery. At the same time, forward-looking economic nationalists within the Republican party sought instead an aggressive protectionist path for American expansion. The newly formed Republican party's rally around antislavery may have temporarily overshadowed the Republican coalition's conflicting free-trade and protectionist ideologies, but a culmination of events would soon usher in an ideological, territorial, and racial conflagration that would reshape the transatlantic political economic landscape for decades to come: especially once the postbellum Republican party began turning its main focus from antislavery to protectionism.

The Republican reorientation toward infant industrial protectionism began in 1860 with the proposal of a protective tariff bill by Vermont's Republican congressman, Justin Morrill, with the aid and encouragement of Henry Carey as well as more orthodox home-market protectionists. Georgia politician Robert Toombs certainly misread the situation in November 1860 at the Georgia secession convention, however, when he stated: "The free-trade abolitionists became protectionists; the non-abolition protectionists became abolitionists. The result of this coalition was the infamous Morrill bill." Rather, the proposed bill had backing from Midwesterners and Pennsylvanians, as it offered protection to wool, iron, and coal, among other industries. But opposition arose to the tariff not only in the South, but also in the Northeast, particularly among Republican Cobdenites.<sup>87</sup>

However unintentionally, the Morrill Tariff further alienated Republican Cobdenites from the party's protectionist majority. The demands and the lobbying tactics of the protectionists would prove more than a match for the country's cross-sectional free-trade opposition, especially following the secession of various southern states, whose Jeffersonian congressmen might otherwise have voted against the bill. Hoping to woo voters in protectionist Pennsylvania, the Republican

<sup>87</sup> William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, eds., *Secession Debated: Georgia's Showdown in 1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 38; *New York Times*, February 6, 1861, 1; Egnal, *Clash of Extremes*, 249. Some manufacturers did warn Morrill against raising dutiable rates. See J. M. Forbes to Morrill, February 18, 1859; Henry S. Pierce to Morrill, April 26, 1860; J. Sting Fray Bigs [?] to Morrill, May 7, 1860, reel 4; Jed Jewitt to Morrill, February 2, 1861; copy, Portuguese legate De Figanieri e Mordo to J. S. Black, February 12, 1861; J. M. Forbes to Sumner, February 21, 1861; Lombard, Whitney & Co. to A. H. Rice, February 21, 1861, reel 5, microfilm, Justin Morrill Papers, LOC. See, also, Richard Hofstadter, "The Tariff Issue on the Eve of the Civil War," *American Historical Review* 44 (October 1938): 50–55; *Cong. Globe*, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 2053; J. L. Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: F. Young & Co., 1864), II, 427.

party majority ignored the northeastern free-trade rumblings of dissent and fell in behind the high tariff bill. Morrill wrote in April 1861, two months after the tariff's passage: "Our Tariff Bill is unfortunate in being launched at this time as it will be made the scape-goat of all difficulties."<sup>88</sup> Morrill's prescience was remarkable.

<sup>88</sup> Phillip W. Magness, "Morrill and the Missing Industries: Strategic Lobbying Behavior and the Tariff, 1858–1861," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Summer 2009): 287–329; Justin Smith Morrill to John Sherman, April 1, 1861, GLC02762, Gilder Lehrman Institute Archives, New York City.