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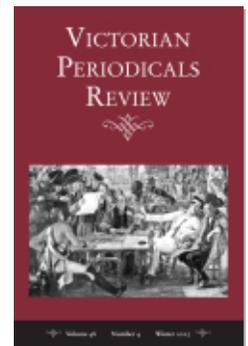
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“The Waterloo of Democracy against Despotism”: Chartist Internationalism and Poetic Repetition in the *Labourer*, 1847–48

BARBARA BARROW

In an 1847 speech for a German workers' society reprinted in the Chartist periodical *Northern Star*, the poet, orator, and Chartist agitator Ernest Jones remembered the battle of Waterloo as an act of “kingcraft” that set European nations against each other in the struggle to maintain hereditary power.¹ Selecting international cooperation as his theme, Jones closed by asking his audience to imagine a different sort of Waterloo:

While we see the sword striking our foreign brethren, tell them our palms are burning. Tell them we know a better sword is ready to leap from its scabbard on the Vistula and the Seine, the Elbe and the Po, the Danube and the Douro. . . . Tell them we hate bloodshed, even where it is to strike a tyrant; but tell them, in those lands, where tyranny will not yield to reason, that it *shall* yield to force! There may be another Waterloo. I hope there will not. But, if there should, it will not be Englishmen against Frenchmen, but the Waterloo of democracy against despotism!²

Jones's speech is emphatically internationalist in its call for Europe's working classes to band together in the shared cause of workers' rights, and it is also a recognizable and striking example of “physical force” Chartism, a position that advocated armed resistance if moral pressure alone should fail to advance the cause.³ At the same time, Jones's strategic reference to the imagined violence of “another Waterloo” also implies the potentially subversive role that standing armies might play in this struggle. If the historical Waterloo had raised armies of Englishmen and Frenchmen against each other, this reinvented Waterloo of democracy collapsed such national

distinctions. The short-lived periodical Jones co-edited with fellow Chartist Feargus O'Connor, the *Labourer* (1847–48), would further invoke the potential of government militias to change allegiances in its report on the 1848 Revolution in France, “A Lesson to Tyrants,” which observed that armies, “formerly the blind tools of the government[,] . . . are beginning to think and reason for themselves. . . . In Paris a great portion of the army refused to act against the people.”⁴ Given at a time when anxieties about Continental uprisings had led some conservative papers to call for increased attention to national defense, Jones’s rhetorical reinvention of Waterloo here and elsewhere was suggestive: those same standing armies that might once have worked to preserve hereditary power could turn away from their commissioning governments and towards the democratic cause, away from national defense and towards the combined struggle to uproot a pan-European “despotism.”

In this essay, I argue that such allusions to the violent specter of another Waterloo are a central rhetorical and poetic strategy in the *Labourer*. Jones and O'Connor’s periodical targeted an audience of workers and potential recruits and featured legal advice, regular installments of labor history, and reports on international events. It also published serialized works of romance and fiction with working-class protagonists; Jones’s songs and poetry; and O'Connor’s treatises and essays on the Land Plan, his project of creating smallholdings for workers.⁵ Like Jones’s speech to the German workers, the *Labourer* conjures images of Waterloo and the Napoleonic Wars as necessary specters of armed resistance; however, it does so by strategically utilizing the serial and miscellaneous format of the periodical. As Miles Taylor and Glenn Airey have noted, the *Labourer*’s mingling of modes and genres worked towards the unified purpose of communicating a political message.⁶ In the “Preface” to the first issues of the *Labourer* in 1847, the editors explained that by blending romance and history with poetry and politics, they hoped to elevate the “feelings” and “aspirations” of working-class readers, varying modes in order to “strengthen the political power of a people”; for this reason, they “placed poetry and romance side by side with politics and history.”⁷ Central to this side-by-side pairing, or what I will call a “unity in miscellany,” are the poetic techniques of repetition and refrain. Jones’s poetic contributions, among them “The Factory Town” and “The March of Freedom,” along with poems such as the translation of Ludwig Uhland’s “The Boy’s Mountain Song,” use repetition and refrain to echo and reinforce assertions about Waterloo, Wellington, and Napoleon in prose features found elsewhere in the journal. These refrains and echoes further insist on armed resistance as a regrettable but necessary last resort: images of cannons and bayonets melt into hoes and spades, bucolic peasants in rural hills band together and take up arms, and the “thunders of Napoleon” work in the service of the “nobler music” of inter-

national collaboration.⁸ Through these refrains, the *Labourer* reinvents the battle of Waterloo as a powerful symbol of international cooperation and armed resistance.

In its reinvention of the Waterloo legacy, the *Labourer* responded not only to contemporary concerns about popular unrest but also to the conservative press's tendency to represent the battle as a symbolic triumph of the hereditary order. In these accounts, Chartist mobilization was sometimes likened to popular uprisings on the Continent, and Wellington appeared as a contradictory figure embroiled in political agitation and questions of national defense, sometimes working in the service of landed Tory stability and other times presented as a symbol of a Whig neglect for working-class concerns that had inadvertently fanned Chartist agitation. Wellington's complex role in relation to the Chartists would come to a highly visible and public climax on April 10, 1848, when peaceful Chartist demonstrators, bearing their third and final petition, came face to face with military and police forces under Wellington's command at Kennington Common.⁹ In what follows, I trace the legacy of Waterloo and Wellington in the mid-Victorian press, showing how both Tory and Whig papers drew on the famous battle in their coverage of Chartist and Continental unrest and on the related question of national security and stability. I then turn to the *Labourer* to demonstrate how the paper counters representations of the battle's significance for hereditary authority, suggesting instead that the call to arms and the mobilization of armies at Waterloo could readily be co-opted for the workers' cause. I close by considering the extent to which the *Labourer's* internationalist appeals to the Waterloo legacy exhibit what some critics have termed a "liberal universalism" that flattens out local and historical differences.¹⁰ Part of this universalizing tendency, I argue, is the *Labourer's* strategic response to issues of international and domestic security that were already themselves collapsed in the mainstream press. By mining these mainstream representations, the *Labourer* reinvents these concerns about national defense in England to make its case for workers' rights internationally.

Waterloo and Wellington in the Press

Waterloo's legacy as a triumph of the monarchical order was a vibrant and familiar topic in the mid-Victorian press. Urged on, in part, by widespread anxieties about popular uprisings on the Continent and especially in France, conservative periodicals and newspapers commemorated the battle of Waterloo as a fortuitous restoration of hereditary authority. One report on an 1835 Scottish Conservative Waterloo anniversary banquet in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, for example, reprinted chairman Duncan McNeil's speech to the invited guests in which he remembered the

battle as an act of “noble resistance” to the “unprincipled aggressions of restless republicanism. . . . We remember that the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo is to more than one nation, and to many millions of beings, the anniversary of freedom and of independence.”¹¹ Other accounts of the gatherings celebrating the battle’s anniversary emphasized the rank and lineage of the invited guests and the quality of the dinner services. An 1848 piece in the *Times*, the paper the *Labourer* described as the “great British organ of the plutocracy,” not only recounted the guest list at that year’s anniversary of the event but also gave lavish descriptions of the plate and china.¹²

Allusions to Waterloo in the periodical press frequently positioned the Duke of Wellington as a consummate war hero, upholder of traditional landed power, and defender of national security. As Peter Sinnema has shown, posthumous literary representations of the duke after his death in 1852 depicted him as a loyal subject of the monarchy and a “blue-blooded, unpretending, antirevolutionary, decidedly un-Celtic hero whose birth to Anglo-Irish peers in Dublin did nothing to prevent the *Times* from insisting on his being English ‘to the very heart’s core.’”¹³ The creation of this revered and decidedly English military persona was already well underway in post-Waterloo accounts of commemorative statues of Wellington, reviews of his dispatches, essays on his military skills, and above all, his public statements against the reform agitation of the 1830s. *The English Review*’s 1845 “Maxims and Opinions of the Duke of Wellington, Collected from His Despatches and Speeches,” for example, remembered the “manly stand” Wellington had taken against the Reform Bill in an 1830 parliamentary speech, a stand that led reform agitators to confront him outside of Apsley House, the duke’s London residence. “The hero himself” was “torn by a furious mob from his horse, and with difficulty rescued from death . . . on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, on June 18, 1832.”¹⁴ In such accounts, Wellington’s role as a famed hero of Waterloo, a role which he unintentionally but gloriously reprised in this confrontation, underlined his dignity and staunch conservatism in the face of political unrest.

This dramatic vision of mob violence and the duke’s legendary performance at Waterloo was publicly and openly reinforced by his organization of a massive military and police force to greet the peaceful Chartist demonstration at Kennington Common on April 10, 1848. In such accounts, Wellington sometimes appeared not as a figure of landed Tory stability but as a cover-up for the Whigs’ neglect of working-class concerns. An 1848 *Fraser*’s report on Chartism wondered at the contrast between the “few thousand men who walked peaceably through the streets to Kennington Common” and the Duke of Wellington, who was “alive again, like an old

war-horse at the sound of the trumpet” as he installed troops along the Thames.¹⁵ The report continues,

A story is told, which is highly characteristic of the illustrious veteran so excited by this last chance of military action. It is said that when, at the Privy Council, he was asked, “Has your Grace protected London Bridge?” “Done two hours ago!” was the curt answer. “And Blackfriars?” “Done two hours ago!” “And Waterloo?” “Done, too!” And so the interrogator proceeded up the river, the Duke answering with similar abruptness, and not very patiently, till he had been dragged up to Putney Bridge. The learned councillor ventured one step further. “Richmond Bridge?” “Richmond Bridge may go to the devil!” said the Duke, utterly unable to bear any further questioning.¹⁶

This account of the bustling commander fortifying a London bridge named in honor of Waterloo against a mass gathering of peaceful Chartist demonstrators suggests how quickly the language of international war was appropriated to describe domestic working-class unrest. Whether he appeared as a figure of Tory parliamentary stability in the pre-Reform era or as a potential Whig ally overreacting to the post-Reform neglect of working-class concerns, Wellington’s legacy as a commander of the violent battle at Waterloo informed the press’s coverage of his role in relation to the Chartist movement.

The legacy of the Waterloo battle also informed accounts of Wellington’s role in the national defense, particularly in light of his response to Continental unrest in the turbulent 1840s. Reports on national defense in the conservative press tended to reference Wellington’s response to anxieties about a French invasion during the revolution of 1848. A January 1848 front-page report in the *Examiner*, for example, discussed—and dismissed—Wellington’s fears of a coastal invasion by the French and his desire to augment English military resources, observing that Wellington had overlooked differences between the France of 1804, with “Napoleon on the throne,” and the comparatively less threatening state of affairs in 1848 now that France was “essentially a middle-class nation.”¹⁷ The paper’s admonishment to Wellington—that he should differentiate between Napoleonic and contemporary France—recalls his legacy at Waterloo and offers tacit assurance that international peace and established order were no longer in danger.

If some conservative publications like the *Times*, *Blackwood’s*, and the *English Review* celebrated Wellington as a figure of national stability and defense, other periodicals resisted both his celebrity status and the broader legacy of Waterloo as a symbol of English military prowess. For one contributor reporting on Waterloo tourism in an 1847 issue of the *Mirror*,

Waterloo's legacy was cheapened and trivialized by the battlefield's afterlife as a tourist destination filled with "relic hunters" seeking "bullets corroded and shattered" and "fragments of . . . bones and skulls."¹⁸ One frequent point of contention in these debates was the recurrent charge that Wellington would not have won the battle had it not been for Prussian reinforcements and Napoleon's own tactical missteps.¹⁹ For example, "The Waterloo Humbug," a piece that appeared in *Figaro in London* in 1836, took issue with the "annual fuss" made over Wellington and Waterloo given that it was a battle won thanks to a "mistake of Napoleon, and not to any merit of the English; though we will admit that they fought like butchers."²⁰ Other accounts highlighted the violence of Waterloo in order to challenge patriotic celebrations of the Waterloo anniversary. One "American gentleman," reporting on his visit to the battlefield in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, closed by urging readers to remember that the battle was a violent tragedy rather than a symbol of national victory: "Kind reader, if you be fond of war as a sport, go visit the field of Waterloo—spend a day in its contemplation—and then tell me what thou thinkest of the principle of wholesale slaughter."²¹ Such accounts challenged more strident celebrations of the Waterloo legacy through their sober meditations on the cost of human lives.

This disquieting memory of mass violence at Waterloo forms a striking contrast to the largely hyperbolized accounts of physical-force Chartism in the press. As Chris Vanden Bossche notes, accounts of Chartism in the elite press tended to exaggerate the potential threat of violence.²² Poetry and reviews of poetry could likewise play a role in fanning insurrectionary sentiment and fueling different factionalist sentiments between Tory and Whig publications. In 1840, the *Examiner* took the *Quarterly Review* to task for its review of the stridently militant Chartist epic *Ernest; or, Political Regeneration* (1839).²³ The writer for the *Examiner* argued that the *Quarterly Review's* long excerpts from the poem and its overt, repeated condemnation of the piece's insurrectionary sentiments served as a barely concealed endorsement of the work that, in turn, revealed a larger Conservative investment in the Chartists' criticism of the Whigs.²⁴ According to the *Examiner*, this epic, which the *Quarterly Review* reported was full of "anarchy, plunder, massacre," not only raised alarm but also exhibited a barely concealed delight in its potential role as fodder for anti-Whig sentiment among the readers of the Tory *Quarterly Review*. Compounding this sense of alarm was the *Quarterly Review's* claim that the printer of *Ernest* had been so astounded by the piece's insurrectionary sentiments that he had repeatedly dropped the types, a claim that the *Examiner* dismissed as pure advertising, a "puff direct" for the now-withdrawn publication that was "not to be surpassed" in its vision of the printer "seized with trepidation at the startling doctrines, and letting the types fall from his trembling

hand in a fit of *errata*.”²⁵ This criticism of the *Quarterly Review* piece affirms the view of many critics—that poetry played a central role in fanning popular unrest—but it further demonstrates that even the suppression of controversial texts could not prevent their continued incendiary afterlives in periodicals with their own political agendas.²⁶

The inflammatory potential of poetry, and the periodical press more broadly, perhaps explains why more reviews of Chartist literary productions did not appear in mainstream periodicals. For a *Blackwood's* contributor writing in response to the Continental uprisings and the 1848 Chartist demonstration at Kennington Common, the measured response of the periodical press had played a key role in ensuring that the events on the Continent did not migrate to Britain and cause “another republic to be proclaimed on the banks of the Thames.”²⁷ Instead, the “press has stood nobly forward on this momentous crisis; and to its ability and truly patriotic spirit, the defeat of the disaffected, without bloodshed, is mainly to be ascribed.”²⁸ To ascribe to the press a role in circumventing a mass bloodshed that was never attempted by the peaceful Chartist demonstrators is to overlook the unbalanced power relations between the protestors and the heavily armed civil and military forces that greeted their procession; nevertheless, this piece illustrates the press’s central role—imagined or otherwise—in maintaining order in the face of a Continental unrest, which was thought to be on the verge of spilling over into Britain.

Chartist writing presented a double bind for the mainstream press. While writing about Chartism seemed to fan popular unrest and thus seemed to work against the mitigating function of the press, failing to report on Chartist activity, for some contributors, threatened to make the unrest worse by attempting to contain it. The tendency of Jones’s poetry and especially his oratory, as published or reviewed in the Chartist *Northern Star*, was, according to the *New Quarterly Review*, “worse than democratic” in its aim to seize and redistribute all property.²⁹ It further asked, “Now do our journals act wisely in concealing these things from the public eye? . . . We think that there is a real and perhaps pressing danger, and that this danger must not only be revealed and commented on, but also grappled with.”³⁰ For the *Labourer*, however, this urgent and democratic poetic impulse had long since moved beyond the work of Chartist authors to influence the work of poets not explicitly linked to the movement for working-class rights. Beginning with Lord Byron and the earlier work of Robert Southey, a “democratic tendency” was shaping the poetry even of authors not “professedly democratic,” like the Brownings and Tennyson.³¹ Even avowedly democratic poets, however, tended to write either in an elaborate style or with a “forced simplicity” that obscured their message. Attempts to correct this tendency motivated the *Labourer’s* “National Literatures” feature, which reviewed Continental literature as an antidote to

the flaws of English poetry.³² In the pages of the *Labourer*, national and international political events had an intimate relationship to poetic form and strategy. For example, Russian poetry, written under the eye of the censor, necessarily expressed its political convictions in the “covered allegory, the dreamy abstraction, or the obscure lament.”³³ In this light, the obscurity or forced simplicity of English poetry seemed a part of national character and political circumstances. England’s “literary genius” falls “still-born from the press, because it is not tuned to the popular key.”³⁴ Exposure to the works of other countries, then, could work to counter a history of class division that had hampered the expressive powers of English poetry and might instead lead poets to “*elevate* and not endanger . . . the democratic character.”³⁵ This elevation, however, had long been at work in the national literary imagination and had already moved beyond the powers of the mainstream press to censor or contain it.

Waterloo coverage in the mid-Victorian press, then, had a complex relationship to accounts of Chartism and Continental unrest. The specter of the battle haunted contemporary accounts of Chartist activities and their violent potential and in so doing collapsed distinctions between questions of national defense inspired by revolutions across the Channel and the protests of Chartist demonstrators in Britain. *The Labourer* mines this complex Waterloo legacy as part of its internationalist call for worker solidarity. Its strategic deployment of miscellany draws on these images of Waterloo through patterns of repetition and variation, where poetry about agricultural labor and images of worldwide armed resistance follow treatises on the Land Plan and monthly reviews of popular uprisings in Ireland, on the Continent, and in the colonies. Through these patterns of echo and repetition, the *Labourer* puts forth its agenda for land reform while tacitly extending the possibility of an international armed resistance in which soldiers massed in the cause of national defense would turn instead on the cause of workers’ rights.

The Labourer

The Labourer reinvents Wellington and the events of Waterloo through a strategic use of repetition and refrain. For example, the 1847 opening issue reprints excerpts from Cook County magistrate Nicholas Cummins’s open letter to the Duke of Wellington on the famine in Ireland that had appeared in the *Morning Herald* and other papers the previous December.³⁶ This letter details the shocking scenes of hunger and poverty the magistrate witnessed first hand on his trip to Skibbereen. Excerpts from this letter appear immediately following Ernest Jones’s opening poem in the same issue titled “The Labourer; A Christmas Carol,” which describes a personified Famine entering a poor cottage at Christmas. When the father and husband of the

family visits a nearby estate to beg for food, he is shot by the guards and returns home to die in his cottage, his “Christmas for the poor” opposed to the bright, abundant Christmas at the wealthy estate.³⁷ Jones appends this poem with extracts from Cummins’s letter to Wellington, explaining how the poem only gives a “faint” illustration of the hunger-stricken scenes on the coast of Western Ireland detailed in Cummins’s account.³⁸ Jones closes by observing that the shipping news on the day of the letter’s publication reported oat harvests leaving Irish ports for destinations in England and Scotland but no arrivals of grain at those same ports.³⁹ Jones concludes both the poem and these extracts by inviting the reader to compare the shipping news with Cummins’s account of the famine. This explicit side-by-side comparison allows the reader to see the “condition of the people, and the worth of the government.”⁴⁰

These extracts from the letter to the Duke of Wellington reveal the *Labourer’s* larger drive to create unity in miscellany. The placement of these extracts under the closing verses of “The Labourer; A Christmas Carol,” about midway down the same page, merges the poem, the commentary, and the extracts into a single connotative entity. Thus, the three accounts of famine appear as variations on a theme rather than as discrete features (figure 1). The placement of subsequent features in the *Labourer* reinforces this notion of repetition through proximity and juxtaposition. Twelve pages later, a piece arguing for international cooperation when sending aid to Ireland once again references the open letter to Wellington. This same letter inspires the title and theme of a poem penned by a frequent contributor to Chartist periodicals, “Malcolm McGregor,” who was inspired to write after “Reading Mr. Cumming’s Letter to the Duke of Wellington.”⁴¹ The persistent, explicit appeals to this letter in the poetry and political commentary, as well as in Jones’s own commentary on the excerpts, invite readers to perceive repetition and thematic unity across the wide variety of genres in the paper’s miscellaneous format.

If Jones’s vision of an impoverished cottage in the vicinity of a wealthy landed estate underlines the *Labourer’s* sustained focus on the redistribution of land as a means to alleviate suffering and poverty, it also underlines the periodical’s strategy of distinguishing the dynastic tradition that had triumphed at Waterloo from the more equitable system of land ownership under O’Connor’s Land Plan. As the recurring “Insurrections of the Working Classes” feature amply demonstrates, land ownership was central to a long history of aristocratic oppression that depended on the alliance of church and state: “The church began the first encroachment on the landed power of the people. The aristocracy soon followed their example.”⁴² Returning to this imagined past, when the people owned land, and distinguishing this past from Conservative nostalgia for traditional hereditary power became the *Labourer’s* rhetorical mission, particularly in its refer-

6

Clung, like leaves of Autumn's serest,
 Wife and children to his side:
 He turned his last look on his dearest,
 And, thus sadly gazing, died.

Courage now no more dissembled
 Broken strength and baffled will:
 The wistful children stood and trembled,
 And the room grew very still.

Still in Leawood laughter loud
 Sped the dance athwart the floor;
That was Christmas for the Proud,
This was Christmas for the Poor.

In this Poem, the author has drawn but a faint picture of a poor man's Christmas, as will be seen by the following extracts from the public letter of Mr. Cummins, a magistrate of the County of Cork, to the Duke of Wellington, which was published in the *Morning Herald* and other journals of Tuesday, the 22nd of December last.

Mr. Cummins says, that,

"Having heard so much of the distress in the western parts of the county, I accordingly went on the 15th inst. to Skibbereen, and to give the instance of one townland which I visited, as an example of the state of the entire coast district, I shall state simply what I there saw. It is situate on the eastern side of Castlehaven harbour, and is named South Reen, in the parish of Myross. Being aware that I should have to witness scenes of frightful hunger, I provided myself with as much bread as five men could carry, and on reaching the spot I was surprised to find the wretched hamlet apparently deserted. I entered some of the hovels to ascertain the cause, and the scenes that presented themselves were such as no tongue or pen can convey the slightest idea of. In the first, six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearance dead, were huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering what seemed a ragged horsecloth, their wretched legs hanging about, naked above the knees. I approached in horror, and found by a low moaning they were alive—they were in fever, four children, a woman, and what had once been a man. It is impossible to go through the detail. Suffice it to say, that in a few minutes I was surrounded by at least two hundred of such phantoms, such frightful spectres, as no words can describe. By far the greater number were delirious, either from famine or from fever. Their demoniac yells are still ringing in my ears, and their horrible images are fixed upon my brain. My heart sickens at the recital, but I must go on.

"In another case, decency would forbid what follows, but it must be told. My clothes were nearly torn off in my endeavour to escape from the throng of pestilence around, when my neckcloth was seized from behind by a gripe which compelled me to turn. I found myself grasped by a woman with an infant just born in her arms, and the remains of a filthy sack across her loins—the sole covering of herself and babe. The same morning the police opened a house on the adjoining lands, which was observed shut for many days, and two frozen corpses were found, lying upon the mud floor, half devoured by the rats.

"A mother, herself in a fever, was seen the same day to drag out the corpse of her child, a girl about twelve, perfectly naked, and leave it half

Figure 1. Juxtaposition of items dealing with famine in the *Labourer* 1 (1847): 6.

ences to Waterloo and Wellington. A review of Archer Gurney's dramatic poem *King Charles the First* (1846), for example, finds fault with the work's tendency "to pourtray feudal royalty as the *beau ideal* of policy" and its failure to recognize that contemporary readers will find a "Washington more illustrious than a Wellington."⁴³ Additional references to republican movements and figures abroad underline the *Labourer's* commitment to land reform, as opposed to alternative movements for workers' rights that focused on reorganizing the industrial economy.⁴⁴ In the "Monthly Review" feature detailing unrest on the Continent and elsewhere, land proprietorship is consistently positioned as the primary means of gaining international momentum for workers' rights, while Feargus O'Connor's "A Treatise on Land" declared that land redistribution alone would save England from "bloody revolution."⁴⁵ Such pieces reinvented a landed tradition as a right multiplied the world over by laboring proprietors rather than as an elite privilege represented by figures such as Wellington.

The pastoral nature poetry featured in the *Labourer* echoes this reverence for the land and further insists on redistribution by contrasting bucolic rural scenes with the potentially inflammatory conditions of industrial labor. Ernest Jones's "The Factory Town" presents nature and the land as an antidote to the steamy, cramped conditions inside the factories—the "dungeons" where workers labored endlessly.⁴⁶ The poem presents these factory conditions as potential hotbeds for violent insurrection while simultaneously defusing this dangerous potential by extending a return to small land ownership:

Up in factory! Up in mill!
 Freedom's mighty phalanx swell:
 You have God and Nature still.
 What have they, but Gold and Hell.

Fear ye not your masters' power;
 Men are strong when men unite;
 Fear ye not one stormy hour:
*Banded millions need not fight.*⁴⁷

These verses simultaneously acknowledge the potential violence of the factory owners—the "masters' power"—while underlining the even greater force of united workers or the "*Banded millions*," who can organize and redirect themselves to take part in the "phalanx" of freedom in an otherwise pastoral natural world. However, even among the "corn-field's pleasant tillage" and the "orchard's rich domain," the potential for insurrection persists:

And cannon, bayonet, sword and shield,
 The implements of murder's trade,
 Shall furrow deep the fertile field,
 Converted into hoe and spade!⁴⁸

The implements—the cannon, the bayonet, and the sword—suggest the violent means by which the ruling classes might put down the working classes, but they also conjure the violent potential already implicit in the factory conditions that led the workers back to the land. The bayonets that melt into hoes and spades might just as easily change back into weapons. The switch to future tense in these lines reminds the reader that the fertile fields will be the outcome of laborers' successful mobilization, but this mobilization is conditional upon the successful attainment of the land. In "The Factory Town," land redistribution is an alternative to violence, but the vision of agricultural implements born from bayonets also reminds readers that force may be necessary if the land cannot be secured by more peaceful means. While the mainstream press invoked the violence of Waterloo as a necessary route to the preservation of elite privilege, the *Labourer* hints at violent insurrection as a potential avenue for workers to reclaim the land.

Jones's reference to the "*Banded millions*" suggests the universality of this vision of unity among workers and underlines the *Labourer's* belief in agrarian reforms as a route to improving workers' lives worldwide. The translation of the German poet Johann Ludwig Uhland's "Des Knaben Berglied," or "The Boy's Mountain Song," in the third volume of the *Labourer* echoes "The Factory Town" in its reverence for agrarian harmony, and it is even more overt in its emphasis on the potentially militant figure of the rustic. The speaker of the poem is a young shepherd, a "mountain boy" who sings his song in the hills alone by the "stream's maternal home" until he is summoned to action:

And, haply, when alarm-bells call
 And beacons burn on the mountains all;
 Then I descend and join the file,
 And swing my sword and sing the while—
 "I am the mountain boy!"⁴⁹

Following as it does upon four verses in which the boy is alone, innocent, and in the midst of contemplating mountain scenes, this last stanza creates a surprising twist in its turn to violence, alarms, and beacons. The closing vision of the solitary mountain boy descending to join the "file" implies the presence of other lone countryside fighters ready at a moment's notice to arm themselves and unite. Like "The Factory Town," this poem conjures the image of a quiet farming population with latent insurrectionary poten-

tial. Its presence in the pages of the *Labourer*—which regularly reported on the Continental uprisings of 1848—demonstrates the periodical's emphasis on the potential unity and power of combination among the underclasses worldwide.

An 1848 piece in the *Labourer* titled "Our National Defences" further draws on debates about national defenses and Continental revolutions and links them to a plan for workers' rights: "They laugh at the idea of our weavers, our emaciated mechanics and artisans, our half-starved labourers, resisting the French grenadiers. . . . True! we admit that THESE NATIONAL DEFENCES have been 'neglected.'"⁵⁰ For the *Labourer*, the solution to the question of military resources was not to tax the people but to give them their own land to defend, abolish the injustices of factory labor, extend the franchise, and train them to use arms.⁵¹ At the same time, the *Labourer* was quick to note that the threat of a French invasion was moot, as people worldwide were beginning to resist the powers of kings. The first stirrings of a French invasion would leave Paris ready to found a "republic" where it had been left a "kingdom."⁵² The inadequacy of increased military defenses to match the strength and inevitable success of republican movements, moreover, was complicated by the potential for standing armies to resist the hereditary governments that assembled them. A report on the 1848 revolution in France, "A Lesson to Tyrants," quoted at the outset of this article, observed that a growing tendency for some army members to refuse to act against demonstrators was a key development in the call for people's rights:

[The armies] are the sons of the people—and they are feeling it. In Paris a great portion of the army refused to act against the people; in Naples, when the commandant was ordered to fire on the unarmed masses, he refused, and said he could never order his troops to fire on their brothers, nor would they do it. The same will, probably, be found to be the case in Belgium—and Bakounine has informed us, that even in the Russian army, ay! in its very guards, the seeds of democracy are flourishing.⁵³

In addition to revising the legacy of Waterloo, this image of a resistant standing army helped to reinforce the *Labourer's* vision of an international solidarity in which a pattern of standing armies across the Continent might act in service of the people rather than against them, a pattern the *Labourer* predicted would emerge in the case of the Belgian and Russian armies as well.⁵⁴

Ernest Jones's poem "The March of Freedom," which also appeared in 1848, draws on the untapped potential of armies worldwide to serve the cause of workers' rights. The opening verse envisions armies across nations gathering forces for this single cause:

The nations are all calling,
 To and fro, from strand to strand;
 Uniting in one army
 The slaves of every land.

Lopsided thrones are creaking,
 For “loyalty” is dead;
 And common sense is speaking
 Of honesty instead.⁵⁵

This vision of a worldwide army co-opts the language of slavery in order to raise the specter of insurrection while at the same time locating the source of this uprising in a healthy affective shift away from the deference associated with a decaying hereditary order.⁵⁶ The poem further represents this transition in the personified figure of Freedom who wanders from Rome, through Russia, and across the Continent finally to alight in Britain. As the figure of Freedom walks through different nations, the poem recounts the history of popular unrest in each locale and calls for those violent pasts to remake themselves into the sanctioned cause for the people’s rights:

Blow, breezes of La Vendée,
 Mistuned by brave Charette!
 Ring, thunders of Napoleon,
 To nobler music set!

March, old imperial soldiers,
 But march in better cause,
 And bear the blade of tyrants
 To fight in Freedom’s wars.⁵⁷

In keeping with the *Labourer’s* broader reinvention of the Napoleonic Wars and Waterloo in the service of international workers’ rights, “The March of Freedom” refashions Napoleon’s military prowess and his legendary army as harbingers of the “better cause” of worldwide liberty for the underclasses. This is a reinvented Napoleonic legacy, one that echoes an earlier assertion in the *Labourer’s* regular installment of historical fiction, “Romance of a People,” in which the narrator declares that the “second romance of our century” will be the “romance of a *people*, as Napoleon’s had been the romance of a *man*.”⁵⁸ In place of the military hero’s singular ascent is a more inclusive vision of a united people rising; at the same time, the use of force as a necessary final resort is always lurking behind this vision through the presence of united workers and potentially disobedient standing armies.

The repetition of these images of Waterloo and Napoleon, along with the echoing threat of standing armies conveyed in poems and prose pieces throughout the *Labourer*, works to reimagine the legacy of the violent Napoleonic Wars as a potential last resort for the workers' cause worldwide. These repetitions also distance the Land Plan from the symbolic triumph of the aristocratic hierarchy at Waterloo under Wellington. If these visions of a worldwide army constitute a radical remaking of the battle's legacy in the service of Chartist internationalism, they also tend to bracket or collapse the particular political and historical contingencies of the different nations and regions they address. For example, one poetry review in the *Labourer* claimed that the "language of liberty is the same all over the world," and this sameness is symbolically enacted by the personified figure of Freedom in her sojourn across the Continent in "The March of Freedom."⁵⁹ As Greg Vargo and Pamela Gilbert have both observed, this internationalist perspective flattens out local and historical differences. Gilbert identifies this as a tendency "to level particularity in the service of an overarching bourgeois ideal of liberal universalism."⁶⁰ To some extent, the *Labourer's* repeated motifs of Wellington and Waterloo as stand-ins for the potential violence of the international movement work to formalize this universalism, mimicking in its iterations of repetition and sameness that larger ideological tendency to read popular uprisings abroad in terms of domestic unrest.

Alternatively, we might read the *Labourer's* use of repetition and refrain as a strategic engagement with the mainstream Victorian press's own conflation of domestic and international unrest. By mining contemporary fears about standing armies and the worldwide mobilization of workers—fears that hearkened back to the lingering legacy of Napoleon, Wellington, and Waterloo as much as they reflected anxieties about national defense and the 1848 revolution in France—the *Labourer* works to push for the extension of the franchise and the enactment of the Land Plan. In this way, poetic and rhetorical repetition—a repetition underscored by the topical sameness of different revolutions in its periodical poetry—worked to make visual and concrete a potential unity that was rhetorically silenced in the mainstream Victorian press and that would be physically silenced in the demonstration at Kennington Common. Together, these strategies worked to conjure the specter of the rural militia in order to push for land distribution, a refashioned Waterloo legacy that worked in the service of a Chartist and internationalist vision of united laborers, rather than dynastic, hereditary power.

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NOTES

1. Jones, "Annual Banquet of the German Democratic Society for the Education of the Working Classes," in Saville, *Ernest Jones*, 92.
2. *Ibid.*, 94.
3. For more on Chartist internationalism, see, for example, Scheckner's *Anthology of Chartist Poetry*, 49–53; Finn's *After Chartism*, 27–33; and Chase's *Chartism*, 286–93. For Chartist debates on moral versus physical force, see Vanden Bossche, *Reform Acts*, 31–35, and "On Chartism." Taylor discusses Jones's physical-force Chartism in *Ernest Jones*, 107–8.
4. "Lesson to Tyrants," 142. I am working with digitized editions of the journal that have been bound into annual volumes; citations are thus given by volume number and year.
5. There is no definitive evidence of authorship for any of the pieces, but scholars are in general agreement that O'Connor contributed the Land Plan pieces and that Jones contributed most of the others. See Taylor, *Ernest Jones*, 92 and 128, and Chase, "The Labourer," 339–40. There is an extensive body of critical work on the Chartists and the Land Plan. See, for example, Chase, *Chartism*, 247–54, and Vanden Bossche, *Reform Acts*, 73–125.
6. See Taylor, *Ernest Jones*, 92, and Airey, "Feargus O'Connor," 106–7.
7. "Preface," n.p.
8. "March of Freedom," 107.
9. For more on the Kennington Common demonstration, see Chase, *Chartism*, 300–303. For more on the Chartists' use of the mass demonstration as a political strategy, see Plotz, *Crowd*, 127–53, and Vanden Bossche, *Reform Acts*, 34–35.
10. Gilbert, "History and Its Ends," 34. See also Vargo's "Outworks of the Citadel," 235.
11. "Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo," 115.
12. "Foreign Events of the Month," 272; "Waterloo Banquet," 8.
13. Sinnema, *Wake of Wellington*, 11.
14. "Maxims and Opinions," 286.
15. "Chartism," 590.
16. *Ibid.*, 591.
17. "Duke of Wellington," front page. Wellington's 1847 letter on strengthening national defenses was published in the press, and its strong wording made the duke seem to be wildly exaggerating. See Partridge, "Wellington," 257–59.
18. "Battle of Waterloo," 390.
19. See, for example, the summary of these arguments in "Battle of Waterloo," 505–18.
20. "Waterloo Humbug," 107.

21. "Visit of an American Gentleman," 31.
22. See Vanden Bossche, *Reform Acts*, 32–33.
23. "Conservative Yearnings," 34. Allison details the poem's now largely forgotten publication and reception and shows how the privately printed, controversial first version of the poem sought to fan insurrection. See "Importance of *Ernest*," 285–311.
24. "Conservative Yearnings," 34.
25. *Ibid.*
26. For the relationship between Chartist poetry and politics, see, for example, Sanders, *Poetry of Chartism*, 1–37.
27. "Revolutions in Europe," 651.
28. *Ibid.*
29. "Ernest Jones's Chartist Lyrics," 523.
30. *Ibid.*
31. "Literary Review: Ebenezer Jones," 236.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, 240.
34. *Ibid.*, 239.
35. *Ibid.*, 237.
36. Jones, "The Labourer; A Christmas Carol," 6. This letter is not given a separate title but rather is reprinted directly beneath Jones's poem.
37. "Labourer," 6.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, 7.
41. "Ireland," 19; "Following Lines," 39. Keane notes that the identity of Malcolm McGregor, a contributor to Chartist periodicals, remains unclear; he appears to have been a radical thinker from Scotland. See his "Chartist Land Plan," 327 and n3, on the same page.
42. "Insurrections of the Working Classes," 14. Taylor discusses Jones's preference for rural, distant settings as part of his version of class struggle in which contemporary oppression was part of a long history of similar violations of an original state of equality. I would add that these visions of a romantic past were also strategic echoes of the *Labourer's* broader aims to distinguish the Land Plan from the hereditary ownership of land. See *Ernest Jones*, 91–95.
43. "Literary Review," 95, 96.
44. Saville notes that this failure to deal with the industrial economy eventually contributed to the downfall of Chartism. See Saville, *Ernest Jones*, 24.
45. See, for example, "Monthly Review," 88–91, and O'Connor, "Treatise on the Land," 153.
46. Jones, "Factory Town," 49.
47. *Ibid.*, 51.

48. Ibid., 52.
49. "Boy's Mountain Song," 168.
50. "Our National Defences," 45.
51. Ibid., 44-48.
52. Ibid., 48.
53. "Lesson to Tyrants," 142.
54. Ibid.
55. "March of Freedom," 103.
56. Mays addresses the Chartists' appropriation of the language of slavery in "Slaves in Heaven."
57. "March of Freedom," 107.
58. "Romance of a People," 81.
59. "Literary Review: Ebenezer Jones," 240.
60. Gilbert, "History and Its Ends," 34. Vargo's "Outworks of the Citadel of Corruption" also notes this Chartist tendency to overlook some aspects of colonial power structures as well as to "elide internal divisions in indigent society" in its reporting on the colonies (235).

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