LANGUAGES OF DEFENSE: THE ROLE OF RHETORIC IN THE POPULARITY OF THE VOLUNTEERS OF 1859

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Created during the 1859 invasion crisis, the British Volunteer Force was a populist amateur military movement in a country that normally emphasized its small, professional army. Traditionally, the rapid growth of the Volunteers is explained as a byproduct of the rising Victorian middle class. Drawing on the approaches of the "linguistic turn" in Victorian history, particularly the work of Gareth Stedman Jones, James Epstein, and James Vernon, this thesis argues instead that the early popularity of the Volunteers stemmed from its use of cross-class rhetoric, particularly the languages of popular constitutionalism, internationalism, and manliness. These rhetorics, which appealed to Britons of all classes and political persuasions, helped the force to expand to 160,000 men within four years. In the 1870s the Volunteers became increasingly disconnected from the rhetoric that had granted them their early success, at the same time as new developments undercut the primacy of popular constitutionalism.

To my family

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LANGUAGES OF DEFENSE

Called a "Victorian Paradox," the Volunteer Force was created in 1859. A force of amateur riflemen organized to defend English shores from invasion, the Volunteers proved to be of dubious military value, a fact recognized by many contemporary observers. Despite their problematic military qualities the Volunteers proved to be startlingly successful, at least as far as recruitment and involvement was concerned. Unlike the invasion anxiety that led to their creation, the Volunteers proved surprisingly durable, surviving as part of the British military for almost fifty years. Their early popularity is a topic worthy of analysis. While most historians have suggested that the success of the Volunteers was due to their connection to the middle class, it was the relationship between the Volunteers and cross-class political rhetoric, particularly popular constitutionalism, which would prove more important.

The invasion panic of 1859 was the last, and most substantial, of the panics that occurred during the 1840s and 50s. Beginning with the publication of the Prince de Joinville's *Note sur l'état des forces navales de la France* in 1844, Britons became increasingly anxious about the possibility of a French invasion by steamship.[1] In 1845, Lord Palmerston declared that steam had bridged the Channel, while in 1848 the

[1] C. I. Hamilton, "The Diplomatic and Naval Effects of the Prince De Joinville's *Note Sur l'Etat Des Forces Navales De La France* of 1844," *Historical Journal* 32 (1989): 675-687.

publication of a private letter by the Duke of Wellington on England's defenseless state agitated the public until Louis Philippe's France fell into chaos. Again in 1852, Napoleon III's coup d'etat increased British anxieties, leading to a steady stream of alarmist pamphlets and an unsuccessful attempt to reform the Militia. The panic of 1859 was the result of a number of contributing factors: the completion of the French naval arsenal at Cherbourg, the construction of the first French ironclad *La Gloire*, French victory over the Austrians in Italy, and the Orsini affair in Britain itself. Unlike previous panics, that of 1859 had significant government response. Among the more notable efforts were the creation of the Royal Naval Reserve, the construction of the first British ironclad *Warrior*, the planning of £12 million worth of coastal fortifications later to be known as "Palmerston's Follies," and the creation of the Volunteer Force.

The creation of the Volunteers was an unusual, if not unprecedented step. Volunteer forces had existed before in British history, including during the Napoleonic Wars, but the Volunteer Force was established despite the fact Britain and France were not at war. It was created against the advice of many senior members of the army, who argued that it would be nothing more than a hindrance in the case of an actual invasion. Both the Duke of Wellington, before his death in 1852, and the Inspector-General of Fortifications, Sir John Burgoyne, had promoted the expansion of the regular army as the most efficient means of improving home defense. The Commander-in-Chief of the time, the Duke of Cambridge, called them "unmanageable bodies."[2] Despite this opposition, the movement thrived. Volunteer corps were established all across Great Britain,

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[2] Qtd. in Michael J. Salevouris, *"Riflemen Form," the War Scare of 1859-1860 in England* (New York: Garland, 1982), 160.

although the force was particularly popular in Scotland and less so in Wales. By 1863, it had expanded to have a membership of over 160,000 men – roughly 3% of the total population of Great Britain.

Traditionally, the rise of the Volunteers has been presented as the result of their connection to the rising British middle class.[3] The most substantial study of the Panic of 1859, Michael J. Salevouris' *Riflemen Form*, identified the origins of the Volunteer Force's ethos with the middle-class philosophy of *Tom Brown's School Days* and *Self-Help*. According to Salevouris, Volunteering was seen as an opportunity for the middle class to acquire a military role commensurate with their social and economic status.[4] A similar, but more developed, argument is presented by Patricia Morton. Morton argues that the early Volunteers, as the military extension of the middle class, valued their status as independent citizens and were particularly concerned with establishing their independence from the regular army and its aristocratic leadership. With much the same attitude towards government as the administrative reform movement, the Volunteers brought a pro-business and anti-aristocratic orientation to national defense: an attitude that led one Volunteer officer to announce with pride "I know nothing whatever of Her Majesty's Service. I am a Volunteer."[5]

The assumed middle-class nature of the Volunteers leads to problems, however, when one considers the composition of the force. While in their very earliest years the

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[3] This argument was presented as early as 1959 in Barrie Rose, "The Volunteers of 1859," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 37 (1959): 97-110.

[4] Salevouris, *"Riflemen Form," the War Scare of 1859-1860 in England*, 203.

[5] Patricia Morton, "Another Victorian Paradox: Anti-Militarism in a Jingoistic Society," *Historical Reflections* 8, no. 2 (1981): 183. Anderson traces similar pro-middle-class agitation during the Crimean War in Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War. English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War* (London: Macmillan, 1967) but concludes that it "accomplished little of lasting importance" (p.123).

Volunteers drew heavily on the middle classes, as early as 1863 the force had become primarily working-class. It was this apparent paradox, a force with a middle-class ethos and a working-class membership, that Hugh Cunningham explored in his *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History, 1859-1908.* Faced with a force whose principles he described as the military equivalent of Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*, Cunningham argued that what drew working-class members to the Volunteers was not patriotism or an interest in military training but the opportunities for recreation that the Volunteers provided. As other avenues for entertainment opened up, middle-class members drifted away while workers remained. This argument that recreation was central to Volunteer enrollment has been recently reiterated by Lorna Jackson in her article "Patriotism or Pleasure? The Nineteenth Century Volunteer Force as a Vehicle for Rural Working-Class Male Sport."[6]

The contradiction between the values and composition of the Volunteer Force relies on a mode of analysis that sees class as central to the Victorian experience. However, in the past two decades major developments in the study of Victorian Britain that call such a frame into question. In the early 1980s, Gareth Stedman Jones began what is now generally known as "the linguistic turn" in Victorian history. A historian of the British working-class experience Jones began to argue that in continuing to privilege an essentialist social context that preceded and prefigured class consciousness, the British Marxists were ignoring the fact that "'class' is a word embedded in language and should

[6] Lorna Jackson, "Patriotism Or Pleasure? the Nineteenth Century Volunteer Force as a Vehicle for Rural Working-Class Male Sport," *Sports Historian* 19 (1999): 125-139.

thus be analysed in its linguistic context."[7] In suggesting that class was a "discursive" not an "ontological reality," Jones outlined a new direction in British history.[8]

At the same time as it has sparked significant theoretical debate, this new attention to language has also invigorated the study of British politics. While the linguistic turn has inspired numerous approaches, including analyses of the language of domesticity and of the importance of melodrama, the most significant approach for this thesis is the idea of popular constitutionalism.[9] The work of historians James A. Epstein, Patrick Joyce, and James Vernon, has developed the idea that there existed a discourse or set of discourses that, as Joyce puts it "are extra-economic in character, and inclusive and universalizing in their social remit in contrast to the exclusive categories of class."[10] Popular constitutionalism in particular, it is suggested, served as a master narrative in politics that used the symbol of the English constitution to reflect a desire to "transcend class identities."[11]

In more recent years, Joyce has moved away from the idea of populism and embraced an increasingly Foucauldian approach, while other historians have critiqued the idea of a broad constitutionalist consensus. To give two examples, Dorothy Thompson

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[7] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class. Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 7.
[8] ibid., 8.
[9] See, for example, Rohan McWilliam, "Melodrama and the Historians," *Radical History Review* 78 (2000): 57-84 and much of Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches. Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
[10] Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People. Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 11.
[11] James Vernon, *Politics and the People. A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 325.

has argued that "the people" was "a divisive and never a unifying term,"[12] while Miles Taylor has challenged the continuity of popular constitutionalism, arguing that it lost ground to a different kind of politics as early as the 1860s.[13] In addition, the basic premises of the linguistic turn have been hotly contested in the pages of *Social History*.[14] At the same time, however, the linguistic turn has become an accepted part of Victorian history, enough that almost a decade ago Rohan McWilliam had already called for a "post-revisionist" synthesis that acknowledges the reality of social conditions and their influence while not losing any of the new perspectives of the linguistic turn.[15]

The insights of the linguistic turn have been unevenly applied to the study of the Victorian army. While studies of imperialism have embraced the analysis of language and discourse, and in the process applied these analyses to the imperial army, their impact has been rarely applied to the army at home. This thesis hopes to apply the ideas of the linguistic turn, particularly that of popular constitutionalism, to the task of explaining the early popularity of the Volunteer Force. In particular, it will argue that the early popularity of the Volunteers stemmed not from a connection with the middle classes but from its use of language, or rhetoric, that appealed across class boundaries to the majority of Britons. Primarily, the Volunteers took advantage of the language of popular constitutionalism, one of the most influential rhetorics in Victorian politics. In addition,

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[12] Dorothy Thompson, "Who were "the People" in 1842?" In *Living and Learning. Essays in Honour of J.F.C. Harrison*, eds. Malcolm Chase and Ian Dyck (Brookfield: Scolar Press, 1996), 118-132.
[13] Miles Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).
[14] David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, "Social history and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language," *Social History* 17 (1992): 165-188. Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, "The poverty of protest: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language – a reply," *Social History* 18 (1993): 1-15. Patrick Joyce, "The imaginary discontents of social history: a note of response to Mayfield and Thorne, and Lawrence and Taylor," *Social History* 18 (1993): 81-86. David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, "Reply to 'The poverty of protest' and 'The imaginary discontents,'" *Social History* 18 (1993): 219-233.
[15] Rohan McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1998).

the Volunteers were favorably connected with the languages of internationalism and manliness. While their connection with these rhetorics made the Volunteers attractive while public attention was focused on home defense, the lack of a tighter connection to a particular ideology or interest group meant that when attention waned, so did the fortunes of the Volunteers. In the 1870s, the Volunteers became increasingly disconnected from the rhetoric that had granted them their early success, at the same time as new developments undercut the primacy of popular constitutionalism.

However, before discussing the role of these political languages in the popularity of the Volunteers, we must turn to the technological context that gave birth to the force. Traditionally, the development of new military technologies has been seen as the primary cause of the invasion panics. Historians argue that the cause of the panics was an atmosphere of military uncertainty created by the appearance of new technologies. As Salevouris puts it, "the advent of steam power, rifled shell-firing artillery, and the ironclad warship (of which France had the first) revolutionized warfare on the sea."[16] Similar arguments are made by Ian Beckett, Hugh Cunningham, M.S. Anderson, and Robert Zegger.[17] This approach is problematic, however. Firstly, the panics of 1842-3, 1847-48, and 1852-53 all preceded the development of the latter two of these technologies. As for steam power, while it was certainly a disruptive element in naval warfare, it was not particularly new. Bernard Brodie suggests that concern over invasion

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[16] Salevouris, *"Riflemen Form," the War Scare of 1859-1860 in England*, 4.

[17] Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991), 143. Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History, 1859-1908* (London: Croon Helm, 1975), 7. M. S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1985), 303. Robert E. Zegger, "Victorians in Arms. the French Invasion Scare of 1859-60," *History Today* 23 (1973): 714.

by steamer began as early as 1830 and had already become "conspicuous" by 1839.[18] A similar impression of how early the steamer threat gained prominence can be seen in the writings of both Robert Southney and the Duke of Wellington in the late 1820s.[19] When Palmerston announced in 1845 that the English Channel was now "nothing more than a river passable by a steam bridge," he was stating a fact that had already been known for some time.[20] What was changing in the years approaching 1859 was that Parliament, and the British people, were being forced to take notice.

The technological developments that really made the panics possible came in the field of communication. The first steps came with the arrival of steam machinery in the printing trade – the first steam press, a Koenig, was used by *The Times* in 1814. More significantly, the introduction of machine-produced paper meant that between 1828 and 1853 the price of the average book fell by almost half.[21] More change came with the first Hoe rotary printing press in Britain, installed in 1856. Used by *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, the Hoe press could print 14,000 eight-page papers in an hour, and by 1863 *Lloyd's* circulation had reached 350,000.[22]

The most significant consequence of these developments – at least in terms of the panics – came not in the book trade but in the periodical press. Newspapers and magazines had a very limited audience at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. The

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[18] Bernard Brodie, *Sea Power in the Machine Age* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1941), 47.
[19] I. F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), 16. Michael Partridge, "Wellington and the defence of the realm, 1819-52," *Wellington. Studies in the Military and Political Career of the First Duke of Wellington*, ed. Norman Gash (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990), 238-262.
[20] Qtd. in Norman Longmate, *Island Fortress. The Defence of Great Britain, 1603-1945* (London: Pimlico, 2001), 303.
[21] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 286
[22] ibid., 345. Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914* (London: Croon Helm, 1976), 55-56.

most significant reviews, the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, had circulations of only 12,000 or 13,000 copies, while monthly magazines like *Blackwood's* or *Fraser's* were even lower – between 3,000 and 8,000.[23] As the costs of production dropped, the greatest obstacles to increased readership proved to be those of the government. In an attempt to restrict the radical press, the Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act – part of the restrictive Six Acts of 1819 – raised the duty on newspapers, periodicals and any pamphlets that contained news or comments thereon to 4*d*.[24] In combination with the tax on advertisements and the duty on paper, the stamp tax made many publications unprofitable. Needless to say, there was significant opposition to these restrictions. The first reduction came in 1836, when the newspaper tax was lowered to a penny.[25]

The next two decades saw a growing movement in opposition to the "taxes on knowledge" that crossed political boundaries. When the Association for the Promotion of the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge was established in 1851, its president was the Anti-Corn Law free-trader Thomas Milner Gibson, its treasurer the radical Francis Place, and its membership included Cobden and Bright.[26] In 1855, in a move spearheaded by the Association with the support of Cobdenite liberals, the newspaper tax was abolished entirely.[27] With the repeal of the paper duty in October 1861, there were no more government restrictions on the cost of periodicals.[28]

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[23] Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 318-319.
[24] ibid., 327-328.
[25] ibid., 341.
[26] Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914*, 45.
[27] Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 354.
[28] Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914*, 48.

Of course, the "taxes on knowledge" did not entirely restrict the spread of periodicals. There was always a substantial unstamped press, illegal but popular among radicals. Beginning in 1832, cheap magazines like *Chamber's Journal* or Knight's *Penny Magazine* had offered wholesome entertainment at an affordable cost. Still, the reduction in taxes gave the British press a significant boost. In 1855, the circulation of *The Times* was 50-60,000, that of the *Illustrated London News* 123,000, and *Reynolds' Weekly Newspaper* 49,000.[29] A year later, the *Daily Telegraph* reduced its price to a penny and expanded its circulation, and many papers followed suit. The most significant growth was in the provinces, where 78 new dailies were founded between 1855 and 1870. Thirteen of these were established in 1855 alone, and seven of those sold for only a penny. For the first time, daily newspapers appeared in towns like Manchester, Sheffield, and Liverpool, while the number of provincial weeklies grew even more precipitously.[30] In 1851, there had been only 234 provincial newspapers in England. By 1860 there were 743.[31]

It would be difficult to suggest that the strength of the invasion panics and their popular reach were solely the product of developments in the publishing industry. Still, the impact of increased circulation should not be overlooked. The readership of many of the sources discussed later in this paper increased dramatically during this period. Without the growth of the periodical press, Britons would not have been bombarded so continuously with news of the panics.

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[29] Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 394.
[30] ibid., 356.
[31] Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England, 1855-1914*, 290.

What was significant about the messages in all of these papers was the language they invoked. Victorian politics was distinguished by the wide variety of rhetorical languages available for any argument. *Laissez-faire*, with which the mid-Victorian era is usually associated, was only one among many. More significant, for much of the population, was the rhetoric of popular constitutionalism. It was on that, as well as the rhetorics of internationalism and manliness, that the success of the Volunteers rested. Unlike *laissez-faire*, these languages were resonated with all classes.

Of the political rhetorics used in Victorian Britain, popular constitutionalism was one of the most widespread. James Vernon has called it "the master narrative of British politics," and if did not quite achieve those rarified heights, it at least spread across the full spectrum of British politics.[32] None of the historians who have made use of the idea of popular constitutionalism have attempted to provide a solid definition of the phenomena. This is not surprising, since popular constitutionalism was not a coherent ideology. Rather, it was a way of arguing that made use of a body of interconnected symbols connected with the much venerated English constitution. While this channeled the arguments made with its terms in certain directions – it was difficult, though not impossible, to argue for a Jacobin revolution in purely constitutionalist terms – it imposed relatively few limits on the speaker's actual position. Popular constitutionalism therefore saw itself used by individuals from every segment of British politics.

At the heart of constitutionalist rhetoric was a single symbol: the English constitution, and in particular the constitution as preserver of English liberties. Of course,

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[32] Vernon, *Politics and the People. A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815-1867*, 296-297.

since the constitution was not a single text, it was particularly open to interpretation. Popular constitutionalism was perfectly compatible with the belief that the virtues of the constitution stemmed from its origins in Anglo-Saxon customary law, in the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, in the developments of Tudor England, and in the Glorious Revolution and Bill of Rights of 1688. In fact, it was not unusual for a single author to reference several of those iconic moments in the same argument. The focus on the preservation of liberty meant that constitutionalist arguments were often anti-statist, expressing skepticism in the value of centralized government. With that came an interest in local-self government. Proponents of constitutionalism who disagreed with the *status quo* often argued that the current constitution had been perverted from its earlier glory. They promoted the idea of an English golden age – again variously located in Anglo-Saxon England, the High Middle Ages, Tudor England, or 1688. Even moments that had no particular to relationship to the constitution, like Agincourt or Waterloo, became important in association with the idea of a golden age.

Another element of the constitutionalist rhetoric that was open to interpretation was its "popular" nature. The constitution seemed to speak for the rights of all Britons, but more restrictive definitions became important political tools. Many conservatives sought to exclude the lower classes as rabble unsuited to the rights granted. More common was the definition of the "the people" as the productive elements of society, a definition common in more radical circles that excluded the aristocracy, although depending on one's theory of political economy it could also exclude substantial

segments of the middle class. Whatever segments of the population were not excluded from "the people" were expected to be equal, in a symbolic if not practical sense.

All this makes popular constitutionalism sound like a perfectly vacuous rhetoric, but this is untrue. While it is true that constitutionalist arguments were made both for and against controversial policies like the repressive Six Acts of 1819, both sides remained invested in the rhetoric. Absolutist, proletarian and Jacobin philosophies were all difficult to express in popular constitutionalist terms. They could be mixed with them, and often were, but were clearly foreign interlopers in this very British rhetoric.

Popular constitutionalism's familiarity and inherent patriotism made it an easy rhetoric for advocates of the Volunteers to appropriate. Whether they used it deliberately or not, the Volunteers proved a good fit by reflecting many of the aspects of the constitutionalist myth. The rhetoric of constitutionalism supported the Volunteers, particularly insofar as they provided an alternative to the standing army, appeared to reflect English liberties like local self-government, offered the hope of national unity, and reminded onlookers of past feats of British arms.

One of the ways the anti-statism of popular constitutionalism manifested itself, and the most important for the Volunteers, was in suspicion of the standing army. This attitude could trace its origins back to the radical Whig philosophy of the seventeenth-century. As early as 1628, Parliament had drafted the Petition of Right in protest against efforts by Charles I to strengthen the army. Criticism of standing armies continued during the Interregnum and the Restoration. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Article Six of the Bill of Rights established the dominance of Parliament over the army; a

dominance further solidified by the passing of the Mutiny Act in 1689, which required parliament to reaffirm the continuation of the standing army annually. This did not, however, lay the issue fully to rest, and in the debates between 1697 and 1699, the place of the standing army in English society was again assailed.[33] For many Britons, the standing army was associated with the threat of Stuart absolutism, and militia forces with the establishment of the Protestant Succession. It was in this tradition that William Blackstone wrote in his *Commentaries* that the militia was the natural defense of England and the standing army was a threat to liberty and an anomaly that existed only on Parliament's sufferance.

During the invasion panics, those who favored an expansion of the standing army were aware that they would have to address the constitutional question in some way. When the Peelite Montague Gore argued for the expansion of the regular army in 1852, he acknowledged the privileged constitutional status of the militia. Gore admitted that in the past a militia might have been preferable to a standing army for the preservation of liberties, but suggested that "at present, no rational man could entertain real fears for the liberty of England."[34] Gore may have had a reasonable point, but his argument lacked the imprimatur of tradition. When *Fraser's Magazine* argued in 1859 that no number of milita and volunteers would be sufficient to secure English shores if the regular army was not also expanded, it could only piously proclaim that "The people of this country must be prepared to forego their ancient prejudice against a standing army."[35] The army

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[33] For more on this issue, see Lois G. Schwoerer, *"No Standing Armies!" The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974).
[34] Montague Gore, *National Defences* (London: James Ridgway, 1852), 24.
[35] *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, Dec. 1859, 660.

officer George Paget took a different tack in his *Letter to Lord John Russell*, which suggested creating a reserve force from all the soldiers discharged from the army under the short service Act of 1847. Paget acknowledged the compulsory aspect of his plan, but argued that it was the least burdensome option for the whole community, involving a very limited number of men.[36]

Unlike the regular army, the Volunteers claimed to be compatible with England's constitutional liberties. In fact, some writers argued that their suggestions for reform were superior because they were the most limited impositions possible. Lt.-Col. Valentine Baker wrote in 1860 that the first priority for any military reform was that it must be "constitutional, interfering as little as possible with public rights and Liberties."[37] On these lines, John William Crowe argued that only a volunteer force would be an appropriate force to defend a free country like Britain.[38] In fact, many hoped that Britain's liberties would prove an eventual advantage. As the *Quarterly Review* put it, "our danger lies in the unity of despotic power, as compared with the uncertainties and vacillations of free institutions; but if these institutions are worth anything, they must triumph in the end."[39] Not least among *Macmillan's Magazine*'s list of British advantages is the fact that the men of Britain are "not licked into submission by officialdom," they are "free *men* – men who know what manhood is."[40] British freedoms could be profitably contrasted with French despotism, both before and after the coup of

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[36] George Paget, *A Letter to Lord John Russell containing Suggestions for Raising a Reserve Force* (London: T. & W. Boone, 1852), 20.
[37] Valentine Baker, *Our National Defences, Practically Considered* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1860), 7.
[38] John William Crowe, *A Few Words on the Militia Question* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1852), 3-4.
[39] *Quarterly Review*, July 1859, 252.
[40] *Macmillan's Magazine*, December 1859, 82.

1851, as the author of *Hints for a Volunteer Coast Defense* did in comparing the national presses of Britain and France.[41]

With the defense of English liberties was associated the idea of affordability. For Lt.-Colonel Baker, that defenses be economical was second only to their being constitutional.[42] In July 1859, the *Quarterly Review* wrote that the advantages of the militia were two-fold, being both more constitutional than the regular army and also far less expensive.[43] The *Westminster Review* agreed, noting that Britain had never had a large peacetime army and likely never would, because of British aversion to such expense.[44] Nine months later, it wrote again that for the British "as a people loving freedom of action and independence, to be prepared to repel an invader" they ought to "accomplish this end by abstracting as little as possible the manhood of the country from productive labor. We should insure against danger in the soundest and cheapest office, by encouraging volunteer riflemen, and maintaining and improving our national militia."[45]

An additional part of the suspicion of the regular army was the belief that their service as soldiers rendered the men of the army unfit for regular society. In John Briggs' pamphlet *The Internal Defence of the Country*, among the advantages of his force of rural fencibles was the fact that unlike French or German conscripts, the fencible will

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[41] A Civilian, *Hints for a Volunteer Coast Defense of the Southern Coast of England* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1853), 20.
[42] Baker, *Our National Defences*, 7.
[43] *Quarterly Review*, July 1859, 280.
[44] *Westminster Review*, January 1859, 52-53.
[45] *Westminster Review*, October 1859, 352-353.

"acquire no such military habits as might render him unfit for the duties of civil life."[46] Among such habits, apparently, was an aversion to hard labor or any sort of continuous employment.[47] In fact, in order to prevent any such contamination, Briggs suggested that the training of the rural fencibles be put not in the hands of the army, but of the police.[48] On these lines, John William Crowe suggests that soldiers of the militia should obey only their own officers, and not those of the regular army.[49] It was even possible to direct this opprobrium towards the militia, as the pseudonymous "Long-Range" did in his pamphlet in favor of the Volunteers, writing that the militia "will have all the mercenary feelings of the soldier, without that which renders the soldier of any value–his military discipline."[50]

Those writers who suggested that the regular had habits that made him unacceptable in civil society, whether rural or urban, were only reflecting a long-standing prejudice against the common soldier, seen by many as the scum of the earth. Despite the improvements in attitudes to the ordinary soldier that resulted from the Crimean War, in 1859 the regular was still perceived as a boorish and dangerous individual.[51] Stories of

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[46] John Briggs, *The Internal Defense of the Country* (London: Harrison, 1859), 7. A fencible was a soldier enlisted for home defense, rather than overseas service. The first regiments of fencibles were raised in 1745 (see Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945*, 58). The term derives from a Middle English adjective meaning "fit and liable to be called on for defensive military service," first used c.1325 AD. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the distinction between militia and fencible was of limited significance.

[47] Briggs, *The Internal Defense of the Country*, 14.

[48] ibid., 7.

[49] Crowe, *A Few Words on the Militia Question*, 7.

[50] Long Range, *The Rifle and Its Uses and Advantages in War, in the Volunteer Service, and in Sporting Pursuits* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1852), 70.

[51] For improvements in attitudes to soldiers after the Crimean War, see Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (New York: Longman, 1980), 116-117.

military ruffians were common in the press, and any form of defense that avoided increasing the number of such men in Britain was attractive.[52]

The Volunteers were particularly attractive for those who thought in terms of popular constitutionalism for a number of reasons. Their volunteer origins, untainted by compulsion, made them appropriate for the free-born, independent Englishmen. Volunteers were not subject to military law except under emergencies, and avoided the taint of the regular army. With most of their costs carried by the volunteers themselves, they were cheap for the government, and for the taxpayer.

Part of the mystique of popular constitutionalism was its presentation of England as a land of equals, "the people." Proponents of this idea did not claim that there were no differences of rank or degree in society, or that perfect equality was their goal. They merely argued that the classes and orders of England should come together as a harmonious whole. Of course, some might be excluded from the harmony of "the people." Conservatives tended to see "the people" as excluding the grotesque and impoverished mob, while radicals in turn excluded the parasitic aristocracy from their ranks. Still, with memories of the unrest of the Chartists still fresh, the Volunteers seemed to offer at least one sphere where the unity of the classes was possible.

For many, the model for that unity was paternalistic. The idea of medieval Britain as a place where the rulers took the proper responsibility for the ruled and where the ruled showed proper respect to their rulers, popularized by the author Thomas Carlyle, seemed to them the ideal state of affairs. This paternalistic idea showed through in a short

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[52] See *Cabinet Newspaper* 4 Dec. 1858, 5. 18 Dec., 1858, 4-6. 1 Jan., 1859, 3. 12 Feb. 1859, 6. 17 Sept., 1859, 3.

pamphlet written in 1852 by military hero Sir Charles James Napier, Grand Commander of the Order of the Bath and the conqueror of Sind: *A Letter on the Defence of England.* Describing his preferred composition of a volunteer corps, he wrote:

> Do not be exclusive in forming your corps: – take your gamekeepers as your comrades, and any of your labourers that will enroll themselves: a gentleman will find no braver and better comrades than among his own immediate neighbors and tenants. Should you require to throw up a breast work, they will be more handy with the spades and pickaxes than yourselves.[53]

The appearance was one of unity – gentry and gamekeepers as comrades – but Napier's language makes clear exactly how far that unity extended. The corps is to include gamekeepers and tenants, and the gentry will remain in command – with the laborers to construct any necessary field fortifications. The same paternalistic model was in action in urban as well as rural areas. In late 1859, the firm of Wylie and Lockhead in Glasgow founded a Volunteer corps among its workmen, advancing them £80 to pay for uniforms. Unsurprisingly, the officers elected by vote were two Wylies and a Lockhead.[54]

Other writers perceived the Volunteers as providing national unity on somewhat more egalitarian terms. Lord Elcho wrote that volunteering gave men from different classes the opportunity "to meet together and unite shoulder to shoulder in defence of their common country."[55] Christian socialists, including Tom Hughes and Charles Kingsley, supported the Volunteers as a way to mix the classes. The former, author of

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[53] Sir Charles James Napier, *A Letter on the Defence of England by Corps of Volunteers and Militia* (London: Edward Moxon, 1852), 14.
[54] Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History, 1859-1908*, 21.
[55] Qtd. in ibid., 23.

Tom Brown's School Days and founder of the Working Men's College Corps, hoped they would be a chance for them to "stand shoulder to shoulder, and man to man, each counting for what he is worth; the peer without condescending, and the peasant without cringing."[56] The latter, in the preface to his novel *Alton Locke*, called the corps "centers of cordiality between class and class."[57] On similar lines, Col. Baker noted in support of a Volunteer force that it gave no one class a dangerous preponderance of military power.[58]

By the early nineteenth century, the idea of local self-government was firmly entrenched as part of England's great constitutional legacy. Various writers readily described the value of localism, tracing its origins to the age of the Anglo-Saxons. By 1854, J.A. Langford was publishing *English Democracy: Its Historical Principles* in order to make knowledge of the institutions of King Alfred's day available to even those of, as he put it, "little leisure and less means."[59] That same year saw the founding of the Anti-Centralization Union, under the leadership of Joshua Toulmin Smith. The onset of the Crimean War led the feminist reformer Harriet Martineau to write in the *Daily News* that the examples of Second Empire France and Tsarist Russia demonstrated the bankruptcy of centralization. The iconoclastic radical David Urquhart was also a great advocate of local government. The celebration of self-government continued after the war, with Parliament passing the Local Government Act in 1858, giving local boards of

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[56] Qtd. in ibid., 27.
[57] Qtd. in ibid., 28.
[58] Baker, *Our National Defences*, 20.
[59] Qtd. in Anderson, *A Liberal State at War. English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*, 131.

health further sanitary and administrative powers. By the 1860s, the principle of local government was "sacrosanct in England, in words, if not altogether in deeds."[60]

For those concerned with the potential encroachment of the central government, the Volunteers were a welcome development. Unlike the regular army, the Volunteers operated almost entirely on a local basis. They were raised at the county level by the Lords-Lieutenant, and most corps were actually drawn from significantly smaller communities. English localism also seemed to offer military possibilities. The *Quarterly Review* suggested that had Napoleon I invaded, "every community, every corporation, and every country would have become a self-defending unit," even had King and Parliament been captured.[61] In the present, the *Quarterly* argued, the lack of centralization of the army was a drawback, but it offered the potential for prolonged resistance in case of invasion, since an invader would find it impossible to easily defeat a force of Volunteers operating in every locale.[62]

In addition to the constitution itself, popular constitutionalism venerated the heroes who had produced and preserved it. Thus the military institutions of the past ages received some of the same mystique as the constitution itself. The most recent such moment were the Napoleonic Wars, when stout-hearted yeoman repelled the tyranny of Napoleon. Foremost among them, at least from the point of the Volunteer Force, were their namesake the Volunteers of 1800. As early as 1793, Volunteer corps were being created all across England. In 1798, the Defence of the Realm Act authorized the

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[60] ibid., 138.
[61] *Quarterly Review*, July 1859, 258.
[62] ibid., 281.

creation of "armed associations" for home service. By 1801 there were more than 97,000 men enrolled in the Volunteers. Further legislation in 1802 confirmed the existence of Volunteer units, and by 1804 there were more than 340,000 serving in the Volunteers and Yeomanry combined. These Volunteers were only disbanded in 1814, once the threat of invasion had been well and truly gone.[63]

This legacy was an obvious one to grasp. In fact, the Victoria Volunteer Rifle Corps, one of the first corps to be founded during the invasion panics, claimed a direct line of descent from these volunteers.[64] The 1859 play, *The Rifle Volunteers*, draws connections between the Napoleonic era Volunteers, represented by the father James Lawrence, and the new generation of Volunteers, represented by Mr. Somerton, the suitor of James' daughter Kate.[65] However, the riflemen of 1859 were less eager to take up the mantle of their Napoleonic forerunners than one might think. For one thing, the Napoleonic Volunteers were well known for being aimed as much at internal revolution as at an external threat. The Chartist J.A. Richardson described the experience of the volunteers as a colossal affront, where the people willingly did their service for the "landholders, fundholders, and boroughmongers" without being rewarded by any redress of their grievances.[66]

The questionable rhetorical effect of this earlier generation of volunteers did not, of course, prevent advocates of the Volunteers of 1859 from using the other heroes of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1859, *Macmillan's* asked if Britain was invaded and defeated,

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[63] Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945*, 73-107.
[64] ibid., 159.
[65] Edward Stirling, *The Rifle Volunteers* (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy, n.d.).
[66] J.A. Richardson, *The Rights of Englishmen to Have Arms* (1839), reprinted in *Chartist Movement in Britain, 1838-1850* (hereafter *CMB*), ed. Gregory Claeys, Vol. 2 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 13.

"should we not have to cover the tomb of Nelson with sackcloth, or bury it in the ashes of the profaned cathedral?"[67] Alongside Nelson in the pantheon of British heroes stood the Duke of Wellington. Whatever his postwar political missteps, the Duke was beloved in national memory. His death in 1852 had served as a moment of national unity – with the notable exception of his native Ireland – with a magnificent funeral involving 10,000 participants.[68] In his later years, the Duke of Wellington had been a significant advocate of improving the national defenses; it had been his letter in 1847, leaked to the press, which had inflamed the first panic.[69] So it should come as no surprise that advocates of military reform invoked his authority. In 1853, "A Civilian" asked how we could ignore the advice given, even in his latest hour, by a man so recently descended to the grave.[70]

More distant, but more emotionally resonant for the Volunteers, was the Middle Ages. Mid-Victorian Britain was enchanted by its visions of a medieval golden age. Victorian medievalism appeared all across the political spectrum, from Tory neo-feudalism to socialism. Like many of the elements of constitutionalism, medievalism was a site for multiple political constructions of the past. Whig historians saw the roots of contemporary English politics in Anglo-Saxon England, destroyed under the Norman Yoke in 1066 and restored in 1688. Alternatively, the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 could be seen as the origins of English liberties, and the later Middle Ages as a moment of national triumph. More unusually, medieval England could be constructed as a site of communal harmony, as both the conservative Carlyle and the socialist William

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[67] *Macmillan's Magazine*, December 1859, 83.
[68] Peter W. Sinnema, *The Wake of Wellington. Englishness in 1852* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 2006), 80.
[69] Salevouris, *"Riflemen Form," the War Scare of 1859-1860 in England,* 10.
[70] A Civilian, *Hints for a Volunteer Coast Defense of the Southern Coast of England*, 4.

Morris did. As Charles Dellheim argues, medieval symbols helped to "transcend class, regional, ideological, and religious differences by strengthening collective consciousness and attachments."[71]

One of the most significant mid-Victorian purveyors of medievalism was Charles Kean. The son of the noted actor Edmund Kean, between 1852 and 1859 Kean managed a series of Shakespearean productions at the Princess' Theatre in London that lovingly celebrated England's medieval past. Kean's in-depth research and exacting standards for his sets and costumes led to his election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1857, the highest public honor received by a British actor until Henry Irving's knighthood in 1895.[72] A banquet held in his honor in 1859 was chaired by the Duke of Newcastle and William Gladstone, then chancellor of the Exchequer.[73]

That year, Kean produced his final play at the Princess's, a production of *Henry V*, the story of the English king who invades France and wins a glorious victory at Agincourt. The patriotic play was well received, one critic going as far to say that "what a Prime Minister dare not utter in Parliament ... the actor seemed to embody on the stage."[74] The patriotic message there seems unmistakeable. To draw a line from the English bowmen at Agincourt to the rifle Volunteer in 1859 was simple. *Macmillan's*

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[71] Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982), 74, qtd. in Richard W. Schoch, *Shakespeare's Victorian Stage. Performing History in the Theatre of Charles Kean* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 121.

[72] ibid., 58-59.

[73] ibid., 55.

[74] ibid., 137. Schoch argues that the play's run of 84 performances, the shortest of Kean's revivals, reflected a post-Crimean discomfort with war. Given the general attitudes to the invasion panic referenced in this paper, and the laudatory reviews quoted by Schoch himself, this argument seems unsustainable.

Magazine did so when it pronounced that the Volunteer movement "does infinite credit to the rifle yeoman, who represent the old archers of England armed with a new weapon."[75]

While the majority of the pamphlets and articles discussed above were intended for a middle-class audience, a parallel discussion of similar issues existed for the working class. Foremost among them was that distrust of the regular army we have already noted. The working classes had more real reasons to fear and loath the regulars than did the average middle-class Briton. While the chance of a praetorian revolt on the part of the army may have dwindled away to nothingness, the army had been used regularly against the lower classes within recent memory.

The rise of working-class radicalism, amply chronicled by E.P. Thompson, saw a parallel rise in the use of military force as a tool of government repression. Troops were central to the response to Luddism in the 1810s. The day before sixty stocking-frames were smashed in the village of Arnold, Nottinghamshire, in March 1811, a crowd of stockingers was dispersed by military force.[76] The Luddite attack on the mill at Rawfolds in April 1812 was repelled by a combination of soldiers and armed workmen.[77] In the weeks after the attack soldiers combed the country for men involved in the fight, while a member of the Cumberland Militia was punished with 300 lashes for failing to fire his musket.[78] In May 1812, there were 71 companies of infantry and 27 troops of cavalry in Lancashire, responding to the threat of further machine-breaking.[79]

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[75] *Macmillan's Magazine*, December 1859, 84.
[76] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1963), 553.
[77] ibid., 560.
[78] ibid., 562.
[79] ibid., 591.

The memory of the soldiers used against the Luddites was significant to working-class memory, but significantly more important was the massacre at Peterloo on August 16, 1819. A crowd of between 80,000 and 150,000 had assembled to listen to orator Henry Hunt when the authorities sent in the cavalry to disperse the crowd. Eleven people were killed, and a further 420 or so injured.[80] The violence at Peterloo proved an important touchstone for the attitudes of later working-class radicals towards the standing army. Many Chartist pamphlets specifically invoked the memory of Peterloo in order to establish the threatening nature of the army, although they tended to ignore the fact that the acts at Peterloo had been committed by members of the Yeomanry, an amateur force, rather than by any part of the standing army.[81]

It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Chartists regularly reviled the army. More significant is the fact that they did so using the language of popular constitutionalism. In Chartist literature, the army was regularly presented as a threat to constitutional liberties – J.A Richardson's pamphlet on "The Right of Englishmen to Have Arms" quoted nineteen authorities, including William Blackstone, David Hume, Walter Raleigh, and Samuel Johnson, on the insidious effects of standing armies.[82] The army was seen as a tool of autocracy, crushing the freeborn Englishman.

The Chartists also invoked the argument against the regulars on the basis of economy. The regulars were unduly expensive, offering no benefit to the population. A penny tract by Henry Vincent said "the army and the navy take the clothes off the

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[80] Robert Reid, *The Peterloo Massacre* (London: Heinemann, 1989), 190-191.
[81] Peter Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England, Especially to those from Eighteen to Thirty Years of Age, Who are Capable of Serving in the Standing Army* (Bradford: J. Ibbettson, 1838), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 1, 158. Richardson, *The Rights of Englishmen to Have Arms*, 17.
[82] Richardson, *The Rights of Englishmen to Have Arms*, 19-20.

people's back, and the food out of their mouths."[83] Others noted the money that the regular army has absorbed during Britain's wars, especially the most recent wars against France.[84]

The army was particularly invidious from the working-class perspective because its members were drawn from that class. Many Chartist tracts compared the status of a regular soldier to slavery.[85] They argued the army was also immoral, teaching its soldiers to kill without complaint. Peter Bussey called the soldier "a butcher, a hired assassin, a legalized murderer, a destroyer of the peace, property, and lives of his fellow-man."[86] Such practices violated the laws of heaven as well as of earth, as the Reverend B. Parsons of Ebley preached in his sixth *Tract for the Fustian Jackets and Smock Frocks*. Parsons called on the words of theologians Bishop Warburton, John Jortin and John Wycliffe to confirm that "a soldier is a *slaughter-man*" and "a common slaughter house is ten thousand times more glorious than the field of battle."[87] Another Chartist pamphlet described the army as "the great perverter of morality."[88] While this moral condemnation might be seen as an argument against all soldiers, the opprobrium was attached

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[83] Anonymous [Henry Vincent], *Five A Penny Tracts for the People No.3: A Few Hints About the Army* (c.1840), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 2, 181.
[84] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 161. Reverend B. Parsons, *'The Chief of the Slaughter-Men' and Our National Defences*, Tracts for the Fustian Jackets and Smock Frocks No.6, reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 4, 350-351.
[85] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 157, Vincent, *A Few Hints About the Army*, 182, Anonymous [William Lovett], *An Address from the National Association for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People. To the Working Classes of the United Kingdom on the Subject of the Militia* (London: J. Cleave, 1846), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 4, 68.
[86] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 153.
[87] Parsons, *'The Chief of the Slaughter-Men' and Our National Defences*, 347. Both the fustian jacket and smock frock were garments commonly work by workers, and were symbols associated with the Chartist movement.
[88] Lovett, *On the Subject of the Militia*, 68.

particularly to the standing army: Bussey followed his description of soldiers as butchers by advocating the creation of a national militia.[89]

The Chartists also believed that the life of the soldier bred immorality. Particularly disturbing was the placing of soldiers in military barracks, which was believed to increase their habituation to vice and to decrease their sympathy for the general population.[90] Thus one of the key complaints of William Lovett's 1846 pamphlet "Enrollment of the Militia for Immediate Service!!" [sic] is that the militia enrolled will "be continually required at the barracks for the above-mentioned period. The barracks, of course, in which the army on home-service are now stationed."[91] Opposition to the construction of barracks was not a new development. In a 1794 meeting of the London Corresponding Society, John Martin asked "We must now choose at once either liberty or slavery for ourselves and our posterity. Will you wait until BARRACKS are created in every village, and till *subsidized* Hessians and Hanoverians are upon us?"[92] The English distaste for these structures was not exclusively working-class. The poet Keats wrote in 1817 that "On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks which disgusted me extremely with Government for placing such a Nest of Debauchery in so beautiful a place."[93]

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[89] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 162.
[90] Anonymous [William Lovett], *An Address from the National Association for Promoting the Political and Social Improvement of the People. To the Working Classes of America, on the War Spirit that is Sought to be Excited Between the Two Countries* (London: J. Cleave, 1846), reprinted in *CMB* Vol.4, 62.
[91] William Lovett, *Enrolment of the Militia for Immediate Service!!* (1846), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 4, 233.
[92] ibid., 130.
[93] Qtd. in Tim Fulford, "Sighing for a Soldier: Jane Austen and Military Pride and Prejudice," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 57 (2002): 158.

One of the key features of popular constitutionalism, particularly in its more radical incarnations, was a strong anti-aristocratic sentiment.[94] With its aristocratic ethos and origins, the army's officer corps was a significant target. In the nineteenth-century army, a gentlemanly bearing was seen as a pre-requisite for command. Unlike in the French army, promotion from the ranks was almost impossible, and to fulfill the requirements as an officer required a private income. In 1854, 38% of active duty colonels came from the landed classes, with a further 22% the sons of active or retired officers themselves. The aristocratic nature of the army became even more pronounced in its high command, where almost 50% of generals were from the peerage or landed gentry.[95] The privileged character of the officer corps was further reinforced by the tradition of purchasing commissions. Three of every four officers acquired their commissions not by attending a military academy, either Sandhurst or Woolwich, but by paying a regulation price, £450 in the infantry or £840 in the cavalry. Promotion also occurred primarily by purchase, with officers regularly paying substantially more than the regulation price for the vacancy they desired: in 1832 Lord James Brudenell, later Lord Cardigan of Light Brigade fame, paid between £35,000 and £40,000 for the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 15th Hussars.[96] The purchase system was not considered an anachronistic institution, but was actively defended by military notables such as the Duke of Wellington, who argued that it ensured that officers were drawn from that class that

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[94] See, for example, *Cabinet Newspaper* 18 Dec., 1858, 1.
[95] Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, 8
[96] Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why. the Incredible Story of the Charge of the Light Brigade* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1998), 38.

was most favored by the current system, and therefore most loyal to the state.[97] For that very reason, the officer corps was reviled by the Chartists as opposed to the interests of "the people." Bussey wrote that "the only benefits to be derived from the maintenance of a standing army, are those which accrue to the Aristocracy of the country."[98] He argued that in order to prevent the division of their estates into negligible portions, the aristocracy used the army, church and navy to support their younger sons at state expense. Aristocrats become officers "though destitute of merit and unacquainted with discipline."[99] R.W. Russell called the army "remarkable for its aristocratic character."[100] The same issue was noted, more discretely, by writers who noted that "that the ranks of the army are practically closed to the middle classes."[101]

The Chartists therefore argued that an invasion panic was merely an artificial attempt to provide employment for more dissipated aristocrats. As the Reverend Parsons put it in his 1848 tract, there is "hardly a nobleman in the country who has not some of his kindred receiving pay for his profession as a *slaughter-man*" and the goal of the panic was to provide posts for officers on half-pay.[102] Joseph Barker called the expansion of the army a way "to crush [the country] a little lower, by forcing it to keep another batch of aristocratic idlers."[103] This line of argument not only called into question the reasons for the expansion of the army, but also emphasized the indolence and unproductive nature

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[97] Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, 12.
[98] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 158.
[99] ibid., 158-159.
[100] R.W. Russell, *America Compared with England* (London: J. Watson, 1849), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 5, 265.
[101] *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, December 1859, 652.
[102] Parsons, *'The Chief of the Slaughter-Men' and Our National Defences*, 352.
[103] Joseph Barker, *Aristocracy and Democracy* (Wortley, 1848), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 5, 97.

of the aristocracy, whose only route to employment was fomenting international anxieties. Nor was this argument exclusive to the Chartists. The middle-class free trader and MP Richard Cobden in his response to the 1859 invasion panic approvingly quoted Mr. Hume to the effect that "our present panics" were due to "our having too many clubs about London, containing so many half-pay officers, who had nothing to do but to look about for themselves and their friends."[104] Thus the danger of invasion was reduced to the more traditional problem of corruption and of interest.

One solution to the expansion of the regular army regularly suggested by the Chartists was to boycott the army by not enlisting. This was the message of Vincent's "A Few Hints About the Army."[105] More significant was the argument that Britons had the right to bear arms, and that the possession of such arms was the best substitute for the regular army. As J.A. Richardson wrote, "mercenary armies are fittest to invade territory or right, but militias have always been found best to defend both."[106]

In line with the constitutionalist celebration of tradition, the Chartists traced the right to bear arms all the way back to Alfred the Great.[107] Under Edward I, the population's weapons were to be inspected twice every year, while under both Henry IV and Henry VIII even laborers, servants and apprentices were required to keep arms. The villains of the Chartist piece were, unsurprisingly, Mary I and the Stuart kings, who had attempted to undermine the militia.[108] The same story was also part of the Whig

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[104] Richard Cobden, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden*, Vol. 2 (London: William Ridgway, 1868), 251.
[105] Vincent, *A Few Hints About the Army*, 182.
[106] Richardson, *The Rights of Englishmen to Have Arms*, 14.
[107] Rev. J.R. Stephens, *The Political Pulpit No.12* (1839), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 1, 340.
[108] Richardson, *The Rights of Englishmen to Have Arms*, 16.

constitutional narrative, praising the power of free-born Englishmen to defeat tyranny and Catholicism. The Chartist narrative however diverged in its treatment of the Glorious Revolution. While the right of Protestants to arm for their own defense was praised, the fact that a standing army was permitted with the consent of Parliament was described as a "pretext" of the "cunning Whigs" to keep the laboring classes down.[109] Chartist pamphlets varied as to whether they advocated arming in practice. Richardson wrote that "there are so many reefs, and shoals, and quicksands amongst modern laws, that it has become dangerous even to move," while the anonymous author of "The Way to Universal Suffrage, by a Tyne Chartist" argued that arming was an imminent necessity – as well as musing on the ways that impromptu cuirasses could be constructed from wood and sheet-iron.[110] Volunteer soldiering offered a route to arming that was approved by the government.

For some Chartists, this idea of military service was linked to the rights of citizenship. Bussey argued that the right of citizenship was the only appropriate compensation for the working men defending the nation.[111] Equally popular was the inverse idea, that until working men were granted political rights they had no responsibility to take part in national defense. The Chartist leader William Lovett wrote in 1846 that "as the Industrious Working-Class population of the United Kingdom are debarred of *all political right*, they ought not be made either the *tools* or the *victims* of

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[109] ibid., 17.
[110] ibid., 18. A Tyne Chartist, *The Way to Universal Suffrage* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1839), reprinted in *CMB* Vol.2, 166-167.
[111] Bussey, *An Address to the Working Men of England*, 153.

political wrong-doers."[112] In fact, Lovett had already put his philosophy to the test. When a militia ballot had been announced in 1830, Lovett had managed to be fined £20 for non-compliance, although the ballot was suspended before his second court appearance.[113] In 1846, Lovett was again expressing his opposition to the militia, this time under the slogan "No Vote, No Musket."[114]

Obviously, for Chartists the right to bear arms was intimately related to the defense of the rights of the people against the tyranny of government. On these lines, discussions of the right to bear arms occasionally had attached dark musings on the fate of tyrants. After establishing the traditional English right to arms, the Reverend Stephens cited a number of Classical sources included Cicero, Xenophon, Plutarch, and Polybius, to the effect that it was legal to kill any tyrant.[115] At the same time, however, many Chartists argued that defenses based on popular involvement would also be more effective against foreign threats. R.W. Russell wrote that the fact Britain's defense against invasion was in the hands of the standing army, rather than the populace, was a great embarrassment. Only with a "citizen force … will the country be truly safe from invasion."[116] Writing in 1848, George Bown similarly argued that an armed populace was the best defense against the French threat, making "a general arming" into "an imperative duty":

> Give, then, every able-bodied man his weapon, and woe to any invading army, however numerous and however disciplined and well appointed. Their career

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[112] Lovett, *On the Subject of the Militia*, 68.
[113] Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945*, 131.
[114] ibid., 131.
[115] Stephens, *The Political Pulpit No.12*, 342.
[116] Russell, *America Compared with England*, 272.

would be cut short, their speedy discomfiture inevitable. A nation so prepared, *cannot be conquered* – this is not all, IT CANNOT BE ENSLAVED.[117]

Although the language of popular constitutionalism privileged the English experience, the authors discussed above did not rely exclusively on national examples. The author of "The Way to Universal Suffrage" pointed to the Swiss example, where the possession of arms was the foundation of political rights, while George Bown pointed to the power of "Physical Force" to overthrow tyrants like Louis XVI, Napoleon, and Charles X.[118] In his *America Compared with England*, R.W. Russell noted that in Ohio, the officers of the militia were appointed by their men, rather than being selected by the government.[119]

These attitudes to national defense did not disappear with the decline of the Chartist movement, but remained part of the working-class political tradition. In 1856 and 1857 the former Chartist Ernest Jones gave a series of lectures he called *Evenings with the People*, at Saint Martin's Hall in London. The sixth of his talks, delivered in late January 1857, was devoted to the question of Foreign Affairs. Jones began by demonizing Russia, Britain's recent despotic opponent.[120] He called Napoleon III a "penniless gambler" who destroyed the republic and massacred his own people.[121] The King of Prussia was disposed of as "a human champagne bottle in Berlin they call a

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[117] George Bown, *Physical Force. An Address to All Classes of Reformers, But Especially to those Who Are Unjustly Excluded from the Franchise* (Leicester, 1848), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 5, 26-27.
[118] A Tyne Chartist, *The Way to Universal Suffrage*, 168. Bown, *Physical Force*, 24.
[119] Russell, *America Compared with England*, 171.
[120] Ernest Jones, *Evenings with the People* (1856-7), reprinted in *CMB* Vol. 6, 226-233. For more on Jones, see Miles Taylor, *Ernest Jones, Chartism, and the Romance of Politics, 1819-1869* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003).
[121] Jones, *Evenings with the People*, 237.

king."[122] Jones scoffed at the threat of invasion, calling it "an excuse for increasing the military force – of establishing Aldershotts and Shorncliffes [military camps], and blinding you as to the real intention of those measures."[123] What is the real purpose of the expansion of the army? To suppress the people of England: "A large standing army is high treason to the people. It is contrary to the spirit and the tenor of the laws of England."[124] What then does Jones suggest for England's defense? To arm the people, who will be both the cheapest and the strongest possible force.[125]

When the invasion panic of 1859 came, Jones gave the same advice in the pages of his weekly newspaper, *The Cabinet Newspaper*. On February 12, he derided the threat of invasion as merely a ploy to distract attention from Reform. He told the audience, "do not be deluded by the cry 'England is in danger.' Tricky ministries have often used it to delay reform."[126] If there was a threat, Jones said, the best defense would be to enfranchise the working classes, as "a free people is a stronger rampart than a thousand mercenary hosts. Reform at home is the true national defense against despots from abroad."[127] Like the Chartists before him, Jones connected the granting of English liberties with an effective national defense. On May 14, 1859, Jones called increases in the regular army and militia a preparation for war against the English people.[128]

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[122] ibid., 243.
[123] ibid., 247.
[124] ibid., 247.
[125] ibid., 247-248.
[126] *Cabinet Newspaper,* 12 Feb., 1859, 3.
[127] ibid., 3.
[128] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 14 May, 1859, 1.

Jones' attitude to the Volunteers was conflicted. On May 21, he called them a "class armament" to subdue Reforms and crush the working classes.[129] The next week he called for working-class rifle clubs to counteract the arming of the upper and middle classes.[130] That same paper called for Britons to "use the war fever, utilize the war mania" in order to gain arms and military experience.[131] By June 4, Jones was expressing his hope that the working classes could actually outnumber the middle class among the Volunteers.[132] On December 3, Jones once again exhorted working men to join the Volunteers, arguing "liberty cannot stand, where the rich arm and the poor remain defenceless."[133] The next week, Jones turned the rhetoric of the middle classes on them, exhorting every laborer to arm "for the defence of the country, for the preservation of peace, for the maintenance of order, for the safety of freedom, *all of which are in peril when one class only arms*"[134] [italics added]. In encouraging working men to join the Volunteers, Jones was expressing his belief that an armed populace was the best guarantee of freedoms. He was also reflecting the common part of popular constitutionalism that argued that all classes must be unified in "the people" – no one to above the rest.

Middle-class writers might have considered Jones' advocacy of the Volunteers, which put the middle classes firmly in the parasitic and unproductive category of class enemies, a threat to public order. Luckily, they were not convinced that his words would

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[129] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 21 May, 1859, 5.
[130] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 28 May, 1859, 1.
[131] ibid., 5.
[132] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 4 June, 1859, 5.
[133] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 3 Dec., 1859, 1.
[134] *Cabinet Newspaper*, 10 Dec., 1859 1.

have much effect. The *Quarterly Review* wrote that "Those who remember the troubles of 1819-20 look with dread at the idea of putting arms into the hands of the people."[135] It continued on to say that "Times, however, have changed, and this country must now be governed with and through the people; they may be guided, but hardly opposed. Notwithstanding this, it would not be wise to arm only the lower classes; but as there will be at least two volunteers of the upper and middle classes to one of the lower, the arming would really be on the side of order."[136] In fact, the Volunteers might be seen as a positive reinforcement of middle-class security, as "If every man amenable to the income-tax was forced by law to buy and keep a rifle, an *émeute* of the mob would be impossible."[137] Reinforcing radical skepticism about the emancipatory power of the militia, as opposed to the Volunteers, was the statement "we do not fear, however, teaching the militia the use of arms, though they are all drawn from the lower orders; and in America no preponderance has been given to the disaffected classes from the circumstance of the whole people being more or less accustomed to military organization."[138]

As the previous example makes clear, Jones and other working-class advocates of the Volunteer corps did not use the language of constitutionalism in exactly the same way as did middle-class writers. Both groups, however, shared a common sense of the importance of English liberties for a successful national defense. The Conservative *Quarterly Review* and Jones' *Cabinet Newspaper* might disagree in every way on who

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[135] *Quarterly Review*, July 1859, 282.
[136] ibid.
[137] ibid.
[138] ibid.

was entitled to the freedoms of the Magna Carta, but both were convinced that those freedoms were critical to a strong defense – and that pointed to a successful Volunteer force.

Popular constitutionalist rhetoric made the Volunteers seem quintessentially English. Opposed to the standing army, connected with ideas of local government, presenting all its members as its equals, and connected to prior English glories, the Volunteers were easy to link with the symbols of constitutionalism. Of course, different audiences interpreted those symbols differently. Take for example, the equality of members within the Volunteers. For the gentry, that seemed a chance to validate their paternal approach to their domains. For the middle class, it was an opportunity to become involved in a sphere of public life previously barred to them. For the working classes it was a chance to redress inequities and achieve the goals the Chartists never had. All of these goals could be represented by the common symbol of equality as free-born Britons. And as long as no one pointed to the many contradictions of interpretation, all parties could pretend that there was not just a community of Volunteers, but also of goals. That consensus would not last forever. But while popular constitutionalism was the most important rhetoric for the Volunteers, it was not the only one with which the force was associated in the early 1860s.

Another rhetorical language on which the Volunteers could rely was that of liberal internationalism. Throughout the nineteenth century, Britons fostered a self-image of their country's pacific, constitutional nature, by contrasting it to the bloody autocracies of Continental Europe. Bernard Porter has noted that British xenophobia towards the

Continent, often quite pronounced, reflected distaste for perceived European political values, rather than xenophobia proper.[139] More recently, Jonathan Parry has argued that the idea of a foreign policy that promoted liberalism abroad, and reinforced British self-perceptions of their superior constitutional regime, was one of the keys to the coherence and success of the early Liberal party.[140] Britons therefore watched with interest for any signs of favorable change in European politics. Occasionally, Britain even became involved in helping the liberalization of the Continent along, either officially or unofficially, and those who did so were often celebrated. As a home defense force the Volunteers were not directly connected with liberal intervention in Europe, but they profited from the British interest in such amateur soldiers. In particular, the Volunteer Force cultivated a strong connection with Garibaldi and the *Risorgimento*, which enhanced their profile with large segments of the population.

In his book *Fallen Soldiers*, George Mosse notes the existence of a widespread nineteenth-century culture of military volunteering. Originating in the French Revolution and the German Wars of Liberation, this Volunteer experience was revitalized in the Greek War of Independence, where volunteers from across Europe – including Lord Byron – joined the Greek guerillas in the war against the Turks. According to Mosse, the volunteers sought freedom from bourgeois constraints through the manly challenge of war. Volunteering fulfilled "a longing for camaraderie, for a sense of meaning in life,

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[139] Bernard Porter, ""Bureau and Barrack": Early Victorian Attitudes Towards the Continent," *Victorian Studies* 27 (1984): 407-433.

[140] Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism. English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

and for personal and national regeneration."[141] Although as a home defense force the Volunteer Force was not directly involved with this culture of volunteering, many of its members were involved in British volunteering and the Volunteers as a whole benefited from their connections with that phenomenon.

The great moment of European liberalism came a little before the time of the Volunteers. Liberals and working-class radicals for the rest of the century drew inspiration from the Continental revolts of 1848. Of course, their impressions were slightly different. Radicals were more impressed by the social reforms of Louis Blanc than were most middle-class reformers. The International Committee and Association established in 1856 shifted attention away from the traditional language of English radicalism towards a new internationalist and proletarian approach, but this *démoc-soc* Chartism was short-lived.[142] At the same time, both groups were happy to put the revolutions of 1848 in the context of the liberation from despotism that they felt was the hallmark of the British experience. The People's International League, established in 1846 to protest the Russian capture of Krakow, connected the idea of national liberation with past British constitutional struggles – they hoped to give every European country its

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[141] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), 22. For more examples of the European culture of volunteering, see Gilles Pécout, "Philhellenism in Italy: Political Friendship and the Italian Volunteers in the Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 9 (2004): 405-427. For an equivalent defensive Volunteer movement in Germany, see Frank Lorenz Müller, "The Spectre of a People in Arms: The Prussian Government and the Militarisation of German Nationalism, 1859-1864," *English Historical Review* 122 (2007): 82-104. and Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks. Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society*, trans. Adrew Boreham with Daniel Brückenhaus (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

[142] Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism. Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874*, ed. Paul Slack (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 136-141.

own 1688.[143] It was therefore with no sense of irony that the *Examiner* compared Hungary's revolution in 1848 to England's Glorious Revolution.[144]

In the aftermath of the revolutions, Britain became a haven for exiles from all across Europe. Perhaps the most popular exile to visit England after 1848 was Lajos Kossuth, governor-president of the Hungarian revolt in 1848. Kossuth was particularly appealing to many Britons because, unlike many of the revolutionaries, he had advocated the retention of the monarchy during the revolt. As Miles Taylor puts it, "In Kossuth they found a figure who embodied constitutional liberalism, opposed equally to republicanism and Catholic absolutism. In Kossuth the reform movement discovered how 1848 in Europe might be reconciled with 1688 in Britain."[145] When Kossuth set foot in England in October 1851, he was received like royalty. In fact, more people turned out in Manchester to see Kossuth than did so to see Queen Victoria.[146] In Birmingham, nearly 500,000 people reportedly thronged the streets.[147] In London, he spoke to more than 75,000 workers at Copenhagen Fields.[148] Praising liberalism, emphasizing the manifest virtues of freedom, the value of local government, playing up the despotic nature of European governments and downplaying his own republican tendencies, Kossuth was held up by Britain as everything a European leader should be.

Organizations like the People's International League and the International Association established friendly ties with liberals and other revolutionaries throughout

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[143] Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860*, 193-194.
[144] Finn, *After Chartism. Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874*, 99.
[145] Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860*, 204.
[146] Gregory Claeys, "Mazzini, Kossuth, and British Radicalism, 1848-1854," *Journal of British Studies* 28 (1989): 246.
[147] ibid.
[148] ibid., 247.

Europe. From such ties it was only a short distance to more material assistance. Lord Byron's fatal involvement in the Greek War of Independence is an early example of the phenomenon. When the Carlists in Spain threatened to decisively defeat Queen Isabella and the Constitutionalists in 1834, the British government suspended the Foreign Enlistment Act, allowing a 10,000-man British Auxiliary Legion to be sent to the Queen's aid. Although their military record was decidedly mixed, the Legion set a precedent for aid to liberals overseas.[149]

The commander of the Legion was commanded by George de Lacy Evans, a veteran of the Peninsula and Waterloo, as well as the Radical MP for Westminster. As a Member of Parliament, Evans had advocated for Polish independence from Russia and against flogging in the army.[150] After returning from Spain, Evans commanded the 2nd Infantry Division in the Crimean War, emerging as one of the few senior officers whose reputation remained intact. Evans was also a strong supporter of the Volunteers. He opposed the Derby government's Militia Bill in 1852 because it failed to promote the formation of Volunteer corps, arguing that such forces were more economical than an enlarged militia. The motion was defeated, but Evans had secured 165 votes in support – twice those marshaled by Cobden when he attempted to postpone the bill.[151] In 1859, Evans showed his support for the movement by becoming an honorary member of the St. George's Volunteer Rifle Corps, and by donating £50 to support a battalion of the Royal

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[149] Edward M. Spiers, *Radical General. Sir George de Lacy Evans, 1787-1870* (Manchester UP, 1983), 63-64. See also Michael J. Turner, *Independent Radicalism in Early Victorian Britain* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 107-108.
[150] ibid., 31, 59.
[151] ibid., 139.

National Rifle Brigade.[152] Evans felt that the Volunteers would be good for patriotic feeling, and criticized the government's ban on Volunteer corps in Ireland as an insult to the Irish.[153]

The figure who most clearly shows the popularity of an aggressively liberal foreign policy is Palmerston. In his political career, Palmerston followed a policy of vigorous liberal intervention, at least compared to the anti-interventionist policy of conservatives. With support for liberal forces in Portugal and Spain, the Don Pacifico case, a refusal to prosecute the British attackers of Austrian General Haynau, and support for Kossuth's sanctuary in Britain, and the Crimean War against despotic Russia, Palmerston made himself one of the premier liberal statesman of the age.[154]

The secret to Palmerston's success was that his belligerent policy was perceived not as aristocratic, but popular. It was aggressive action in support of constitutionalism and the much-venerated British liberties we have already discussed under the mantle of popular constitutionalism. Thus, as Hugh Cunningham notes, Palmerston managed to demonstrate that "in foreign policy government and people were not poles apart, but shared common concerns."[155]

Palmerston's policies also brought him support beyond the middle-class "shopocracy" generally assumed to be his base. As Anton Taylor has demonstrated, throughout the 1850s Palmerston was able to rely on the support of London working men

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[152] ibid., 189.
[153] ibid.
[154] Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism. English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886*, 150, 199, 202.
[155] Hugh Cunningham, "The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914," *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981): 20.

and many ex-Chartists. Thus he argues that Palmerston's "popular radical appeal" in the 1850s was due to his ability to "pose as a radical, defending constitutionalism abroad and championing the rights of oppressed nationalities in Europe."[156]

The success of Palmerstonian policy had consequences for the success of the Volunteers. His foreign policy made military action more respectable in liberal circles, as long as it was demonstrably in support of constitutionalism. Thus Jonathan Parry goes as far as to call the British response to the panic of 1859 "a marriage between Palmerstonian defence strategy and Gladstonian finance."[157] Even more impressive than those who soldiered in defense of English liberties, like the Volunteers, were those who gave their lives in the case of liberty of overseas. In the first years of the Volunteers, the cause celebre of liberty in Europe was Italy – and the Volunteers could make much of their connections, practical and more symbolic, to that fight.

The *Risorgimento* gave Britons a new Continental hero in Giuseppe Garibaldi. After following his campaigns in Italy with bated breath, Britons awaited the arrival of their hero in 1864 with great anticipation. Garibaldi represented more than merely a foreign dignitary come to accept the plaudits of a noble nation. He also expressed the hopes of Britons that divisive politics and class divisions could be left behind. He might even prove the reincarnation of an earlier British golden age: Lord Russell compared Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily to the William III's invasion of England in 1688.[158]

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[156] Antony Taylor, "Palmerston and Radicalism, 1847-1865," *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994): 160.
[157] Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism. English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886*, 233.
[158] Derek Beales, "Garibaldi in England: The Politics of Italian Enthusiasm" In *Society and Politics in the Age of the Risorgimento. Essays in Honour of Denis Mack Smith*, eds. John A. Davis and Paul Ginsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 197-198.

A first sign of those desires for national unity came on April 11, when Garibaldi arrived in London. Volunteers, rather than regular soldiers, lined his route.[159] During his trip, Garibaldi was welcomed by Palmerston, his chancellor of the Exchequer Gladstone, and the foreign secretary Lord Russell, but also by the conservative leader Lord Derby.[160] In addition to meeting with such notables, he breakfasted with the Joiners' Union.[161] Palmerston wrote to Queen Victoria that the visit "had afforded great pleasure to the bulk of the nation, as proof of the community of feeling among all classes."[162] There was, of course, not perfect harmony. The more upper-class Garibaldi Reception Committee and the Working-Class Garibaldi Committee competed to greet the conquering hero and appropriate his image.[163] That image was an impressive one. In addition to his military victories, his liberal and Anglophile sympathies, and his achievements for the Italian cause, Garibaldi had immense personal charisma. James Vernon writes that "contemporary portraits, figurines, and pub signs of Garibaldi portray an upright, handsome, plucky figure, resplendent in fine, showy clothes, a handsome, dashing man – undeniably playing up the element of machismo and (yes) sex appeal."[164]

The British press lionized Garibaldi and his men but also those volunteers in Italy, servants of a liberal cause, unrelated to the great man. *Fraser's Magazine* published a poem by "G.B." entitled "The Volunteer at Solferino." The titular volunteer was, as the poet described him, "A fair-hair'd youth" only sixteen years old and mortally wounded

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[159] ibid., 189.
[160] ibid., 192.
[161] ibid., 203.
[162] Qtd. in ibid., 192.
[163] ibid., 194.
[164] Vernon, *Politics and the People. A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815-1867*, 266.

when "formost in the patriot band,/He'd struggled for his native land,/A fearless volunteer."[165]

Volunteer corps were attracted by the Garibaldi mystique. Individual corps were free to chose whatever uniforms they desired, and many – like the Third Middlesex – chose to emulate the color and cut of his dress in their uniforms.[166] Others treated him as a unit patron.[167] In the 1860 farce *The Garibaldi "Excursionists,"* the cowardly main characters worry that their Volunteer regiment will choose to become excursionists and join Garibaldi's campaign. In the play this possibility only gives the theatrical prankster Tom Tiddler a chance to make fools of the men, but the curtain is rung down as the real Volunteers arrive to the call "a final cup to the success of the real Garibaldi Excursionists!"[168]

The connections between Garibaldi and the Volunteer Force were more than merely symbolic. A force of 600 or 800 British volunteers had served with Garibaldi on his campaigns. Unlike the Legion that served in the Carlist War, the recruitment of this force was still hindered by the strictures of the Foreign Enlistment Act. As it was illegal to recruit a force for foreign service on British soil, the organizers were forced to place the following somewhat vague advertisement:

> EXCURSION to SICILY and NAPLES. – All persons (particularly Members of Volunteer Rifle Corps) desirous of visiting Southern Italy, and of AIDING by their presence and influence the CAUSE of GARIBALDI and ITALY, may learn

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[165] *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, October 1859, 466.
[166] Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History, 1859-1908*, 108, 124 n10.
[167] Beales, "Garibaldi in England: The Politics of Italian Enthusiasm," 187.
[168] Henry James Byron, *The Garibaldi "Excursionists"* (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy, n.d.), 18.

how to proceed by applying to the Garibaldi Committee, at the offices at No. 8, Salisbury Street, Strand, London.[169]

In addition to advertising for recruits from the various Volunteer corps, the Central Committee of the Legion held its meetings in the St. James Volunteer Service Club.[170] Nor was the provision of aid to Garibaldi beyond the reach of the rhetoric of popular constitutionalism. When questioned on the matter in Parliament, Lord John Russell defended the government's failure to suppress the expedition by comparing Garibaldi's campaign in Italy to the events of 1688.[171]

Not everyone was so impressed with the British volunteers. The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote that they "left the worst impression of English morals and discipline. They embarked to return home dead drunk all of them, and the drunkenness was not the worst."[172] Their behavior gave Barrett Browning a less than shining impression of the possibilities of the Volunteer force at home. She compared them to "babes and sucklings" and said of the invasion panics "Never was any cry more ignoble. A rescues B from being murdered by C, and E cries out, 'What if *A* should murder *me*!' That's the logic of the subject. And the sentiment is worthy of the logic."[173] The implication was that England (E), having seen France (A) rescue Italy (B) from Austria (C), and failing to aid the Italians in any signal way, had no right to use French arms as

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[169] George Jacob Holyoake, *Bygones Worth Remembering*, Vol. 1 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), 245
[170] Finn, *After Chartism. Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874*, 206-208.
[171] ibid., 206.
[172] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Miss E.F. Haworth, Autumn 1860, *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, Vol.2 (London: Macmillan, 1897).
[173] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Miss Browning, May 11, 1861, *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, Vol.2 (London: Macmillan, 1897). Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Miss E.F. Haworth, Friday Winter 1859, *The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, Vol.2 (London: Macmillan, 1897).

an justification for their own military adventures – even if those adventures were restricted to the home. Barrett Browning, like Cobden and others, blamed the panics on the military lobby, saying "*I* never doubted (for one) that it had its beginning with 'interested persons.'"[174]

The Volunteers of the *Risorgimento* were not the only forces that the Volunteers were compared to. The *Westminster Review* pointed to the example of the Swiss militia system, while Valentine Baker named his proposed militia force after the French National Guards.[175] Not all references, however, were positive – the same *Westminster Review* article noted that Honved militia in Hungary had melted away during the revolutions of 1848.[176] Still, many Britons were interested in the spread of liberty to the Continent. Drawn from most of the political spectrum – Whigs, Liberals, Independent and *démoc-soc* radicals – they all they could unite behind the efforts of a man like Garibaldi and his volunteer troops. In the process, the Volunteers could bask in their reflected glory.

The third rhetorical language that favored the Volunteers was that of manliness. At first glance, the mid-Victorian era appears to be one in which masculinity was secure, what John Tosh has called the "climax of domesticity." In fact, domesticity, while the hegemonic idea of masculinity, was not the sole conception of manliness. Many men still held to a less moderate idea of masculinity, while others worried that in turning to domesticity English men might lose their manhood entirely. In this situation, the Volunteers were able attract the attention and support of both those who supported both

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[174] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, letter to Miss E.F. Haworth, Friday, Winter 1859.
[175] Baker, *Our National Defences*. *Westminster Review*, October 1859, 318.
[176] *Westminster Review*, October 1859, 314.

domesticated manliness and those who felt that such domesticity was undermining the strength of British society.

Originating among Nonconformist provincial merchants in the eighteenth century, the ideology of domesticity was one grounded in the idea of a separation between public and private spheres. Perhaps the most significant consequence of this was the restriction of women, as the foundation of the family, to only the latter sphere. Beyond this basic distinction, though, domesticity championed the idea that one's position in the public sphere was reliant on the maintenance of a modest, respectable, family life in the private sphere. In this way it was in opposition to the aristocratic lifestyle, taken to its extreme in the Prince Regent's day, which emphasized excess and display.[177]

Although its most severe consequences may have been restricted to women, the ideology of domesticity carried with it substantial consequences for men as well. As John Tosh has shown, domesticity produced expectations that men would, in addition to carrying on their activities in the public sphere, such as business and politics, also maintain an appropriately modest home life. While such expectations could, and were, evaded through clubs and holidays, they constituted the anticipated behavior for most middle-class men.[178]

Nor, as Anna Clark has shown, were the ideals of domesticity restricted exclusively to the middle class. In particular, the Chartist movement gradually embraced the ideals of domesticity as a weapon to use against the New Poor Law and in support of

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[177] The most significant analysis of the rise of domesticity remains Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).
[178] John Tosh, *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1999).

improved working conditions and wages in factories.[179] The domestic ideal can be seen in particular on the English stage in many melodramas, a genre within which the domestic form gradually came to predominate. Even in settings where a domestic element might seem totally forced, such as in nautical melodrama, such elements were practically mandatory.[180] While the ideal of domesticity would eventually come under pressure from multiple directions, including both the idea of the New Woman and of Aestheticism, for the majority of the century it remained the hegemonic form of sanctioned masculinity.

The values of restraint and family seem incompatible with the facts of military life at first glance, and for much of the century they were believed to be. During the eighteenth century the accepted behavior for an officer had included drinking, gambling and dueling reflective of an aristocratic lifestyle, and this sort of lifestyle continued to be the norm well into the nineteenth.[181] The novels of Charles Lever, published between 1839 and 1844 emphasize this sort of life for their bachelor gentlemen officers, riding and shooting.[182] This sort of behavior was closely associated with the aristocracy, and on stage the army officer was more likely to be identified as an aristocratic seducer of women than as a sturdy defender of the nation.

Such appearances only gained strength in the Regency period, when the behavior of the Prince Regent himself seemed to license that style of living. The gaudiness of

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[179] Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches. Gender and the Making of the British Working Class.*
[180] Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965).
[181] According to Tim Fulford, such activity is at the heart of Jane Austen's critique of the militia in *Pride and Prejudice*. See Fulford, "Sighing for a Soldier: Jane Austen and Military Pride and Prejudice," 153-178.
[182] John Peck, *War, the Army and Victorian Literature* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 3-11.

army life was reflected in its uniforms, where plain straps on shakos were replaced by brass chinscales and headgear grew so large that the Duke of Wellington was actually blown off his horse in 1829 when the wind caught his bearskin cap. The 1830s, however, saw the beginning of a retreat to a more modest and "bourgeois" style. With continued criticism of any excess, uniforms continued to become decreasingly spectacular all the through the 1850s.[183]

The cult of domesticity found its first military hero in the person of General Henry Havelock. Appointed Brigadier-General five weeks after the start of the Indian Mutiny, Havelock became a hero for leading the Relief of Lucknow, before dying a tragic death from dysentery. What made Havelock an unusual figure, and his elevation to the status of national hero more interesting, is his life outside the service. Henry Havelock was a man of middle-class origins, a devoted husband who had fathered eight children, as well as a devout Baptist who had proselytized among the ranks. According to Graham Dawson, four full-length biographies about Havelock were published by 1861. The most substantial, by John Clark Marshman, emphasizes the general's emotional connection to his family. Thus Havelock, praised by the whole spectrum of British politics – he was celebrated by both *The Times* and *Reynolds' Newspaper*, becomes evidence of the appropriateness of manly domesticity even in the ranks of the army.[184]

John Tosh discusses the extension of domesticity into public affairs through the medium of manly simplicity. He argues that in the early nineteenth century Victorians

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[183] Scott Hughes Myerly, "Political Aesthetics: British Army Fashion, 1815-55," *Splendidly Victorian. Essays in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British History in Honour of Walter L. Arnstein*, eds. Michael H. Shirley and Todd E. A. Larson, 2001), 45-68.
[184] Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 79-154.

began to value the appearance of vigor – "energy, virility, and strength" – combined with straightforwardness of action and speech, over prior values of politeness and breeding, "manly simplicity" over "gentlemanly politeness."[185] This manliness transcended class boundaries, as long as those involved were perceived to be vigorous, independent, and capable of work.[186]

Further evidence for the traction of the domestic ideal in public figures comes from the funeral of the Duke of Wellington in 1851. An irascible opponent of most military and political reforms, the Iron Duke had alternatively been feted and reviled by the British public. His death, however, brought forth an outpouring a grief. Like Henry Havelock seven years later, in death Wellington became the consummate Christian soldier. In addition to paeans to a religiosity Wellington had likely never felt, Britons praised the simplicity of his life. Much was made of the fact that at the time of his death, Welington was living in a single room at Walmer Castle. The austerity of that chamber, which John Wilson later described as "little better than a barrack bivouac," and his room at Apsley House were celebrated for their austerity. Thus, despite the spectacle of the event, Wellington's funeral is further evidence for a growing celebration of modesty.[187] Peter W. Sinnema contrasts the funeral with "the comparative hedonism of the early nineteenth-century state obsequies (one thinks in particular of Nelson ...)"[188]

It was these developments that led Olive Anderson to argue that the 1850s and 60s represented a period when the idea "Christian militarism," within which she includes

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[185] John Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 459-460.
[186] ibid., 468-470.
[187] Sinnema, *The Wake of Wellington. Englishness in 1852*, 36.
[188] ibid., 88.

the Volunteer movement, was on the rise in Britain.[189] However, with some exceptions the army was still perceived as more libertine than domestic. For example, in George Eliot's 1859 novel *Adam Bede,* the genteel militia officer begins as an aristocratic seducer and must learn proper manliness from the laborer Bede before he can take his place in society.[190] Hardly helpful for the army's reputation was the fact that the ranks of its officer corps were still drawn, primarily, from the gentry rather than the middle class. Men of Havelock's background were a relative rarity, and the fact that in the aftermath of the Mutiny Havelock received only a KCB – the same award given to Lords Lucan and Cardigan after the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade – provoked a minor scandal at home.[191]

So, when the Volunteers appeared on the scene in 1859, they were well placed to take advantage of a perceived lack of domesticity in the ranks of the regular army. In contrast to the regular army, where most officers never married and most soldiers were forbidden to, the Volunteers hoped to recruit among the ranks of married men. Rather than be housed in barracks amongst other bachelors, and away from the possibility of feminine care, the Volunteers would live at home.

A number of writers drew attention to exactly these aspects of the Volunteers. Tom Hughes wrote in *Macmillan's Magazine* that the protection of the English home was the first purpose of the Volunteers.[192] That the Volunteers were "as a rule men, not boys;

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[189] Olive Anderson, "The Growth of Christian Militarism in Britain," *English Historical Review* 86 (1971): 46-72.
[190] John R. Reed, "Soldier Boy: Forming Masculinity in *Adam Bede*," *Studies in the Novel* 33 (2001): 268-284.
[191] Edward M. Spiers, *The Scottish Soldier and Empire, 1854-1902* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006), 133.
[192] *Macmillan's Magazine*, July 1860, 192.

full-grown men, with professions and trades to work at, and families to support, or at any rate, bread to earn for themselves" was proof of their steadiness.[193]

It was exactly this expected domesticity that was satirized in the 1859 farce *The Rifle and How to Use It*. The two main characters, Percival Floff and Sidney Jubkins, are both members of the Volunteers and dutiful husbands. However, rather than reflecting the firm command of the household that was the domestic ideal, they are continually browbeaten and embarrassed by their wives. Their membership in the Volunteers does nothing to improve their manhood, and only leads them into further embarrassing trouble.[194]

While part of the popularity of the Volunteers came from the sense that they would be properly domestic, rather than reflecting the licentious behavior of both officers and men in the regular army, the Volunteers were also attractive to those who feared that England's men were already suffering from a surfeit of domesticity. These observers tended to argue that with their involvement in commerce and with the creature comforts of the home, English men tended not be sufficiently manly at all.

Many of those who held this belief shared the philosophy of muscular Christianity. Promoted by figures like F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley in sermons and in novels like *Westward Ho*, muscular Christianity idolized a masculine ideal that was energetic, decisive, and above all physical. While closely associated with Christian Socialism, muscular Christianity presented a particularly physical view of a Christian life. To many,

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[193] *Macmillan's Magazine*, July 1860, 191.
[194] J.D. Bridgeman, *The Rifle and How to Use It* (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy, n.d.).

Volunteering offered exactly the correct form of physicality, strengthening the body under conditions that were both righteous and well-regulated.[195]

Many of the key figures of both muscular Christianity and Christian Socialism became involved in the Volunteer movement. Hughes was the founder of a rifle corps at the Working Men's College, while Kingsley praised the movement in the preface to his novel *Alton Locke*. Hughes' article in *Macmillan's Magazine* praised service in the Volunteers for making "individual Englishmen healthier of body, stronger and steadier of hand, quicker of eye, prompter in action, and more generally alert and intelligent than they are at present."[196]

Men of other philosophical persuasion than the followers of Hughes and Kingsley also felt that the Volunteers held certain possibilities. One of the most interesting amongst them was the social thinker John Ruskin. Ruskin had achieved celebrity as an art critic, championing the work of painters like J.M.W. Turner in his book *Modern Painters*. He soon became interested in more than art, though, and became a leading proto-socialist thinker. Like his contemporary William Morris, Ruskin's socialism was neo-Medieval – as works like *The Stones of Venice* attest.

Ruskin was a serious critic of military expenditure and of the Panic of 1859 in particular. Much like William Cobden, he argued that expenditures on defense were unnecessary and served merely to line the pockets of interested parties – although he

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[195] See Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit. the Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985).
[196] *Macmillan's Magazine*, July 1860, 193.

blamed capitalists rather than half-pay officers. In a series of essays he published in the *Cornhill Magazine* he put it this way:

> at present, France and England, [are] purchasing of each other ten millions sterling worth of consternation annually, … And all unjust war being supported, if not by the pillage of the enemy, only by loans from capitalists, these loans are repaid by subsequent taxation of the people, who appear to have no will in the matter, the capitalists' will being the primary root of the war; but its real root is the covetousness of the whole nation, rendering it incapable of faith, frankness, or justice, and bringing about, therefore, in due time, his own separate loss and punishment to each person.[197]

While Ruskin clearly blamed capitalists for encouraging the Panics, he connected them to a larger problem he saw in English society, that those in all manner of professions were seeing the pursuit of profit as more important than the pursuit of their profession itself. Ruskin believed the Volunteers could be part of the solution. Writing to an acquaintance, he explained his reasoning: the Force was "the only thing to save us from our accursed commerce – and make us men again instead of gold shovels."[198] Service in the Volunteers would promote a sense of duty and instill discipline in those individuals who had turned to the pursuit of unethical profit, and thus English manhood could be saved from its covetous nature. As Hughes put it, Volunteering could end "the eagerness for business and habit of money-getting was fast absorbing every thought, to the detriment of

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[197] John Ruskin, "Unto this Last," *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Vol. 17 (London: G. Allen, 1903-1912), 104.

[198] John Ruskin, letter to Miss Heaton, March 1860, letter H.86 in *Sublime & Instructive. Letters from John Ruskin to Louisa. Marchioness of Waterford, Anna Blunden and Ellen Heaton*, ed. Virginia Surtees (London: Michael Joseph, 1972), 225.

all the higher and noble instincts," and replace it with "generous rivalry and cheerful exercise" that could "sustain and renew–perhaps increase–the pristine vigour of the race," not to mention frowning upon "dandyism and tinsel."[199]

This idea matched Ruskin's broader sense of the purpose of war, which he explained six years later in a lecture at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He began with the statement that "all the pure and noble arts of peace are founded on war; … Commerce is barely consistent with fine art; but cannot produce it."[200] War serves to purify the soul, sharpen the wits, and establish "who is the best man," something that can only be determined by a fight to the death.[201] On the other hand, Ruskin says, wars that are fought by unwilling conscripts are reprehensible.[202] The Volunteers, of course, joining of their own free will, had the potential to be part of the liberating side of war, rather than its mundane commercial side.

As far as the potential of the Volunteers, many of Ruskin's friends seemed to agree with him. Ruskin was a friend of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and many of them joined the 38th Middlesex, or Artists' Corps: Ford Madox Brown, D.G. Rossetti, Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, William Blake Richmond, A.C. Swinburne, John Hullah, Val Princep, Spencer Stanhope, George Frederick Watts, Henry Wyndham Phillips, Frederick Leighton, William Cave Thomas,

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[199] *Macmillan's Magazine*, July 1860, 199.
[200] John Ruskin, "War," *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Vol. 18 (London: G. Allen, 1903-1912), 459-460.
[201] ibid., 470.
[202] ibid., 466.

and Fred Cockerell. Ruskin himself did not serve, but was enrolled as an Honorary Member, while his manservant enlisted in a Working Men's corps.[203]

The themes of the invasion panics also appeared in the work of some of these artists. Already in 1852, William Holman Hunt had painted the allegorical *Our English Coasts, 1852*, with its warning of undefended cliffs, although when the crisis passed he was forced to retitle it *Strayed Sheep* in order to exhibit in Paris in 1855.[204] In 1859, Millais painted *The Black Brunswicker*, portraying a youthful officer about to leave home to fight the villainous French – during the Napoleonic Wars.[205] Although the Pre-Raphaelites tended to religious and medieval themes, their work also reflected the concepts of popular constitutionalism. Paintings like Madox Brown's *Work* (1852-1865) and Millais' *The Race Meeting* (1853) reflected an anti-aristocratic tone, with criticism of the aristocracy's handling of the army never more evident that in Millais' *Peace Concluded.*[206] The painting, of an officer at home surrounded by his family, had originally been entitled *Urgent Private Affairs*, a reference to well-connected officers who arranged a transfer out of the Crimea on "urgent private affairs" as the war dragged on – but like Holman Hunt's piece it had to be retitled once peace was declared and criticism of the army became less popular.[207] Many Pre-Raphaelite paintings reflected

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[203] Michael H. Bright, "'Come if You Dare': The Artists' Rifles and the Volunteer Movement," *Victorians Institute Journal* 8 (1979), 2.
[204] Jonathan P. Ribner, "*Our English Coasts, 1852.* William Holman Hunt and Invasion Fear at Midcentury," *Art Journal* 55 (1996): 45-54.
[205] Bright, "'Come if You Dare': The Artists' Rifles and the Volunteer Movement," 16.
[206] Tim Barringer, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 100-101.
[207] Matthew Paul Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 93-95.

the expectations of muscular Christianity, perhaps most obviously in muscular Christ figure in Madox Brown's *Jesus washing Peter's Feet* (1851-6).[208]

Thus, at least in its early years the Volunteers were perfectly placed to take advantages of anxieties over the state of British manliness. For those who were concerned that the army followed a brutal and debased way of life, the Volunteers offered an alternative force that was not only compatible with the ideal masculine domesticity, but reinforcing of it. On the other hand, for those who feared that British manhood had already been enervated by that same domestic ideology, the Volunteers seemed like a way to reintroduce vigor and exertion in appropriate ways.

Despite the initial outpouring of enthusiasm and interest, it took only a few years for the slow, if inexorable decline of the Volunteer Force to begin. The loss of middle-class members began almost as soon as the crisis of 1859-1861 was over. As already noted, by 1863 the force had become predominantly working-class. Total numbers continued to increase over the course of the 1860s, helped no doubt by tensions related to the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 and the Fenian threats of 1867. However, the force reached its peak strength in 1868, 199,194 men. The next few years saw a precipitous decline, with a loss of just under 4,000 men from overall strength in the next year. In 1873, the force's manpower had declined to 171,937. While the Balkan Crisis of 1877-1878 helped recruitment, the Volunteers never recovered the importance they had held in the early 1860s.[209]

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[208] Barringer, *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites*, 114-115.
[209] Ian F. W. Beckett, *Riflemen Form. A Study of the Rifle Volunteer Movement, 1859-1908* (Aldershot: Ogilby Trust, 1982), 104-105.

The marginalization of the Volunteers is already clear in the farce "The Volunteer Review," written and first performed in 1869. Unlike the farces featuring the Volunteers first played in 1859-61, "The Volunteer Review" makes no mention of the foreign threat, nor does it express its confidence that the Volunteers–whatever mockery they have been subjected to–would be firm against a foreign foe. Instead, in the finale of "The Volunteer Review" Corporal Nupkins says: "Why if we had been *starved* at *this* Review, we couldn't have shown up at the *next*, so you see it's all for the *public good*" and promises he and his men will do the utmost to "entertain" the audience.[210] The function of the Volunteers has shifted from defending England to putting on reviews and field-days that entertain the public.

Two major factors help to explain the decline of the Volunteers. Developments in military affairs on the Continent made the defensive capacity of the Volunteers even more questionable than they had previously been. Changes made in an attempt to improve Britain's defenses overall undermined the unique attractiveness of the Volunteers to popular constitutionalism. Whatever the technical developments that the panic of 1859-60 may have accelerated in the navy, when it came to national defense questions the vast majority of Britons still thought in roughly the same terms that they had during the eighteenth century. It would take a larger shock that the invasion crisis of 1859 to derail their assumptions.[211]

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[210] Thomas J. Williams, *The Volunteer Review: or, The Little Man in Green!* (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy, n.d.), 26.

[211] On this point I differ from Salevouris, who writes that the war scare of 1859 left "an embryonic but growing feeling that a golden age of safety and security had given way to an new era of anxiety and vulnerability ... a new military age had dawned and there was no turning back" Salevouris, *"Riflemen Form," the War Scare of 1859-1860 in England*, 304.

That shock came within the next decade. First the 1866 Austro-Prussian War and then the 1871 Franco-Prussian War demonstrated the power of an army of short-service conscripts. The longer-service French army, which had previously been considered the most powerful in Europe, and the one the Volunteers were supposed to stop, was humiliated.

Prussian victory demonstrated that any first-class army would require a reserve of trained manpower. Unwilling to adopt a short-service conscript force on Continental lines, for the next forty years Britain would struggle with exactly how to provide such manpower without conscription. The first attempt came with the Cardwell Reforms. These reforms included 1872 Localization Act, which in an attempt to encourage local recruiting, divided Britain into 66 territorial districts, each consisting of two line battalions, two Militia battalions, and the appropriate local Volunteer corps, all under the command of a district lieutenant-colonel.[212] While closer integration with the regular army was a military necessity if they were to serve as a genuine reserve, it meant that the Volunteers could no longer claim to be a counterweight to the regular army.

At the same time as the independence of the Volunteers was declining, interest in the empire was growing. In 1859, the fact that Volunteers could not be ordered abroad was an advantage – it signaled the constitutional, domestic, and limited nature of the Force. As the end of the century approached, it was a sign that the Volunteers were increasingly irrelevant to the imperial conflicts where the army was now making its name. Many supporters of the Volunteers, such as Charles Kingsley and John Ruskin, had

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[212] Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914*, 196-197.

turned to empire for a new tonic.[213] Rendered nothing more than an adjunct to the regular army, the Volunteers were eventually swallowed up by the Territorial Army– a force that existed primarily to provide a reserve to the regulars – in 1908

The decline of the Volunteer Force is further evident in a short story that became a national sensation in 1871, two years after "The Volunteer Review" was first staged. In May of that year, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published a short story by Lieutenant-Colonel George Chesney of the Royal Engineers. Entitled "The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer," it was the tale of a fictional future Britain defeated. In Chesney's future, southern England is invaded after the British fleet is destroyed by mines in the North Sea. The Volunteers, of whom Chesney's protagonist is one, are defeated, and the story ends with Britain under the yoke of the unnamed but obviously Teutonic invaders. Chesney's story was an unexpected bestseller. Sales of the magazine rose 65%, and the story was soon released as a sixpenny pamphlet.[214] By July it had sold 110,000 copies in that form.[215] The Battle of Dorking soon entered popular mythology, and "Weren't you injured at the Battle of Dorking?" rapidly became a popular response to seeing a friend with any sort of injury.[216]

Chesney's Volunteers do not acquit themselves particularly well, either militarily or morally. When the men reach the town of Dorking before the battle, they mob a

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[213] On Ruskin, see John M. MacKenzie, "Introduction" In *Popular Imperialism and the Military, 1850-1950*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992). 4-6.
[214] David Finkelstein, "From Textuality to Orality–The Reception of *The Battle of Dorking*," *Books and Bibliography. Essays in Commemoration of Don McKenzie*, ed. John Thomson (Wellington: Victoria UP, 2002). 90.
[215] I.F. Clarke, "Introduction: The Paper Warriors and their Flights of Fantasy," *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914. Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-to-come*, ed. I.F. Clarke (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995). 14-15.
[216] Finkelstein, 97.

bakery and steal the loaves.[217] After the disastrous battle they waylay a military cart with stores, tear the tins of meat open with their bayonets and eat it without even determining if it had been cooked or not.[218] When a staff officer harangues the Volunteers for stealing from the bakery, one responds: "Oh, blow it, governor … you arn't agoing to come between a poor cove and his grub."[219] That this speech comes from an articled attorney indicates how far, in Chesney's opinion, it would be possible for the Volunteers to degenerate.

Compared to this the battlefield performance of Chesney's Volunteers is reasonably respectable. They hold their ground for most of the battle, even carrying out a credible bayonet charge. However, in the end they lack the discipline to maintain order and retreat.[220] As one officer in the story puts it, the regulars would much rather be left alone to do the fighting than have the misguided help of the Volunteers.[221]

Chesney's skepticism towards the improving potential of the Volunteer Force makes him of one mind with the farces we have discussed, but he goes well beyond them in presenting the result as a terrible degeneration. Under the pressures of war, volunteers like Travers not only prove unable to protect their homes, wives, and children from the invaders, but also in dialect and deed prove unfit to be husbands. As amateurs, the experience of warfare proves to be unmanning for the Volunteers.

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[217] George Tomykins Chesney, "The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer," reprinted in *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914. Fictions of Future Warfare and of Battles Still-to-come*, ed. I.F. Clarke (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995), 45.
[218] ibid., 62.
[219] ibid., 45.
[220] ibid., 59-60.
[221] ibid., 53.

Chesney story also reflected a shift in politics. The invasion narrative that he pioneered has been called a "Tory-Conservative genre" by one critic, and Chesney has a definite political message in "The Battle of Dorking."[222] He lays the blame for his fictional disaster on the fact that "power was then passing away from the class which had been used to rule, ... into the hands of the lower classes, uneducated, untrained to the use of political rights, and swayed by demagogues."[223] The liberalism of the "Garibaldi Excursionists" is replaced by solid Tory politics. Chesney's story also begins to look outwards, announcing that the source of Britain's strength was not her domestic industry but her empire.[224] Where the Volunteers of the 1860s had looked inwards to national tradition or to the Continent, those of the 1870s and 80s would look outwards to the expanding formal empire.

As a locally-organized force, clearly separate from regular army, containing men of all classes, the Volunteers were a perfect fit with the constitutionalist language that filled mid-Victorian politics, as well as the rhetorics of liberal internationalism and manliness. However, that flexibility also proved a major weakness for the Volunteers. While home defense remained a major political issue, a broad church approach meant that the Volunteers grew rapidly. But when home defense shrank in importance, it left the Volunteers without a strong constituency. Political rhetoric was both the strength and weakness of the Volunteers.

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[222] A. Michael Matin, "'We Aren't German Slaves Here, Thank God': Conrad's Transposed Nationalism and British Literature of Espionage and Invasion," *Journal of Modern Literature* 21 (1997/98): 252.
[223] Chesney, 73.
[224] ibid., 72.

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