



CRIMEAN WAR, JOHN ARTHUR ROEBUCK AND PUBLIC OPINION IN THE GREAT BRITAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19th CENTURY

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The key issue of this work is the relationship between the press, public opinion, and political institutions of Great Britain during the Crimean War (1853–1856). In this context, the political activity of the Sheffield radical John Arthur Roebuck (1802–1879) is considered. The relevance of the work is determined by the research thesis that, during the Crimean War, public opinion was no longer only broadcast by the press but was largely shaped by it. *Methods.* The broad research context of the article is provided by a critical method of processing sources, some of which (publications from the provincial newspapers *Sheffield and Rotterham Independent* and *Iris*), discovered in the *Northamptonshire Record Office*, are being introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. *Analysis.* The goal of this article is to clarify the thesis well-established in traditional historiography, according to which the influence of the press on the current political agenda became significant only in the late 1860s. The analysis done in the article shows that if in the mid-30s of the 19th century the press only broadcast the opinion of the political elite, then during the Crimean War it already had the most direct influence on the formation of British public opinion. *Results.* The result of the study was the thesis that by the end of the Crimean War, the British press was quite able to influence public opinion and, even under certain circumstances, determine it. However, it still had very limited influence when it came to measures affecting the prerogative powers of Parliament and the Cabinet. *Authors' contribution.* V.V. Klochkov determined the basic concept of the article and the methodological foundations of the study, as well as identified unpublished sources from the regional archives of Great Britain. V.S. Nazarova prepared the introduction of the article, created its structural composition, and analyzed the historiography of the problem. I.M. Uznarodov conducted an analysis of the publications of periodicals and formulated the main results of the study.

Key words: Great Britain in the middle of the 19th century, Crimean War, press and public opinion, John Arthur Roebuck, British radicalism, contemporary historiography.

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КРЫМСКАЯ ВОЙНА, ДЖОН АРТУР РОБАК И ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ МНЕНИЕ ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ СЕРЕДИНЫ XIX ВЕКА

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Аннотация. *Введение.* Предметом данной работы являются взаимоотношения прессы, общественного мнения и политических институтов Великобритании в период Крымской войны (1853–1856). В данном контексте рассматривается политическая деятельность шеффилдского радикала Джона Артура Робака (1802–1879). Актуальность работы определяется исследовательским тезисом о том, что в период Крымской войны общественное мнение уже не только транслировалось прессой, но в значительной степени формировалось ею. *Методы и материалы.* Широкий исследовательский контекст работы обеспечивается критическим методом обработки источников, некоторые из которых (публикации из провинциальных газет «*Sheffield and Rotterham Independent*» и «*Iris*»), обнаруженные в *Northamptonshire Record Office*, впервые вводятся в научный оборот. *Анализ.* Целью настоящей работы является уточнение устоявшегося в традиционной историографии тезиса, в соответствии с которым влияние прессы на текущую политическую повестку становится значимым лишь в конце 60-х гг. XIX века. Проведенный в статье анализ показывает, что если в середине 30-х гг. XIX в. пресса лишь транслировала мнение политической элиты, то в период Крымской войны она уже оказывала самое непосредственное влияние на формирование британского общественного мнения. *Результаты.* Итогом исследования стал тезис о том, что к концу Крымской войны британская пресса была вполне в состоянии влиять на общественное мнение, и даже при стечении определенных обстоятельств определять векторы принятия государственных решений. Однако она все еще имела весьма ограниченное влияние в тех случаях, когда речь шла о мерах, затрагивающих прерогативные полномочия парламента и кабинета министров. *Вклад авторов.* В.В. Клочков разработал базовую концепцию статьи и методологические основы исследования, а также выявил неопубликованные источники из региональных архивов Великобритании. В.С. Назарова подготовила введение статьи, разработала ее структурную композицию и проанализировала историографию проблемы. И.М. Узнародов провел анализ публикаций периодических изданий, сформулировал основные результаты исследования.

Ключевые слова: Великобритания середины XIX в., Крымская война, пресса и общественное мнение, Джон Артур Робак, британский радикализм, современная историография.

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Introduction. The middle of the 19th century became for Great Britain the age when public opinion turned out to be one of the most significant factors affecting the current political agenda. This influence became especially tangible in the period of the Crimean War (1853–1856), when the English media, in all its spectra (starting with the national newspaper *The Times* and up to regional

ones, which have small circulation), didn't just observe war events and broadcast the position of the political royalty. But they mostly determined what we call, nowadays, "public opinion," having a direct and immediate impact on it [14].

The nature and degree of this impact on modern historiography are estimated differently. However, the majority of investigators agree that

in the context of history, exactly the period from the 1830s to the 1850s was the time when the relationships between the media, public opinion, and political royalty transformed extremely seriously, and this in turn made the range of problems an important object for historical study [1].

In this context, the argument of the research thesis defined the relevance of the work: public opinion was not just broadcast by the media; it was formed to a considerable extent during the Crimean War. Also, criticism of policy decisions accepted by British royalty became an inevitable part of newspaper publications, which influenced the perception of war events in English society. And last, media support was becoming an important tool for radical politicians who were criticizing the government harsher, and, by the way, they achieved from this point of view the results affecting not only the current political agenda but also the state of political institutions in the country. In its turn, the novelty of the investigation lies because the described research discourse is implemented in its entirety, basing, among other things, on the publication in small-town newspapers *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* and *The Iris*, discovered in the Northamptonshire Record Office, and they were first introduced into scientific circulation in this article.

The purpose of this work is to clarify the thesis well-established in traditional historiography (both in British and Russian) that the influence of the media on the current political agenda became significant only in the late 1860s during the preparation and implementation of the reform of the Parliament in 1867 [11]. The analysis done in the article shows that this statement does not fully reflect the actual state of things; the origins of the influence noted above can already be found in the 1830s, and they were clearly manifested during the period of the Crimean War.

Methods and materials. Public opinion as a tool for standardizing collective behavior was first analyzed in one of the most famous pieces of work by A. de Tocqueville, "Democracy in America" (1840). Not only the time of the appearance of this remarkable work is significant here, but also the fact that the author is very skeptical about this concept, arguing that "in the society, which calls itself democratic, public

opinion acts as a yoke that subordinates an individual, and averages everyone and everything" [10, p. 117]. Half a century later, A. de Tocqueville's compatriot G. Tarde defined public opinion as "a logical group of judgments on topical current issues, reproduced in many copies" [9, p. 124]. It was G. Tarde who first drew attention to the fact that public opinion is stereotyped due to the multiple reproductions of the same opinion in the media. In 1922, W. Lippmann's classic study "Public Opinion" was published, where the author paid attention to how an individual's point of view is transformed into their social position and begins to influence the current political agenda and political institutions [5, pp. 188-190]. In the 1960s N. Luhmann investigated the problem of how thematic preferences are formed within the framework of the phenomenon, which is already habitually called "public opinion" [6, p. 62]. Finally, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, J. Habermas investigated the problems of "ideal discourse," through which constructive interaction between public opinion and existing political institutions is ensured [12, pp. 98-99]. In his latest work in 2022, he pointed out that "ideal discourse" is becoming more and more problematic with the advent of new media and social networks [13, p. 54]. J. Habermas's student, C. Mouffe, investigated the problem of public opinion in the same vein [7, p. 112].

In that way, the concept of public opinion was comprehended within the socio-philosophical plane approximately by the middle of the last century, and the problem of relationships between public opinion, the media, and political institutions achieved independent status as a matter of historical study. As far back as 1949, A. Aspinall's classical work "Politics and the Press" was issued, which stated the main approaches to the issue mentioned from a historical point of view and showed that the interrelationships of public opinion, the media, and political institutions were transformed through time [14, p. 132-133]. In Russian historiography, interest in these problematics has been growing since the beginning of the 1990s. I.M. Uznarodov displayed in his 1992 monograph of that by the middle of the 1860s, media had significantly influenced the shaping of public opinion in Great Britain as well as the current political agenda [11, p. 68-69]. V.V. Klochkov pointed out in 1999 that media was

becoming the factor affecting the shaping of public opinion in Great Britain at the end of the 1830s [2, p. 156]. In 2007, a remarkable monograph by I.A. Rosenthal was published, devoted to the peculiarities of the development of public opinion in Russia and providing important comparative material [8]. Subsequently, V.D. Bakulov, A.A. Egorov, V.V. Klochkov, and V.S. Nazarova showed that the period of the late 30s and mid-50s in the history of Great Britain had become the time when the relationship between public opinion, the media, and political institutions transformed in the most significant way [1, pp. 302-304]. The issues of what this transformation was during the Crimean War, how the media influenced the formation of public opinion and the current political agenda, as well as to what extent the traditional political system responded to the challenges from radical parliamentarians (with John Arthur Roebuck taken as an example), are in the spotlight of this article.

Analysis. When historians write nowadays about the Crimean War of 1853–1856 in connection with British public opinion, it is usually emphasised that the mood in favour of a “victorious war” was dominant in that period [4, p. 128]. At the same time, it is often overlooked that literally three years before the start of the war, during the famous World’s Fair of 1851, completely opposite intentions prevailed in English society: back then it was about “the celebration of peace that unites the industry of all the nations” [16, p. 62]. In this regard, it is very exhibitory that exactly at the end of 1853, the radicals of the Manchester School, those heralds of “the celebration of peace” in 1851, were publicly ridiculed in the media (or even publicly burned in effigies, as it happened in December of 1853 in the city of Manchester) precisely because they considered the Crimean War a crime, while the country’s political royalty – conservative, liberal and radical – wanted the completion of the war least of all [28, pp. 165-167]. Therefore, the closest attention should be paid not only to the dramatic change in British public opinion in itself, but also to those mechanisms – primarily the media – that expressed and directed it [1, p. 303]. It is also rather interesting to trace the changes that occurred in the relationship between political royalty, society and the media since the middle of the 1830s when the British Conservatives first

realised the importance of the media during electoral campaigns, and before the Crimean War, during which these relationships were transformed in the most significant way.

The idea of war and the causes of Russophobia in British society. From the very beginning, the Crimean War was popular not only among the political royalty and in society in general, but also among poets and writers. Lord Tennyson expressed these sentiments in his famous poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade”, where there are lines that have become textbook: “Not tho’ the soldiers knew Some one had blunder’d: Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die” [16, p. 64]. Surprisingly, Yorkshire landowner Robert Pembleton Milnes echoed the poet laureate. “The war continues gloriously,” he wrote to his son Richard in 1854, “and I would like it to go on like this: wars are useful as thunderstorms... without them Manchester would have nothing to breathe with” [32, p. 12].

The peaceful sentiments of the supporters of free trade in 1846 (followers of the conservative Prime Minister R. Peel, who abolished the famous “grain laws” that year at the cost of splitting the party and separating the so-called “Peelites” from it; they organised a coalition with the Whigs later) and the radicals of the exhibition in 1851 were seriously shaken in 1852 when Napoleon III came to power in France. The Second Empire habitually acquired the image of a traditional enemy and a colonial rival in British public consciousness. That year, the deaths of the Duke of Wellington and the Waterloo conqueror happened, and this made the media say that “the nation is weakened by long peace and unjustified economy” [33].

At the same time, the transformation of the image of Russia in British public consciousness is extremely interesting. It is noteworthy that France, which was considered to be the enemy in 1852, turned out to be Britain’s coalition ally in the war against Russia just two years later. The enthusiasm in British society for the Crimean War is difficult to explain both by the long period of peace and traditional concerns about Russia’s military strength. Rather, it may be that Russia was perceived not only as a serious national rival (for example, such as the Second Empire), endangering the balance of power in Europe and

British sovereignty in India, but also (what is even more important) as the main obstacle on the way to European freedom [18, p. 127]. In this very sense, the background of the Crimean War was a number of European revolutions in 1848. The political royalty of Great Britain welcomed this war because of its completely different foundations. The Whigs and Peelites were anti-Russian because they believed that the demands of free trade should counter the excessive ambitions of the “aggressor”; the Tory opposed the strengthening of Russia and its military power, especially in the Middle East; and the radicals looked at Moscow as the centre of suppression of European freedom (especially on the example of Poland and Hungary) [28, pp. 199-200].

The roots of Russophobia in Britain in the mid-19th century were deeper than the revolutionary events of 1848. Back in the period from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the parliamentary reform of 1832, Sir George de Lacy Evans (a Whig and the General who took part in the Crimean War) and Robert Thomas Wilson (the General who left memories of the 1812 company in Russia) wrote that Russia’s goal had always been Constantinople, the capture of which would make the world domination “easily achievable” for the empire of Nicholas I [18, pp. 129-130]. During the Crimean War, nothing fundamentally new was said, but at that time, due to the media, that point of view captured the minds of not a limited circle of enlightened readers, but large crowds of people joined that idea. At the same time, K. Marx turned out to be one of the most ardent Russophobes, who wrote in those times that “in this case, the interests of revolutionary democracy and England itself go hand in hand” [16, p. 68]. The leader of Hungarian rebels in the revolution of 1848, L. Kossuth, wrote to D. Urquhart, an English radical: “We must crush Russia, and we will do it led by you” [18, p. 202].

It should be noted that on the eve of the Crimean War, English public opinion was no longer focused on social problems as ten years earlier: Chartism agitation was left behind and the “interests of the nation” clearly prevailed over the interests of the classes. The famous radical George Jacob Holyoake wrote quite expressively in 1854 about the “unexpected and unknown racial instinct” raging in his blood [20, p. 178]. This happened because there was a significant

difference between the activity of the Chartists and the militant “national zeal.” The media was always opposed to the Chartists, but now *The Times*, the country’s national newspaper with a circulation of 40,000 copies, has done everything to create an atmosphere of war. A subtle remark on this issue was left by Earl Clarendon, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the coalition government (Whigs and Peelites) of the Earl of Aberdeen, who led Great Britain to the Crimean War: “It is a well-known fact that *The Times* forms, directs or reflects – it does not matter what kind of – public opinion of England” [26, pp. 512-513]. And if, in October 1853, *The Times*, like the entire Aberdeen cabinet, still hesitated between peace and war, then after that, the hesitation was forgotten. The same was done by Earl Clarendon, who wrote in March of 1854 that “we are not engaged in the Eastern question, but in the battle of civilization against barbarism” [26, p. 519].

The causes of the war and the transformation of public opinion. Significantly, despite the popularity of the idea of war with Russia in British public opinion, the country’s political royalty, apparently, was not ready to provide any consistent explanation of the causes of the conflict and the goals to be achieved in it. The head of the coalition cabinet, Earl Aberdeen, being initially a supporter of compromise with Russia, witnessed how his ministry was gradually drawn into the conflict [28, p. 101]. Nicholas I also didn’t have any desire to unleash a European-wide war, but the fact that the Ottoman Empire was Europe’s “weak point,” incapable of reformation, sharply exacerbated the existing differences and eventually turned Great Britain and Russia into opponents. At the same time, none of the countries was sure what should actually be done with regard to the “Eastern Question” or, even more, what actions the other side would take. At a reception in January of 1853, Nicholas I told George Hamilton Seymour, a British ambassador in St. Petersburg, literally the following: “When we (i.e., Great Britain and Russia. – V. K., V. N., I. U.) come to an agreement, I will not worry at all about the rest of Europe; it does not matter what others may think or do” [18, p. 207].

When battle actions broke out between Russia and Turkey in October of 1853, the Aberdeen cabinet was far from unequivocally supporting the Ottoman Empire. “Vile Turkish

have actually declared war on Russia,” Earl Clarendon echoed the Prime Minister [26, p. 524]. The British media, including provincial media, was also unanimous in the opinion that the war should not be started. Thus, *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* wrote in July of 1853 that one “should think about the consequences of the war and should not push the nation to such a crazy and bloody thing” [29].

The situation was changed by Nakhimov’s defeat of the Turkish squadron in Sinope at the end of November 1853 [4, p. 130]. *The Times* wrote at that time that “the Battle of Sinop dispels the hopes which we had that peace would restore... We considered it to be our duty to support and defend it as long as this peace was compatible with the honour and dignity of our country... but now the war has begun in good earnest” [34]. The newspaper from Sheffield mentioned above, which six months ago wrote about peace and praised Aberdeen’s moderation, then demanded directly the war: “Simple negotiations with the tsar will not do anything... and now it seems that the time has come when we must act in such a way as to frustrate Russia’s plans” [30].

However, in those conditions, when public opinion of Great Britain being forewarned by the media demanded actively the war, it was announced just on the 28th of March, 1854. So, even before the outbreak of hostilities, a conflict was revealed between the militant sentiments in society and the cautious actions of politicians. While negotiations to end the conflict continued almost without interruption throughout its course, public opinion in Britain was not willing to support a premature peace by any means. The situation was aggravated by the fact that as the military activities in Crimea continued almost daily (let’s not forget that the telegraph already existed and was available to transmit messages from the battle front), evidence of “ineffective government public administration” was revealed. *The Times* correspondent William Howard Russell praised the heroism of the British infantry forces (it was to him that the phrase “thin red line framed by steel” became a nominal phrase), though he was very critical about the “disadvantages of the system,” which especially revealed themselves in the winter of 1854–1855 [28, p. 203]. Sevastopol fell only in September of 1855 (and the success

was relative; in fact, only the southern part of the city was in the hands of the allies). And by that time, public opinion in Great Britain had moved from sincere enthusiasm for the war to harsh criticism of its poor management.

This transition was greatly facilitated by the activities of the editor-in-chief of *The Times*, named John Delane, who was using the information received from his correspondents, including W. Russell, mentioned above. John Delane could accuse, almost with impunity, those cabinet ministers whom he considered to be responsible for military and administrative blunders. It was during the period of failures in the winter of 1854–1855 that British political royalty began to realise the new power of the media: if in 1836 they were still fighting for the right to publish reports on parliamentary debates, then they took the liberty to criticise the government of the country [3, pp. 278-279]. A paradoxical situation developed: the media formed public opinion (according to Earl Clarendon’s felicitous remark above, “of no consequence”), but they were rather unable to realise the details of the current political agenda; however, they were strong enough to openly criticize the government. Lord John Russell, *the leader of the Peelites in the Aberdeen Cabinet*, wrote at that time about the “vile tyranny of *The Times*” and claimed that the newspaper “looked forward to being not an instrument, but an organizer of the government” [27, p. 344].

Charles Greville, in his turn, being the author of the famous diary, which is the most valuable source on the parliamentary history of Great Britain during the period under review, wrote in February of 1855:

“The media, led by *The Times*, seeks to confuse everything and speak out against the aristocratic strata of society and the Constitution. The senseless absurdity and disgusting lies that they spread every day are very dangerous, since these absurdities and lies spread throughout the country by the radical media are accompanied by incitement, the consequences of which may come sooner than anyone can imagine now” [19, p. 270].

The radicals’ public attack on the Aberdeen cabinet began with a barrage of criticism directed against the military system in Crimea and the lack of coordination between military and civilian departments, which became apparent in the winter

of 1854–1855, when losses from diseases and frostbite exceeded the actual military ones. The Sheffield newspaper *The Iris* wrote about Lords Raglan, Lucan and Cardigan, who carried out direct command of the British forces in Crimea:

“A noble yachtsman, Lord Cardigan, commanded a light brigade from a luxury yacht in Balaklava Bay. He was never able to establish a relationship with his chief of Staff, his brother-in-law, Lord Lucan. Lord Raglan has given the positions to five of his nephews. They are all completely incompetent, but they take command. But they are lords!” [21].

John Arthur Roebuck and the Parliamentary Committee. The result of such an unbridled campaign in the media was a political action consisting of the establishment of a special parliamentary committee to investigate the state of the British army in Crimea. A radical member of Parliament from Sheffield, John Arthur Roebuck, appealed to the House of Commons to create such a committee. This was done on January 23, 1855, eight months before the fall of Sevastopol, under the obvious impression of the hardships that the British army had to endure in the cold Crimean winter of 1854–1855.

J.A. Roebuck, unlike many of his radical colleagues who sympathised with him, was not a qualified expert on the Crimean campaign. He could rather be described as a very tough polemist: the phrase “to argue like Roebuck” became widely used in British parliamentary custom in those cases when it was necessary to point out a tendentious debater intending to defeat a political rival at any cost. The famous historian of the Crimean campaign, Alexander William Kinglake, gave him a rather remarkable description:

“Roebuck was not an expert, but he became a public prosecutor. He sorted out more in denunciations and court sentences than in evidence or arguments: his favourite word was ‘dissimulation’, and he often used it. Roebuck always had boundless faith in himself, and cared little about anyone else” [24, p. 157].

Indeed, J.A. Roebuck always valued his political independence. He was born in Madras and grew up in Canada. His grandfather was a Scottish steel magnate. Roebuck became a member of parliament in the first post-reform elections of 1833. He didn’t refer himself to either

Tory or Whig, though he apparently had a great dislike for governments using a system of personal connections and client relationships in their organisation and activities. He wrote in 1852 that “the Whigs have always been an aristocratic faction, using democratic principles only as a means of protection against their opponents: when they are not in power, they become demagogues, and when in power, they are exclusively oligarchs” [25, pp. 123-124].

There were two Sheffield newspapers behind J.A. Roebuck: *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* and *The Iris*. The first one wrote in January 1855, “We are glad that in the House of Commons we have such a free and confident voice as John Arthur Roebuck... who is trying to break through the routine of aristocratic preferences” [31]. *The Iris* went even further, arguing that it should “be allowed to Mr. Roebuck to bring the perpetrators of our failures to exposure and punishment” [22]. Largely due to the support of the media, at the end of January 1855, J.A. Roebuck became the chairman of the parliamentary committee to investigate the situation near Sevastopol.

The first result of J.A. Roebuck’s appointment to this post was the resignation of Lord John Russell, which led to his withdrawal of the Peelite faction from the cabinet led by him, the split and the fall of the cabinet of the Earl of Aberdeen in February of 1855. It is noteworthy that at the very end of January 1855, the Whig and Peelite governments, without Russell, tried to prevent the establishment of the Roebuck committee, but it was carried in the House of Commons by 305 votes against 148. It afforded ground to attribute a decisive role in the resignation of Earl Aberdeen’s cabinet to J. A. Roebuck [25, p. 140]. It seems that his role in the downfall of Earl Aberdeen’s government is still being exaggerated. But anyway, the new Finnish Prime Minister, Viscount Palmerston, had to deal with Roebuck’s committee.

One important circumstance should be kept in view here: English constitutional practice traditionally resorted to the practice of creating parliamentary committees only in extraordinary circumstances. So, during the crisis of the early 30s of the 19th century related to the problems of paying church taxes in Ireland, an appropriate parliamentary committee was established [15,

p. 6]. But by the middle of the 19th century, there had never been a case where a parliamentary committee was given the authority to investigate the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers as a whole. Sir James Graham, a Peelite member and a supporter of John Russell, fairly noted that in the event of a secret trial, “the House of Commons loses not only its prerogatives over the committee, but also control over it, and the people receive an inquisition unworthy of it.” In the case of public hearings, “the witnesses will be more careful in their statements, as well as the committee members in their questions” [27, p. 187]. As a result, the meetings of Roebuck’s committee were held publicly, and this affected the very modest results of its work.

Despite the fact that most of the witnesses (according to their own statements) were ready to give “complete and unambiguous” testimony, and contrary to J.A. Roebuck’s desire to present the case in such a way that the government and the management system as a whole turned out to be guilty of the winter failures of 1854–1855, the parliamentary committee decided that individuals were guilty of this, recommending conducting competitive examinations for military and administrative capacities [16, p. 89]. This was clearly not the result Roebuck hoped for, and in the course of the committee’s work, his authority was largely undermined. Many parliamentarians expressed dislike for Roebuck’s “sarcastic and vindictive personality.” However, John Russell gave the most accurate description of the character:

“He obviously enjoyed blaming everyone and indulging in those vicious attacks which were so characteristic features of his nature. His speeches started with a convincing performance and finished with a spectacular ending, but in the middle they clearly lacked evidence and content... In any case, it was hardly prudent to exaggerate the difficulties of the constitutional government, compensating for the lack of a thorough investigation by too harsh criticism of its failures” [27, p. 190].

It is noteworthy that Sheffield newspapers remained on Roebuck’s side even after the completion of his committee activities after the fall of Sevastopol. *The Iris* wrote that “the actions of Roebuck committee will forever remain a nightmare for negligent politicians” [23]. But in

general, the experienced Prime Minister Palmerston coped with radical Roebuck quite easily: he needed people whose negative pathos focused on foreign policy issues and not on the demands of radical reforms within the country.

Results. So, the conducted research shows that during the Crimean War, there was a significant transformation in the relationship between the media, public opinion and the political royalty of the country. If in the middle and second half of the 30s of the 19th century the media only broadcast the opinion of the political royalty on current issues of the political agenda (as, for example, it was with the famous *Tamworth Manifesto*, the first policy document of the Conservative Party printed on newspaper pages), and defended its right to publish reports publicly on parliamentary debates (as in the equally famous *Stockdale v. Hansard* court case), then during the Crimean War the media had the most direct influence on the formation of British public opinion. Moreover, during the period of military setbacks in the winter of 1854–1855 there were signs that the media, in alliance with radical political figures both in parliament and outside, began to actively support the political efforts of certain factions, directing public opinion in a direction favourable to them. The political activity of J.A. Roebuck, described above, serves as an indicative confirmation of this fact.

Nevertheless, in order to adequately assess the achievements of J.A. Roebuck and the role played by the media and public opinion in promoting the political agenda proposed by him, two circumstances should not be overlooked. The establishment of a parliamentary committee to investigate the activities of the government as a whole, which was unique in the British constitutional history of the 19th century, should certainly be seen as an illustration of the influence of society on the political agenda. However, how quickly the radical demands of J.A. Roebuck were transformed by the British political royalty into a relatively neutral bill on administrative reform, which shows not less vividly the limited influence of public opinion on the parliamentary prerogative and powers of the Cabinet of Ministers? In this regard, Palmerston, an elderly aristocrat, outplayed his political rival despite all the efforts of the radical Sheffield media. By the end of the Crimean War, it was obvious that the British

media was already quite able to influence public opinion and, even under certain circumstances, determine it, but it still has very limited influence when it comes to measures affecting the prerogative powers of the Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers.

As for J.A. Roebuck himself, his short-term political rise during the Crimean War was replaced by an equally rapid decline. Public sentiment changed, disturbances based on military failures subsided, and the ebullient energy of this person, combined in the most bizarre way with the contradictory features of his quarrelsome character, repeatedly noted by contemporaries, was not in demand any more. One way or another, it should only be recognised as a fair assessment of his work, which was given in 1878 by the writer Henry William Lucy:

“John Arthur Roebuck lived in full view of the whole world for almost half a century, and his public life was quite consistent. However, when it comes to his honour and consistency, the question arises as to how necessary, honourable and useful it is to be a snob in everyday life. Roebuck was a political snob, an annoying wasp to the last degree, but I have never heard of bees insisting that he represented their interests” [17, p. 12].

J.A. Roebuck said of Palmerston that he did not surpass the average churchwarden in his abilities. But he apparently did not understand that after making peace, the British began to demonstrate that, in changed circumstances, they for sure preferred churchwardens to eccentric people's tribunes.

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