

“NO PITY – I CLAIM ONLY JUSTICE”: RADICAL MEMORY OF THE PETERLOO MASSACRE
AMONG THE
ENGLISH WORKING CLASS, 1819-1848

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On Monday, August 16, 1819, tens of thousands of working men, women and children gathered at St. Peter’s Fields in Manchester to demand parliamentary reform, universal male suffrage and equal representation. Protests and demands for such a program had been common throughout the period of hardship, poverty and high unemployment in England that followed demobilization at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Meetings with attendances in the thousands or even the tens of thousands were called at Spa Fields in London in 1816 and in Manchester in 1817 amid talk of attempts to overthrow the government and imprison or even kill the king, even among the organizers of the meetings.¹ In all cases the authorities had sought to disperse the crowds, and indeed no meaningful revolutionary action actually took place. At Manchester in August 1819, however, the military attacked the crowd with unprecedented violence. While radical speakers stood addressing the 40,000-60,000 attendees from the platform, the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry cavalry rode into the crowd on horseback, trampling and sabering eighteen to death and seriously injuring nearly 700, including many women and children.² The organizers and speakers were swiftly arrested. Then, fearing a French-style revolution, Britain’s Tory government began to repress the movement for parliamentary reform through its Six Acts, which together increased taxes on newspapers to put them beyond the reach of the masses, regulated the content of newspapers and other publications,

sped up trials of those accused of seditious crimes and effectively banned most radical meetings. The massacre was quickly given the name Peterloo, a portmanteau of its location, St. Peter's Fields, and the Battle of Waterloo, out of which Britain had emerged victorious over Napoleon just four years earlier, such was the potency of the mental imagery of the massacre that stuck in the minds of attendees and those who later heard or read about what had happened. During the following three decades, Peterloo would be placed at the center of the mythology of the British movement for parliamentary reform. Recollections of the massacre in the following decades would be especially prominent among Chartists, members of a radical working-class movement named for its People's Charter which emerged in 1837 and remained active throughout the 1840s. The charter was a document signed by millions of people which demanded universal male suffrage, equal parliamentary districts, payment of Members of Parliament and other democratic reforms, echoing the demands of the Peterloo marchers from 1819.

While Chartism drew on a rich collective memory of Peterloo right from its beginnings in the mid-1830s, the foundations for this memory were laid much earlier by radicals in the immediate aftermath of the massacre in 1819 and 1820. They wasted no time in actively channeling popular outrage at the massacre into a powerful political challenge to authority, appealing to the widespread sense of injustice at the hands of a despotic state that violated its subjects' sacred rights with impunity. In his plea to the judge in his trial for unlawful and seditious assembly in 1820, Samuel Bamford, one of the speakers at Peterloo and a popular reformer who had led the delegation from the Lancashire town of Middleton to the rally, wrote:³

“I am a reformer . . . I shall always use my utmost endeavors to promote parliamentary reform by peaceful means, but although I am not an enemy to the principle, I am not going to sacrifice every feeling. I am not a friend to blood but after what has taken place at Manchester, I can hardly confine my expressions . . . I want only justice – no pity – I claim only justice.”

Bamford did not go on to become a Chartist, but his plea warned the authorities that Peterloo could have a radicalizing effect on working people, just like it had had on him. His determination to avenge the massacre would be reflected over the following decades by radicals, reformers and Chartists organizing their huge campaign of meetings, petitions, rallies, marches and strikes. While both Chartism and the Peterloo Massacre itself have been the subject of a great deal of scholarship, this paper explores specifically the ways in which Peterloo was memorialized, mythologized and manipulated by the working-class reformers, including Chartists, to buttress their justifications for their political program and to rally support to their cause, as well as to remember the dead. The Manchester historian Terry Wyke argued indisputably that memory of Peterloo “waxed and waned” over time, while labor historian Joseph Cozens has concluded convincingly that periods during which memory of Peterloo was exhibited frequently coincided with periods of increased class conflict in Britain.⁴ This paper builds on these findings and argues further that memory of Peterloo and its uses to Chartism did not just result from class tensions but helped to facilitate them too. Increased understanding of class antagonism between working people and the state and the exploitative classes that they faced gave this memory a historically significant, causal role in later radical activity, not just a backdrop that mirrored it. Peterloo became a powerful, totemic element of a new collective memory, playing a major role in what the leading radical historian E. P. Thompson called the ‘making’ of English work-

ers into an active class, as opposed to a passive category of people, through common experience and antagonism toward oppressors.⁵ To the factory laborers of northern England and beyond, Peterloo felt like an unforgettable, unforgivable crime committed against them by ‘Old Corruption,’ a loose group which included a corrupt clique of Tory aristocrats in government and, increasingly, the upper-class economic exploiters of ordinary people.

Reaction to Peterloo and early memory, 1819-1820

Invoking the memory of Peterloo was not just a tactic for reformers to rally support to their cause decades after the event. The trials of Samuel Bamford, Henry Hunt and the other arrestees from Peterloo at the York Assizes in 1820 were one of the first instances of reformers weaponizing notions of martyrdom and unjust politically motivated persecution for radical political ends, a pattern that would continue from the aftermath of the massacre through the following decades and into the Chartist movement. The Peterloo Massacre channeled the energy from a mass movement for political reform into a crusade for justice for both the victims and those accused of political crimes, according to Robert Poole: “Each trial was a stage upon which to broadcast publicly the violent conduct of the magistrates and the troops . . . and so to vindicate the cause of reform.”⁶ Reformers seized these opportunities. Hunt contended in his defense that the authorities had intended all along to inflict casualties upon the attendees of the meeting using their “newly sharpened sabers” (in preparation for a premeditated attack) without attempting to disperse them peacefully first.⁷ Denouncing his accusers as liars, Hunt claimed that they were “perfectly aware that no riot-act was read; and when the contrary was asserted, it was a false and scandalous report to prejudice the public mind.”⁸ In this single denunciation of the Manchester magistrates, the cavalry

and the court in which they were being tried, Hunt accused the state of premeditated murder, flagrant violation of long-established laws and rights and of perjury. Radical criticism of the government was therefore quite conservative, taking a legalistic tone that cited violations of existing rights rather than an idealistic one that might have attacked the authorities as a backward, repressive obstacle to an imagined egalitarian society for the future. Having indicted the state and its agents in this language of criminality, reformers juxtaposed these crimes with the innocence of those who had been killed. For example, Hunt examined the Reverend Robert Hindmarsh as a witness who, while present, did not take place in the rally at St. Peter’s Fields. “I considered,” said Hindmarsh, “that I was perfectly secure under the protection of the laws, while the people remained in a state of tranquillity [sic]; therefore, thought I might remain upon the ground with safety. I saw nothing upon the ground which altered this impression. I everywhere heard congratulations on the peaceable complexion and character of the meeting, and everyone hoped it would terminate quietly.”⁹ The non-combative characterization of the victims and the expectation among attendees that the rally would conclude peacefully made its violent and forcible conclusion by the cavalry seem all the more appalling and illegal.

Hunt, Bamford and most of their associates did end up being found guilty of “assembling with unlawful banners an unlawful assembly, for the purpose of moving and inciting the liege subjects of our Sovereign Lord the King to contempt and hatred of the Government and Constitution of the realm.”¹⁰ However, the trial was still a “disaster” for the authorities, according to Poole, not least because the defendants were convicted on only one count out of seven.¹¹ Indeed, even that verdict was not returned clearly as the judge extrapolated from the jury’s ambiguous findings to find the defendants guilty.¹² Furthermore, as Joseph Cozens has noted,

Hunt made great political capital out of his post-conviction imprisonment at Ilchester jail and used the time to live up to his nickname as the great ‘Orator,’ churning out vast amounts of literature addressed directly to his many followers that portrayed the victims of Peterloo as political martyrs.¹³ He did use his platform to embellish his own role at the center of the rally, calling his own incarceration “a deadly blow . . . aimed at your rights and liberties,” but Hunt’s writing was certainly rousing in its attack on the injustice of the massacre.¹⁴ He begins the first volume of his memoirs with an account a meeting of tens of thousands, assembled “in the most peaceable and orderly manner” being ‘assailed’ by the yeomanry “without the slightest provocation or resistance on the part of the people.”¹⁵ Addressing readers as his “brave, patient and persecuted friends,” he asserts that his account is a “strict relation of facts.”¹⁶ This dense passage, published mere months after Peterloo, again juxtaposed legitimate, peaceful reformers and the barbaric, criminal yeomanry authorized to do the bidding of the authorities. It also supports Cozens’ finding that Hunt was among the earliest to confer the politicized status of martyrs upon the victims since Hunt linked their deaths to the political platform they supported.¹⁷ Their deaths were not accidental or unpreventable, according to Hunt, they were part of the state’s deliberate and harsh resistance to their modest demands.¹⁸



An 1819 print of the Peterloo Massacre by George Cruikshank titled *The Massacre of Peterloo or Britons Strike Home*. The cavalry carries bloodied sabers and a portly soldier instructs his men “Down with ‘em! Chop ‘em down my brave boys . . . remember the more you kill the less poor rates you’ll have to pay, so go at it, Lads, show your courage & your Loyalty [to the King].” This linking of violence with ‘loyalty’ to the authorities and miserly ratepayers who would sooner see workers die than bear the cost of alleviating their suffering was typical of how many people understood the massacre.

The foundations for a lasting collective memory of Peterloo were laid during the months immediately following the massacre. The trials of those arrested gave the reformers a platform from which they could defiantly accuse the authorities in person of acting illegally, and their convictions constituted further evidence of wrongful persecution. The reformers on trial for their role in organizing the rally at St. Peter’s Fields began to translate a reactive and emotional public response to the massacre in its immediate aftermath into a movement for justice, both for the dead and for the cause of reform. Published literature reflected intense fury

at the authorities about the massacre. The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, husband of Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*, issued a rousing call to action in his famous poem *The Mask of Anarchy*: “Rise like Lions after slumber, In unvanquishable number . . . Ye are many - they are few.”¹⁹ Even Shelley, however, was not as successful as the informal radical press at conjuring up feelings of rage across England. Popular literature that mirrored fury at the bloodshed was churned out rapidly in the aftermath of the massacre, months before the trials of Hunt, Bamford and the other organizers began at York. This literature articulated sheer rage and vengefulness at what had happened rather than pursuing political ends or on conferring the status of political martyrdom upon the victims. One fascinating broadside ballad published at the end of 1819 recounts the attendees of a lawful meeting being “slain” by “Our enemies so cruel regardless of our woes . . . Look forward with this hope that every murderer in this land may swing upon a rope . . . soon Reform shall spread around.”²⁰ Amid this tense atmosphere, people took matters into their own hands, demonstrating that the rhetoric of the radical press influenced (or at the very least mirrored) public feeling. In late 1819, tens of thousands marched in solidarity with the ‘Manchester sufferers’ across the North at Newcastle and Leeds, even collecting donations for a relief fund.²¹ Almost one month to the day after the massacre, Manchester theatre-goers chanted ‘Peterloo!’ at military officers in the audience, denounced them as murderers and flung missiles at them when they demanded that the band play *God Save the King*, then a loyalist song and now the British national anthem.²² Five months later in February 1820, the authorities arrested and then executed a group of radicals plotting to assassinate the entire British cabinet and the Prime Minister Lord Liverpool. They had been encouraged and then set up by a police spy, but the willingness of the Cato Street conspirators, as they were known, to follow through with the plot shows the

strength of feeling in the radical movement in the months after Peterloo. Some historians like E. P. Thompson have argued that England was close to revolution at the end of 1819 while others like Malcolm Chase have disputed this.²³ What is clear, however, is that Peterloo was a key grievance driving those who participated in the wave of political action in 1819 and 1820, whether or not they seriously threatened to push Britain into revolution. In sum, the reaction to Peterloo and its endorsement by the authorities was immediate. The trials of Hunt, Bamford and others gave leading radicals an additional platform from which to direct this existing public reaction and nurture it further into a perception of the dead as political martyrs.

“The decade of the silent revolution”

Along with the intensity of radical political agitation, such public exhibitions of memory of Peterloo died down in late 1820. The Six Acts, passed in response to the agitation after Peterloo to ban meetings and tax newspapers, seemed to catch up with radicals. With improving economic conditions from 1820 - the price of wheat fell to half its 1819 price by January 1822 - there was less anger for radicals to appeal to.²⁴ Physical expressions of memory of Peterloo became rarer, but not until the end of 1820. During the intervening summer, Oldham crowds taunted soldiers that their new uniforms would be their last and the Yorkshire yeomanry complained of daily insults in the streets.²⁵ When two members of the Manchester yeomanry were assaulted they requested a lenient sentence for their assailant, fearing further reputational damage to their regiment.²⁶ The first anniversary of Peterloo was also commemorated across Lancashire: a procession marched to St. Peter’s Fields, more than 3,000 met at Royton and ceremonies were held at working towns like Ashton-Under-Lyne.²⁷ However, this agitation died down as the year ended,

and the attitude of the authorities was summed up by a December letter from Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary who presided over Peterloo, to the Viceroy of India: “The prospect [of keeping the peace in England] . . . is improving; and I have no doubt the storm will be weathered,” despite “numberless points of difficulty.”²⁸

While it is true that the decade was comparatively calmer, scholars should remember that, as E. P. Thompson noted, these years saw a struggle for freedom of the press and trade unions; it was “the decade of the silent insurrection,” as another historian put it.²⁹ Thompson argues that, having experienced both the Industrial Revolution and the defeat of popular radicalism in 1819 and 1820, working people became conscious of their class interests and the antagonisms they faced, even if English politics seemed to be calmer for most of this period.³⁰ Nevertheless, there were some exhibitions of memory of Peterloo before the Chartist movement erupted from 1837. 60,000 were reported to have marched into Manchester with Hunt around Peterloo’s anniversary during the Reform Crisis in 1830.³¹ Recollections of Peterloo were comparatively and surprisingly uncommon at this point, and the first Chartist agitation was still some years away. The massacre was not therefore forgotten. Instead, many people came to understand a struggle between the laboring masses and ‘Old Corruption,’ a conflict that came to a head at Peterloo, even if these people did not take matters into their own hands during periods of relative calm as often as they had done in 1819 and 1820. It was to these growing understandings of class politics that the Chartist movement of the 1830s appealed. Memory of Peterloo lay dormant in many ways during the 1820s. Its memory was not commonly expressed in public, but the massacre was certainly not consigned to history, as the events of the 1830s would show.

The Chartist ascendancy, 1838-1848

To Chartists, Peterloo represented the ultimate physical manifestation of the class conflict that dominated the social and economic relations of nineteenth-century Britain. They attempted to consolidate the raw experience of class conflict into a better, if not perfect, understanding of class and antagonistic social relations, restoring Peterloo’s status as an iconic, formative event that workers should commemorate, politicize and, most importantly, actively avenge and act upon rather than simply remember. Robert Hall’s study of Ashton-Under-Lyne, a mill town near Manchester, has shown the ways in which Chartists developed and publicly formulated a new history of ‘the people’ through a diverse array of exhibited history.³² They placed Peterloo at the front and center of this new history, he argues, reinforcing the tendency of workers to see the massacre through the lens of class conflict.³³ Disseminating radical publications widely was one way in which Chartists appealed to both class antagonism and to dormant but still powerful memories of Peterloo. After the tax placed on newspapers by the Six Acts were reduced from four-pence to just a penny in 1836, radical Chartist newspapers like the *Northern Star* entered circulation.³⁴ Many unstamped and therefore tax-exempt and low-cost publications, which by law could not publish news and instead offered radical opinions, were circulated widely and offered rousing polemics which denounced the “genteel idlers who flutter and fatten on the toil of the toilers,” and cited acts of state violence like Peterloo as evidence that the entire state and the British elite would resist even peaceful attempts by workers to improve their own lives.³⁵ Print culture was only one way in which Chartists preached their history of martyrdom and struggle. Although roughly two-thirds of men were literate by 1840, millions were still beyond the reach of Chartist ideas, especially as the literacy rate was naturally lower among working men than among the population at large.³⁶ Oral culture was

therefore at least as important as literature. An 1840 broadside ballad printed in Preston, a Lancashire town roughly thirty miles from Manchester with a large Chartist presence, called on Britons to be “firm and unite . . . While cowards-despots, long may keep in view and silent contemplate, the deeds on Peterloo.”³⁷ As Hall argues, singing political songs that called workers to action, either indoors at lectures or dinners or outdoors at mass-platform gatherings, was typical of the way in which Chartists used accessible, oral and public forms of history to encourage awareness of a history of the working class as embattled masses standing in opposition to exploitative classes, upholding and memorializing events including and in particular Peterloo.³⁸ The repeated appearance of recollections of the massacre in Chartist histories shows that it played a key role in appealing on the grounds of common history, interests and enemies to the millions of working people who participated in the Chartist movement in some form whether through political action like meetings, petitions, rallies, strikes or recreational or educational events like dinners or lectures.³⁹



The large Chartist meeting at Kennington Common in London, 1848. The meeting took a similar platform format to the Peterloo meeting of 1819.

It is true that, while Chartists saw Peterloo as a crime committed by an oppressive class against an oppressed class, they never really clarified who comprised either class beyond this simple distinction.⁴⁰ Chartists explained the actions of the cavalry at Peterloo as arising from its role as the servile puppet of the oppressive classes, carrying out the will of ‘Old Corruption’ with brute force. Gareth Stedman Jones has rightly called this approach “totalizing” as it takes into account violent episodes like Peterloo but not liberalizing reforms that alleviated poverty or sickness.⁴¹ There was indeed virtually no discussion of ruling or middle classes in a socio-economic sense, only a rudimentary understanding of a ‘them’ standing in opposition to an ‘us,’ so precisely who the real criminal was at Peterloo was never really articulated with any real clarity. Many attacked ‘Old Corruption,’ ‘despots’ or ‘idlers’ for ills like poverty or repressive state violence against reform movements like that of Peterloo, but these terms stayed vague and could be weaponized against anyone from Members of Parliament to local magistrates, from factory owners to landowners and from Whigs to Tories. Chartism can therefore be criticized for having a political program but only a far more rudimentary social one. Still, this ambiguity does not mean that Chartist understandings of class were without meaning. In the case of Peterloo, a narrative of a criminal act committed by them against us was emotionally powerful enough to appeal to workers resentful of their own material situation and the treatment of their contemporaries at the hands of the Manchester yeomanry. It did not have to be socio-economically or intellectually coherent to arouse strong feelings and appeal to class consciousness. Cozens’ conclusion that Peterloo was most powerfully recalled at moments of class conflict such as the rise of the Chartist movement af-

ter 1837 therefore makes a great deal of sense.⁴² Understanding its power to arouse class antagonism among workers, Chartists injected fresh energy into the memory of Peterloo through raw and emotional if ill-defined appeals to class antagonism. These were incorporated into rituals, oral and written culture and political agitation in order for Chartists to position themselves as the heirs of the Peterloo martyrs to whom working people felt attached by their common victimhood, common history and common socio-economic position.

Conclusion

There were indeed periods between 1819 and 1848 when memory of Peterloo was demonstrated less commonly, but there were also periods when such demonstrations were very common and took on politicized characteristics, especially through the perception of the victims as martyrs. These characteristics gave memory of Peterloo a causal role in the contentious or even revolutionary political atmosphere of 1819-20 and in the revitalization of radical movements in the 1830s. Exhibitions of memory were often public and either physical or oral, but written culture did play an important role in influencing and reflecting these exhibitions while also keeping the massacre fresh in the memory. Furthermore, the formative effect of both the Peterloo Massacre itself and the popular understanding of it on the working-class psyche made its memory indelible, even during politically calmer periods. Memory of Peterloo could be called upon at particular times by different groups, as it was in isolated instances like anniversaries during the 1820s and during the ascendancy of Chartism. What did unite popular memory of Peterloo across the period was its class aspect. It had a sharply polarizing effect on British society, as working people increasingly understood themselves as standing in opposition to some kind of

ruling, exploitative class, if not a clearly delimited and expli- cable ruling class, and the state it used to support its own in- terests through oppression and coercion at the expense of the laboring masses. There was little understanding of anything in between these two extremes, but as far as Peterloo was concerned there did not need to be. The ability of memory of the massacre to arouse political and emotional responses from working people arose from an uncomplicated antago- nism toward an upper class of people which workers believed to have violently attacked people just like them at Peterloo. Working people felt that they, and any attempt by them to stand up for themselves, were held in the utmost contempt by both the government and the corrupt, exploitative classes of people it represented and in whose name it acted with such violence. Peterloo was compelling evidence of unjust oppres- sion experienced by ordinary people on a daily basis. It was also a formative experience in the molding of the nineteenth- century working class and the political program large sec- tions of it would champion. It could not be swiftly forgotten, and it was certainly not forgiven.

Notes

¹ Robert Poole, “French revolution or peasants’ revolt? Petitioners and rebels in England from the Blanketeers to the Chartists,” *Labour History Review* 74, no. 1 (2009), 6; *Ibid.*, 17.

² The true number of attendees is the subject of debate. For an examination of the different estimates, see Robert Poole, *Peterloo: The English Uprising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 360; *Ibid.*, 374-375.

³ National Archives, “Samuel Bamford,” accessed January 9, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/protest-democracy-1818-1820/samuel-bamford/>.

⁴ Terry Wyke, “Remembering the Manchester Massacre,” *Manchester Region History Review* 23 (2012), 131; Joseph Cozens, “The Making of the Peterloo Martyrs, 1819 to the Present,” in *Secular Martyrdom in Britain and Ireland: From Peterloo to the Present*, ed. Keith Laybourn and Quentin Outram (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 33.

⁵ From the title of E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966).

⁶ Robert Poole, “What Don’t We Know About Peterloo?,” *Manchester Region History Review* 23 (2012), 17; *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷ Anon., *The Trial of Henry Hunt, Esq., [et al.] for an Alledged [sic] Conspiracy to Overturn the Government, &c* (London: T. Dolby, 1820), 160.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹¹ Poole, *Peterloo: The English Uprising*, 385.

¹² Anon., *The Trial of Henry Hunt*, 308.

¹³ Cozens, “The Making of the Peterloo Martyrs,” 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Henry Hunt, *The Memoirs of Henry Hunt, Esq. Written by Himself in his Majesty’s Jail at Ilchester*, vol. 1 (London: T Dolby, 1820), iii-iv.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, v.

¹⁷ Cozens, “The Making of the Peterloo Martyrs,” 37.

¹⁸ George Cruikshank, “The Massacre of Peterloo or Britons Strike Home” (1819), Wikimedia Commons, accessed April 3, 2020, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peterloo_Massacre.png.

¹⁹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, “The Mask of Anarchy” (1819), available at British Library, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/poetryperformance/shelley/poem3/shelley3.html>.

²⁰ Anon., “The Meeting at Peterloo” (1819), Johnson Ballads, University of Oxford Bodleian Library, Harding B 25 (1238) V17536.

²¹ Cozens, “Peterloo Martyrs,” 34.

²² *Morning Chronicle*, September 21, 1819, 2.

²³ Thompson, *The Making*, 673; Malcolm Chase, *1820: Disorder and Stability in the United Kingdom* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 1.

²⁴ In January 1819 wheat was above 80 s. per quarter-ton, whereas three years later it stood below 46 s. per quarter-ton. For more information see Élie Halévy, *The Liberal Awakening, 1815-1830*, trans. E. I. Watkin (1923; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), 107-110.

²⁵ Chase, *1820*, 170.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Liverpool Mercury*, August 25, 1820, 62.

²⁸ Lord Sidmouth to Warren Hastings, Viceroy of India, in *The Life and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth*, vol. III, ed. George Pellew (London: John Murray, 1847), 339.

²⁹ Thompson, *The Making*, 711; Gwyn A. Williams, *Rowland Detrosier: A Working-Class Infidel* (York: St. Anthony’s Press, 1965), 4.

³⁰ Thompson, *The Making*, 711.

³¹ *Morning Post*, August 23, 1830, 4. 60,000 seems an inflated figure, but it is safe to assume that the true figure was in the tens of thousands.

³² Robert G. Hall, “Creating a People’s History: Political Identity and History in Chartism, 1832-1848,” in Owen Ashton, Robert Fyson and Stephen Roberts, *The Chartist Legacy* (Woodbridge: Merlin Press, 1999), 234.

³³ Hall, “Creating a People’s History,” 243.

³⁴ *Hansard*, House of Lords debate, vol. 138, May 24, 1855, col. 954.

³⁵ *Chartist Circular*, October 31, 1840.

³⁶ W. B. Stephens, “Literacy in England, Scotland and Wales, 1500-1900,” *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1990), 555.

³⁷ Anon., “Peterloo” (Preston: Harkness, 1840), Johnson Ballads, University of Oxford Bodleian Library, Harding B 16 (203b) V17535.

³⁸ Hall, “Creating a People’s History,” 233-234.

³⁹ William Edward Kilburn, “View of the Great Chartist Meeting on Kennington Common” (1848), Wikimedia Commons, accessed April 3, 2020, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chartist_meeting_on_Kennington_Common_by_William_Edward_Kilburn_1848_-_restoration1.jpg.

⁴⁰ Hall, “Creating a People’s History,” 233.

⁴¹ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 177.

⁴² Cozens, “Peterloo Martyrs,” 33.