

13 Vigilant citizens

The case of the Volunteer Police Force, 1911–14*

Alessandro Saluppo

In the years preceding the First World War, the threat of organised labour fuelled fears of social disintegration and high levels of insecurity among conservative ranks.¹ At the same time, increasing jingoistic nationalism along with a growing deterioration in the international situation transmuted labour unrest into an expression of domestic disloyalty. Arguments about the future survival and prosperity of Britain gradually coalesced with a quest for public discipline.² These visions of orderliness provided the ideological framework for the emergence of a number of patriotic leagues, citizens' patrols and parapolice corps with the intention, or at least the ostensible intention, of assisting the police in the maintenance of law and order and in performing essential public services during major industrial disputes.³ Aside from newspaper reports, little is known about these private anti-labour associations. Questions regarding their formation and structuration, their organisational functioning and operational modes have remained for the most part unanswered or outrightly ignored. In an attempt to fill this void, this chapter retraces the case of the Volunteer Police Force (VPF). Founded on Trafalgar Day (21 October) in 1911 by picture frame dealer William Mailes Power and presided over by James Hamilton, 2nd Duke of Abercorn, the VPF may be interpreted as a paradigmatic manifestation of the propagation of vigilante behaviour in the Edwardian years. During the parliamentary debate on the 1923 Special Constables Act, the Liberal MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, Josiah Clement Wedgwood, declared:

I remember that it was before the War that the Citizen Defence Force (*sic*) first came into being, with his Grace the Duke of Abercorn as president and a son of Mrs. Humphrey (*sic*) Ward as one of the whippersin. They had their meeting in the Crystal Palace, and decided to break the strikes. They enrolled everyone who would come along . . . in order that when next the wicked working man rose up in his might and attempted to destroy civilization . . . they might be armed at every point to resist red revolution.⁴

His harking back to the short-lived and shadowy existence of the VPF was offered as an argument against the appointment of permanent special constabularies in peacetime and to warn parliament about the risks of fascist contagion in Britain.⁵

Wedgwood's reference to the Duke of Abercorn's organisation is not as surprising as it might seem. The foundation and conduct of the VPF had caused great alarm and clamour in the press on the eve of the First World War, and it is therefore highly plausible that its name still resonated in the memories of more than a few Labour MPs. Despite the great stir it made at the time, the story of the VPF, which took upon itself the role of protector of the social order and industrial discipline, has fallen into oblivion. The main purpose of this study, therefore, is to shed light again on this forgotten case of anti-labour mobilisation and, at the same time, to use its paradigmatic story to probe the social and political tensions that characterised Britain's pre-war years. Drawing on a vast array of archival and documentary sources, this chapter reconstructs the VPF's organisation, endowments, clientage, recruitment, governance and modes of action. It also analyses the intellectual justifications and motivations which underpinned it. In doing so, the intention is to reveal the disposition of certain social groups – from aristocratic castes to the upper middle classes – to both counter the rise of political and socio-economic deviance and lay to rest the spectre of socialism with violence. Enquiry into these pressures on the state's monopoly of the use of legitimate force serves to show the considerable support for organised self-defence lent by "respectable society" during the Great Labour Unrest (1911–14). The story of the VPF also serves to complexify the conventional assumption that the potential for organised political violence in mainland Britain was marginal or even non-existent before World War I.

Crisis of cohesion and the rise of vigilante behaviours

In 1912, journalist and science fiction writer John Twells Brex published *The Civil War of 1915*. The book, which had appeared in serial form in *The Sporting Times* prophesied the near-future uprising of working masses and Britain's descent into class war. For Twells and many of his contemporaries, the spectre of a general strike of wage-earners paralysing the whole machinery of production, culminating in social anarchy, revolution and the collectivisation of property, had been gradually transfigured into a psychological reality.⁶

Between 1910 and 1914, Britain was faced with a mass upsurge in labour militancy and strike waves. Something over 4,000 strikes involving about four million workers were recorded, while working days lost peaked to an annual total of over ten million. Over the same time span, trade union membership rose from about two million to 4.1 million.⁷ Among the most striking novelties of the "Great Unrest" was its "violent, unofficial and insurgent character".⁸ In the Cambrian stoppage of 1910 in South Wales, a fertile terrain for revolutionary syndicalist doctrines, violence was pervasive, as evidenced by frequent acts of sabotage on installations and equipment as well as attacks on non-union workers, the houses of mine managers and the property of magistrates. Violent clashes with the police at the Glamorgan Colliery in Llwyn-y-pia led to rioting in Tonypany.⁹

While the Cambrian dispute was dragging on, "the great outburst of 1911" commenced with a general strike of seamen and firemen in Southampton, which rapidly spread to most of the principal ports in the United Kingdom. Dockers in

peacetime and transport workers came out in solidarity with the seamen, virtually arresting the movement of cargo through the docks. The bitterness with which the strike was fought and the extent of the disruption it caused, lent plausibility to Elie Halevy's portrayal of the conflict as "nothing short of a revolutionary outbreak".¹⁰ Fierce battles between strikers and the police, arson, destruction of property, man-hunts against foreign strikebreakers and episodes akin to popular insurrection occurred in Hull, Glasgow, Manchester and Cardiff.¹¹ The high level of violence, which tainted the irenic image of Britain as an orderly and law-abiding society, terrified the affluent and middle classes.¹²

At the beginning of August, while the uproar associated with the dockworkers' and seamen's strike appeared to be subsiding, transport workers in other parts of the country went on strike. About 80,000 workers brought the Port of London to a standstill. From the beginning of August onwards, labour disruptions spread to the railways leading to the first national strike in that sector. At the end of a huge demonstration in Liverpool, troops opened fire on rioters killing two, an episode which became known as Bloody Sunday.¹³ A few days later, a crowd attacked a train driven by "blacklegs" in Llanelli; soldiers fired shots killing two men, and a violent explosion due to an arsonist setting fire to some trucks containing cylinders of detonators resulted in more deaths.¹⁴ Meanwhile, anti-Jew riots erupted in some Welsh mining towns.¹⁵

The disturbances in the summer of 1911, and later, shook the confidence of British society. *The Times* gloomily reported that:

we are assisting at the absolute decomposition of society into its elements, in the absence of settled principles, of sane direction, and of discipline of any shape or form. . . . There is no King in Israel and every man is a law unto himself.¹⁶

The contemporaneous Agadir crisis, the controversy over the powers of the Lords, the suffragettes' campaign, the mounting battle over Home Rule and the subsequent arming of Ulster made industrial disorders appear more ominous than they were.¹⁷

Predictably enough, fears of riots, strikes and bloodshed combined with perceived deficiencies in law enforcement resulted in the rise of vigilante attitudes and behaviours. During the 1911 London Dock Strike, the manager of Raphael's Refinery informed the Home Office that he had made

complete preparations against any attack on this place, that our men are fully armed and we shall not sit still and watch our property being looted as did the owners of property at Newport, Tonypandy, Hull, Manchester, Cardiff and other towns.¹⁸

London printing firms hired private guards, mostly former constables, to protect their premises.¹⁹ In Liverpool, in response to the transport strike in the summer of 1911, business and civil society representatives formed the Civic Service League

“to assist the authorities in preserving the health, safety and well-being of the City in time of need”.²⁰ By May 1913, about 2,500 volunteers had been trained to carry out electrical and steam engineering work, stoking, motor driving and medical services in case of an industrial emergency.²¹ Although the Civic Service League vowed to protect the general public from the effects of prolonged labour stoppages as its principal goal, it was essentially a “white collar” anti-labour organisation. In the meantime, “Provision Protection Committees” were formed in many parts of the country in anticipation of disorderly outbreaks and hooliganism arising from new strikes. “In every community”, controversial newspaper editor W. T. Stead wrote,

there may have to be organized a volunteer force of men willing and ready to take the places of strikers whose abstention from work threatens the whole community with the loss of the indispensable services of public utility represented by those who supply food, drink, light, sanitation, and the transmission of raw materials.²²

At the end of August 1911, *The Times* proposed the formation of “standing volunteer force corps” in each locality to carry on operating necessary public services in case of severe disturbances as a result of industrial disputes. Modelled on the *Frivilliga Skyddskåren*, a public security brigade which had helped break the Swedish General Strike of 1909, this national strikebreaking organisation was to assist in food supply and distribution, transport and shipping at times of serious unrest.²³ In the same period, the president of the Automobile Association and future ultra-conservative Home Office Secretary, William Joynson-Hicks, proposed the creation of a National Transport Service of “private motors” to mitigate the impact of transport strikes.²⁴ Similarly, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu suggested that motorists could be properly organised and deployed to limit the consequences of a general railway strike.²⁵ Such schemes for recruiting and mobilising volunteer labour were evidently attractive to the patriotic middle classes. Dismayed by the gravity of industrial unrest and its potential revolutionary escalation, many of them had already served as special constables during the summer strike crisis. In Liverpool, during the August riots, justices swore in 4,142 citizens, of which “over 1,200 did actual street duty in the disturbed areas”.²⁶ In London, many hundreds of volunteers proved “ready to take a baton” for the preservation of public peace and the protection of property.²⁷ The petit-bourgeois composition of the special constabulary helped exacerbate tensions.²⁸ “In 1911 we had Bluebottles on top of the meat vans”, Labour MP John Johns recalled, “they were special constables, and very special constables. They were not used to break the strike, but to break people’s heads”.²⁹

The government attempted to forestall such securitarian pressures by institutionalising them.³⁰ In mid-September 1911, the chairman of the Sheffield Watch Committee, Alfred Cattell, announced before the City Council that the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, was working hard to arrange the formation of a permanently organised special constabulary in the most populated cities to cope

with emergencies similar to those that had arisen during the transport strikes and to preclude the use of the military to repress civil disorders. The chairman praised the Home Office's scheme, pointing out that "the ordinary police forces were totally inadequate for the recent troubles", and to have a volunteer force ready for times of great stress could be a necessary arrangement to contain industrial unrest.³¹

While labour representatives expressed their legitimate concern over the strikebreaking nature of a civilian police force dedicated to the defence of property, the Home Office issued the seminal Circular 214312, a document that pressed police authorities to persist in the enrolment of special constables and to keep a classified register of trusted persons who could be mobilised to deal with future emergencies. The Home Secretary also suggested the creation of a two-tier police reserve: the First Police Reserve was to consist of men accustomed to military discipline and trained in the police or in the army, while the Second Police Reserve was to be made up of regular special constables. The proposed scheme for a new reserve police force, which came under severe criticism from municipal authorities as it would entail further cost to the taxpayer, was only systematised at the onset of the war and remained fundamentally unmodified until the end of World War II.³²

In London, a movement in support of a volunteer police force had earlier gained traction after the Chief Commissioner of Police, Edward Henry, recommended setting up a permanent register of citizens who would be available for Special Constable service in every borough.³³ In relation to this proposal, the future founder of the VPF, W. M. Power, who had offered to raise a company of special constable cyclists during the London Dock Strike, began making preparatory arrangements for the formation of a civilian police.³⁴ Power, who had joined the Queen's Westminster Volunteers as far back as 1874 and was the first attested member of the 16th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment, envisaged a national organisation of "volunteer police clubs" whose main purpose was to assist the regular police during emergencies arising from industrial disputes and to make local authorities independent of military aid in maintaining order and protecting life and property. These corps, organised in a decentralised structure, much on the lines of volunteer clubs and, at least initially, funded by private contributions, were to be subordinate to the Chief Commissioner and to Chief Constables. Volunteers had to take the special constable's oath and were provided with a badge or a warrant. Former Army and Navy servicemen, Territorials, professionals and youths in the quest for an "adrenaline rush" were expected to constitute the primary recruiting pool for the new organisation. Labour training and periods of drilling, including boxing, wrestling, gymnastics and athletics, were to be arranged for the members.³⁵

The proposal to form a civilian force, with no formal connection to the Special Constable scheme, attracted the suspicion of the Home Office. On 16 September, Churchill received a letter from Power, accompanied by a memorandum, in which the mission and objectives of the proposed Volunteer Police Force were outlined.³⁶ It specified that the formation of a "Volunteer Auxiliary Body" responded

to the desire of citizens not only to support the police in maintaining law and order during outbreaks of “industrial warfare”, but also to prevent a repetition of such occurrences. Power hoped to secure the cooperation, or at least the acquiescence, of the Home Office in establishing such a force. The Home Office declined to express any support whatsoever for a private body that unreservedly misconceived the Home Secretary’s recommendations apropos the organisation of police reserves under the control of public authorities. Furthermore, Churchill, who was preparing to switch offices with Reginald McKenna and move to the Admiralty, refused to meet Power and distanced himself from any possible association of his name with the movement.³⁷

Despite the government’s hostility, the VPF was set up. The Duke of Abercorn accepted to become its president, while a loose assemblage of right-wing conservatives, businessmen, financiers, clerics and other contemptuous opponents of the Liberal government, expressed public support for the new civilian body.³⁸ Power wrote on the eve of the inauguration of the VPF:

The government must do something. . . . The first instinct of man is “self-defence”. On to this civilization has grafted the great motto of “Peace”, while experience has shown us that the only method . . . that works smoothly is “be prepared”.³⁹

“England expects every man to do his duty”: the Volunteer Police Force⁴⁰

The Volunteer Police Force was established in London on Trafalgar Day, 1911. For the inaugural meeting, which was held in the central transept of the Crystal Palace, the Victorian opera diva Emma Albani had consented to sing “Home Sweet Home” and “God Save the King”. Other noted artists of the time, including Violet Oppenshaw, Walter Hedgcock, Dalton Baker and Herbert Godfrey, were also engaged for the musical entertainment of the public. Throughout the previous days, the major railway companies had been advertising the event and “running excursions” in London.⁴¹

In the midst of a noisy crowd, for the most part drawn to the Palace by the prospect of hearing Albani sing, Viscount Templeton opened the meeting by stating that there was no political bias in the movement and that the new civilian police was not intended to replace, but rather to supplement the regular police during national emergencies.⁴² After this preamble, the body’s organising chairman, Arnold Statham, a well-known barrister, delivered an aggressive speech in which trade union solidarity action was labelled as “a mere cloak for class warfare to extort surrender to unjustifiable demands”, and the peaceful picket “a kind of State-protected highway robber with violence”. He argued that Labour leaders and their threat to call a national strike of railway and transport workers were “holding England by the throat”. In consequence, he stressed the right of citizens to come together in self-defence and “to take a firm stand against anarchy”. “What Britain wants today”, he concluded “is not weak-kneed local authorities, but a

Bismarck with a will of iron”.⁴³ After this extravagant praise of authoritarian rule, Statham moved the first resolution:

that this Mass Meeting of citizens from all parts of the United Kingdom, impressed with the urgent necessity of quelling lawlessness and disorder from time to time in case of need, resolves to form, without casting any additional burden upon the taxpayer, a Volunteer Police Force of private citizens to cooperate with the Regular Forces in the protection of life, property and liberty, where the same are assailed, and for the maintenance of general transport, whensoever the public carriers of the people’s food are threatened with violent interference.⁴⁴

After unanimous approval of the first resolution by an impromptu Grand Council,⁴⁵ F. C. Morgan, president of the Central Association of Accountant, moved the second resolution. This set out in detail the constitution and organisational principles of the force. In 14 points, it declared that the VPF was a force of private citizens, which, in cooperation with the regular forces of the United Kingdom, was committed to the protection of “life and property” and to the maintenance of essential services of public utility during disputes. The force was to submit to the orders of the heads of the Police Departments, although it was stated that

it shall be free to act . . . where attempts are threatened to wreck trains or signal boxes, set fire to warehouses, loot shops, or do other malicious injury to public methods of locomotion, transport, or private property without awaiting the initiative of absentee officials.

The national character of the Volunteer Police Force was to be firmly established and its units made available during “any sudden crisis . . . like a force of light infantry for rapid transit to areas where rioting, arson, or scenes of violence are being enacted”. The organisation, whose recruitment processes included physical fitness screening, was to be maintained by private contributions with no demands made upon the state.⁴⁶

Once the forms of the organisation were fixed, it was announced to the public that branches of the VPF were to be formed in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.⁴⁷ The force, one of its secretaries, Wilfrid E. Myers, declared to a correspondent of the *London Daily News*, was not a strikebreaking organisation, but “when as happened in Swansea, rioters start setting fire to houses and damaging property, then we think it is time for the ordinary citizen to step in”. “Our scheme”, Myers bizarrely added, “is really a form of Socialism – citizens themselves looking after the common welfare”.⁴⁸

As early as 13 November, the press reported that the London Brighton and South Coast, the London and New Western, the Great Eastern, the London and South-Western, and the Central London railway companies had engaged the services of the VPF in anticipation of a renewal of labour disturbances on the railways.⁴⁹ Corps of patriotic volunteers, complemented by technical experts in railway and

engineering work, were to be mobilised to protect labour replacements and railway materials. Each man dispatched to the strike areas was expected to wear a uniform and to be equipped with a blackjack (or life preserver).⁵⁰ To meet all contingencies, the administrators of the VPF proposed that manufacturers of commercial vehicles provide assistance in transporting supplies from the railway termini to distribution centres. Car makers Dodson Motors Ltd responded to the appeal by placing a car at the disposal of the movement.⁵¹ “This organization”, the Home Office laconically commented on the VPF’s strikebreaking plans, “is likely to give trouble”.⁵²

At the end of November, the VPF had received over 30,000 applications at its headquarter on Victoria Street.⁵³ Membership was “largely composed of wealthy young men, who might, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to distinguish between hooliganism and legitimate forms of working-class protest”, historian Veronica Cicely Wedgwood wrote many years later.⁵⁴ While the peer’s sons volunteered, as they did against the Boers, “to stamp on the restless workers”, the Duke of Abercorn repeatedly appealed for funds to help meet the organisation’s growing expenses.⁵⁵ “In order for the force to be effective in rendering substantial assistance to the public services”, he wrote, “a highly efficient organization of the force must be built”, and this evidently required money.⁵⁶

If the conservative press lauded the VPF for its avowal to protect general transportation, working-class organisations had grown increasingly alarmed by the decision of local commercial and industrial personalities to set up volunteer police corps. In Yorkshire, it was reported that members of the VPF had held meetings with local businessmen and plans for the formation of a civilian police force had been positively received.⁵⁷ In Derby, the presidents of the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Trade informed the VPF’s organising secretary, W. M. Myers, of their decision to form a similar private organisation on the banks of the river Derwent.⁵⁸

“Efforts are being made in many directions”, the pseudonymous *Labourite* complained in the *Derbyshire Courier*, “to undermine the power of the workers, intimidatory forces are being organized under one disguise or another”.⁵⁹ Leftist papers bluntly defined the VPF as a strikebreaking group organised along the lines of the Pinkertons in America. The *Justice* wrote significantly:

There are two movements now going on by which the master class are now endeavouring to ensure themselves against any dislocation of business in the event of a strike. . . . One is the Home Office movement for the enrolment of special constables . . . and the other is the organization of a “volunteer police force” by the capitalist themselves.⁶⁰

Under the pen name “Trade Unionist”, a commentator for the Bournemouth-based *Christchurch Times* wrote:

A number of busybodies, almost entirely prominent Tories, are going about the country seeking to establish what they call a Volunteer Police Force . . . a

private venture. . . . This new body is to have a uniform, and it is quite certain that it will be composed of men who are strongly anti-trade unionist. Thus, if such a force were to become numerous, there is all the material for class antagonism of the worst kind. It is to be hoped that Mr. McKenna will keep his eye on these amateur policemen, who are likely to cause more trouble to the regular police than to assist them to maintain order. These Tory strike-breakers may easily become a greater danger than any strikers.⁶¹

The propagation of the VPF across the country kindled talk of self-defence among workers. The Bradford branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants passed a resolution stating that the formation of such a force, “organized and controlled by the capitalist classes outside and above the law of the land and openly supported by railway companies”, was a serious menace to the liberties of working men. They therefore agreed to form a “physical protection league”, whose objective would be to train and equip selected trade unionists “to meet on equal terms the bullies of organized capital”.⁶²

Meanwhile, at the House of Commons, Labour MPs raised questions about the legality of a private uniformed volunteer force, “purposely armed with bludgeons to break people’s heads” and to be used as a strikebreaking force in the event of industrial disputes. Home Secretary Reginald McKenna replied that the Volunteer Police Force was a private and self-governing organisation which had not received any government approval. He cautioned that the formation of an independent organisation, whose purpose usurped the functions of the police, aroused reasonable “suspicion”, and therefore was inimical to the safety of the state. Furthermore, the use of uniforms and badges that resembled those of ordinary police forces was illegal and per se objectionable. McKenna concluded by deploring what he termed a “perilous venture”.⁶³ The *Irish News* observed:

The Home Secretary’s hint is to be hoped of hav[ing] the effect of calming the martial ardour of the zealous patriots who are anxious to be invested with the nimble truncheon and teach the mere hack policeman how much better they could bring about peace by cracking skulls.⁶⁴

In answer to the observations made in the House of Commons, Statham – in his capacity as chairman of the Grand Council – denied that the intention of the force was to imitate the functions of the regular police, but rather it was intended to render “practical assistance to the public in times of necessity”:

The services to the public, such as the assistance of electric light, power and other public undertakings by mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, and other trained members of the force were functions entirely different from the ordinary police, and it was considered absolutely necessary in the interests of the public services that an organization should exist for their succour when they might otherwise be paralyzed.⁶⁵

The hostile stance of the Home Office prompted the VPF to publish a booklet in order to publicly clarify the “aims and objects” of the organisation. It stated that the underlying principle of the force was that all law-abiding and loyal citizens owed a duty to assist the state – the guardian of the “common good” – in protecting the rights and liberties of citizens threatened with tumult, intimidation and violence. Among members’ duties were the preservation of peace, either in cooperation or in partnership with the regular police, the protection of non-union workers and public vigilance.⁶⁶

In spite of all the controversies, organisation of the VPF continued to push forward. A Southend and County branch of the force was inaugurated and “a company of 120 men was enrolled among scenes of great enthusiasm”.⁶⁷ Investment broker and estate agent, Aitken Tweedale, began making preparations for the formation of the VPF in Bristol. Large employers and prominent citizens were invited to help the new force by funding equipment and materials. In return they might have had a company named after them.⁶⁸ In mid-December, an “at home” was given by Mrs. Holcombe Ingleby to raise funds for the force and was attended by influential figures, including Major General Sterling, Admiral de Courcy Hamilton, Lieutenant Colonel Driscoll and the pioneer of aircraft design, Lieutenant Edward Busk. At the event, Statham stated that a “great number of men”, some trained in electrical and mechanical engineering, retired civil servants, men of the Royal Artillery and the Field Artillery and others who served on the railways during the time of the Boer war had been recruited. Major-General Sterling also addressed the gathering, deprecating the use of the military during the strikes and lauding the movement as a great patriotic one. “A body of guardsmen”, he said, “in their shirtsleeves with big sticks might be useful in a street riot”.⁶⁹

Two days later, at a meeting of the Grand Council, a proposal was made by Lord Lonsdale, and approved unanimously, to rename the Volunteer Police Force the Civilian Force. It was understood that the change was aimed at preventing any possibility of confusion between the Volunteer Police Reserve, which was being established by the Home Office with police functions, and the Volunteer Police Force whose purpose was “the maintenance of public services and other purely civic duties”.⁷⁰ This resolution did not dispel the suspicion that the force was nothing more than a strikebreaking outfit and the concurrent news that its members were being hired *en bloc* by companies added to this presentiment.⁷¹ Speaking before the executives of the National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union, syndicalist Madame Sorgue, the “most dangerous woman in Europe”, commenting on the labour unrest of summer 1911 and the new challenges facing the British labour movement, stated:

I see there is a volunteer police force being organized [in England]. That is the most serious blunder. I knew those volunteer police. I have seen them at work at Parma. There they pursued deliberately a policy of exasperation. It will lead to civil war.⁷²

At the end of the year, the Civilian Force released a new, detailed booklet. The objectives and aims of the force were restated, and the right and duty of citizens to protect their liberty and the inviolability of property, without statutory approval, was repeated. In pursuing these objectives, volunteers would assist “Railways, Ships, Docks, Tramways, Electric Power, Light Sanitary, or other Public Services” and would ensure the movement of essential supplies. The force was also directed to recruit Special Constables and to supplement them and the fire and ambulance services and provide safeguards for the protection of animals from acts of cruelty. Finally, the Civilian Force was “to provide a system of physical and moral training for young men, to render them proficient in some branch of public spirit and patriotism, and equip them for the full discharge of the responsibilities of citizenship”.⁷³

The organisational structure of the Civilian Force was streamlined and functionally differentiated. Beneath the Grand Council, members were divided into “special service members”, who would act as flying columns throughout the Kingdom; “trade service members”, who were assigned to prescribed industries “for the protection of their business or employment, or with the consent of their employers for the protection of other concerns of a similar kind”; and, finally, “service members”, who operated in a specific district and were organised into companies of 120 men commanded by a captain, who was in turn appointed by the district headquarters. In addition to the regular companies, mounted cyclists and motor cyclists were in the process of being organised. The Civilian Force’s equipment consisted of a helmet, armet, whistle, collar numbers and unspecified “weapons of defence”. The men received training in boxing, walking-stick defence and a method of attack known as the Vigny system, which had been devised to combat “Les Apaches” of Paris. The uniform was grey with fawn facings and a distinctive aluminium badge. The members of the Civilian Force did not receive any monetary reward for their services. However, when engaged in duty, members were covered by a special insurance that paid out a sum of £200 in the event of death or permanent disability. For temporary or partial disability, up to £2 per week was paid.⁷⁴

District staffs, which consisted of a chief of staff, a medical officer, an enrolment officer, a principal mobilisation officer, a director of supplies and transport, a signalling instructor and a veterinary officer, had the authority to conduct all of the Civilian Force’s affairs, including fundraising, recruitment, and training, equipping and mobilising the service’s operating forces. To ensure compliance with the applicable laws, members of the Civilian Force were sworn in as special constables “before going on duty in any public place”. They were exonerated from taking the special constable’s oath when they acted on “behalf of the Proprietor as his friends or servants for the purpose of protecting his property from forcible trespass”.⁷⁵

The Civilian Force’s undertaking “to assist the community at large” under the cover of the law did not soften the Home Office’s opposition. The Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Edward Troup, considered it intolerable for any “government which stands for law, order and impartiality, and not for punching the heads

of strikers, to have anything to do it".⁷⁶ In spite of Abercorn's reassurances to the Home Office that there was no intention of the Civilian Force "being a privately controlled or directed organization",⁷⁷ at the beginning of the year its associates continued looking for financial backers and businesses willing to either hire them or set up their own companies. In London, a delegation of the force approached the representatives of the Shipping Federation to offer them their protection services. The shipowners, who staunchly opposed trade unionism, agreed to make a donation of £500 to Abercorn's force, which would be increased to £1,000 if the organisation developed along promised lines.⁷⁸ Harrods Limited pledged to form a full company from among their employees and to open a recruiting depot at their stores in London.⁷⁹ In Oxford, a Strike Emergency Committee was formed with the intention of joining the Civilian Force. "It is hoped", *The Times* wrote, "the example of the undergraduates there will lead to similar action in other University towns and elsewhere".⁸⁰

In the meantime, at the Civilian Force's headquarters, retired cavalrymen, colonials and members the Legion of Frontiersmen were enrolled "as a flying squadron", while retired army officers were assigned to the coordination of service members. Arrangements were made to train volunteers in operating electrical power stations and railways.⁸¹ A correspondent from the *London Evening News* described one of the first public appearances of the force thus:

If you were in Victoria-street . . . on Monday evening, you must have noticed a number of men, dressed in an odd mixture of police and military-looking uniform, patrolling the pavement or standing on guard. They were London's new policemen. In their grey military helmets, long, dark coloured police overcoats, shiny black waterproof capes, blue and white armlets and ordinary workday trousers, forty men and officers of this new civilian force were out on duty for the first time.⁸²

While new companies of the Civilian Force were formed around the country,⁸³ the press reported that Abercorn's "amateur police" had been engaged to guard the Victoria Street branch of the London and South Western Bank to prevent suffragettes carrying out window-smashing protest.⁸⁴ Also at this time the new secretary, Pirie Gordon, unsuccessfully approached Sir Robert Baden Powell to propose enlisting 18-year-old boy scouts in the Civilian Force.⁸⁵

At the beginning of March, perhaps after consultation with Sir Theodore Morison, a member of the Council of India, the Duke of Abercorn announced that

in view of the serious possibilities which may be in store for the country, the Civilian Force has decided to try to enlist the assistance of those officers of the Indian Army, Indian Police, and other Indian services who are home on furlough in the Civilian Force.⁸⁶

In response to Abercorn's proposal to raise a company for special service to be known as the "Indian Service Company", the Under-Secretary of State for

India, Edwin Samuel Montagu, sought legal advice from the Home Office as he entertained “grave doubts” over the legality of the matter.⁸⁷ The Home Office replied that while the government could not support the policies and methods of the Civilian Force, it recognised that it could not interfere with the citizen’s right to offer his services to police authorities. These officers in the service of the government of India could, therefore, have been employed on public duty, but only after being sworn in as Special Constables.⁸⁸ After fresh questions on the activities of the Civilian Force were raised in the House of Commons, Abercorn cautiously ordered that the “Indian Services Company” should not be involved in the maintenance of any branch of public services during labour disputes.⁸⁹

With the miners’ strike spreading nationwide, the Civilian Force was alerted for possible mobilisation. If deployed, the force was expected to guard the pitheads and pumping installations and to feed the pit ponies. The strike was described in a pamphlet circulated by the Civilian Force as “the first stage of the revolutionary scheme” and a step towards the “syndicalist ideal” which would bring employers to their knees, coerce the government and by “one grand coup d’état” collectivise property. To deal with such a revolutionary threat, “patriotic citizens” should be mobilised for the protection of society:

The hour appears to be approaching when the long intended blow will be struck by organized Labour against an unorganized community, and it is of urgent importance that every patriotic citizen should hasten the assistance of the only body [the Civilian Force] that has been organized to assist the forces of the Crown to cope with such an INSURRECTION IN THE LABOUR WORLD.⁹⁰

Although the Civilian Force’s strikebreaking services were not requested by the coal mine owners, and would in any case have been of little or no value to them considering the scale of the dispute, the fear of a revolutionary strike was drawing an unnegotiable line between good and bad citizenship in the minds of Abercorn and his associates. The “socialist trade unionist” could not have been a good citizen nor could he have been acknowledged as a member of the national community.

At the beginning of the London Dock Strike of 1912, the Shipping Federation, which had complained of the Home Office’s decision to refuse police protection for imported labour, hired the services of the Civilian Force. On 28 May, *The Times* reported that

an urgency call was received for a detachment of the Civilian Force to escort labourers to the docks where already many members of the force had been engaged in discharging cargoes of food. By midnight, an officered and fully-equipped company supplied with rations were at work. By 4.30 yesterday morning the whole body were stationed at places indicated by the Shipping Federation at whose instance their services were requisitioned.⁹¹

At Greenhithe, where the Shipping Federation's notorious frigate, *Lady Jocelyn*, was lying along the pier with 600 blacklegs housed on board ready to be dispatched by several tugs to the various London docks, members of the Civilian police clashed with pickets. The confrontations resulted in many injuries on both sides. The shipowners recognised that the presence of the Civilian Police "largely contributed towards a feeling of security on the part of the imported men".⁹² According to an unnamed trade unionist, Abercorn's volunteers were "unprepossessing and mostly unshaven men, in grey helmets, long coats with belts, corduroy trousers and dirty boots. They were all armed with heavy sticks and revolvers".⁹³ In several instances, there was actual or threatened use of these firearms, conceivably supplied by the shipping companies, against the strikers. At the beginning of June, the Civilian Force released a statement declaring that it had assisted the Shipping Federation in the

transportation of food supplies for London, protected free labourers from molestation, escorted large bodies of willing workers to the docks and guarded vessels from damage by strikers, and some detachments have, in addition to protection duty, worked hard in discharging cargoes of food.⁹⁴

The practice of substituting a private for the public police authority spawned a lively debate in parliament and in the press.⁹⁵ For MP Wedgwood, the Civilian Force appeared to be not only an unnecessary reflection upon the regular police, but also an imitation of those private police organisations in America "which were largely responsible for the bloodshed which marks labour trouble in that country".⁹⁶ The *Daily Herald* criticised the Civilian Force as "the new slave guards",⁹⁷ while *The Syndicalist and Amalgamation News* would later speak of a "Capitalists' Private Army of Armed Strike Breakers".⁹⁸ Trade union leader Ben Tillett vigorously protested the use of the Civilian Police and told Lord Haldane that "if he permitted the capitalists to arm their blacklegs with revolvers and truncheons, they would arm their men with similar weapons".⁹⁹

During the summer, amidst ongoing polemics on the purposes and functions of Abercorn's organisation, the Home Office pressed those stipendiary magistrates who had been associated with the Grand Council of the Civilian Force to sever their connections with that organisation.¹⁰⁰ At the end of the year, vice-president and chief of staff, William M. Power, had his membership revoked by unanimous resolution of the Grand Council following accusations by other executive members of administrative and financial malfeasance.¹⁰¹ A short time later, Power would establish a new organisation, the Volunteer Civil Force (VCF), on much the same lines as the Civilian Force. After the sudden death of the Duke of Abercorn on 3 January 1913, proceedings were brought against Power in the Chancery Division to restrain him from presenting the VCF as the direct successor or replacement of the Civilian Force or from persuading the public that the Civilian Force had ceased to exist. A series of legal squabbles virtually paralysed the new organisation up to the summer of 1914, when Power began publication of the monthly V.C.F. Notes.¹⁰²

Although, as the Board of Trade reported in its annual report on Strikes and Lock-outs, the year 1913 “was remarkable for the number of disputes which occurred during its course, far exceeding the number recorded in any previous year”,¹⁰³ the activities of the Civilian Force appear to have been sporadic. A scarcity of funds and, perhaps, a decline in membership because of internal disagreements were very likely the causes of this lack of activity. However, at the end of the free speech demonstration in Trafalgar Square on 29 June, which was attended by trade unionists, suffrage societies and the Free Speech Defence League, members of the Civilian Force violently clashed with “dockers and socialists” who were marching to Downing Street.¹⁰⁴ In defending Britain from “subversion”, the extreme anti-socialist ideology of the Civilian Force easily amalgamated with anti-feminism and anti-suffragism.¹⁰⁵

At the end of October, James A. E. Hamilton, 3rd Duke of Abercorn, who had succeeded his father as president of the Civilian Force and commanded the Tyrone Regiment of the newly formed Ulster Volunteer Force, appealed for money. “It is abundantly evident”, he argued, “that our organisation may be badly needed in the near future, and committee is anxious to raise an assured income to enable them to maintain the Force on substantial scale, and ready to meet any emergency”.¹⁰⁶ About a week later, a detachment of the Civilian Force was dispatched to Dublin for “protection duty” in the midst of the lockout and was quartered on the Shipping Federation’s depot ships. By mid-November, hundreds of strikebreakers were regularly working in the guarded docks under the protective eye of volunteers.¹⁰⁷

On the outbreak of war, the Civilian Force, like the other patriotic organisations that had sprung up with perplexing rapidity in the turbulent summer of 1911 to safeguard Britain from the evils that the self-appointed saviours of society dreaded, began to volunteer for the various forms of war service. This led to the establishment of a hospital for the wounded, assistance with recruitment and fundraising for Belgian refugees. The Civilian Force was not reconstituted at the end of the war.¹⁰⁸

Conclusions

In the post-war years, the Volunteer Police Force (then the Civilian Police) had only survived in the tenacious memory of some Labour MPs, to then fall into oblivion. In his memoirs, much influenced by the years of fascism and war, Josiah Wedgwood went so far as to define the VPF as an “abortive forerunner of the Nazis”.¹⁰⁹ Aside from hyperbolic comparisons, the meteoric rise of Abercorn’s amateur police reveals the apprehension and disquiet afflicting British elites and upper middle classes in the face of extended political, social and industrial citizenship. At the same time, the formation of a private body organised on quasi-military lines for the maintenance of civil order and for the preservation of individual liberty, freedom of contract and “national efficiency” suggests a certain deterioration of trust on the part of vested interests and conservative elements in the ability of state authorities to suppress deviance. In addition, the wearing of uniforms, the organisation and training of members and the carrying of offensive weapons drew attention to the distorting effects of the militarisation of society

and the risk of legitimising violence perpetrated by civil actors, where this was deemed to be in the national interest. In this context, the principles and practices of the VPF embodied an exclusionary concept of citizenship, which tended to relegate demands for collective bargaining and industrial democracy to the status of “social treason”. The government’s firm opposition to the VPF inhibited its development and prevented potential imitative spirals, and at the same time might have cautioned certain sectors of British capital against unlawful, if not seditious, conduct against trade unionism and calmed their push towards the privatisation of security. The mobilisation for total war absorbed those “patriotic excesses”, traces of which were to resurface as fears of revolt spread following the Russian Revolutions of 1917 and in the turbulent post-war years.¹¹⁰

Notes

- * Research for this article received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program (G.A. 677199 – ERC-StG2015 “The Dark Side of the Belle Époque. Political Violence and Armed Associations in Europe before the First World War”).
- 1 Geoffrey Searle, “‘The Revolt from the Right’ in Edwardian Britain,” in *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914*, ed. Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), 21–39; John Douglas Pratten, *The Reaction to Working Class Unrest 1911–1914* (PhD thesis, Sheffield University PhD, 1975).
- 2 On 21 August 1911, *The Daily Mail* labelled the transport dispute in 1911 as a “strike against society” which “could only succeed by the destruction of society itself”. Quoted in Charles Townshend, *Making the Peace. Public Order and Public Security in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 44.
- 3 On the Liverpool Civic Service League, The Liverpool Athenaeum Archives, Civic Service League, Minute Book, Vol. 1 (29 August 1911–19 September 1913). On the Leeds Citizen’s League of Law and Order, J. E. Williams, “The Leeds Corporation Strike in 1913,” in *Essays in Labour History 1886–1923*, ed. Asa Briggs and John Saville (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1971), 70–95.
- 4 Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 9 April 1923, Vol. 162 cc. 943–1019.
- 5 On the Special Constables Act 1923, see, Clare Katherine Leon, “From special constables to special constabularies,” in *The Special Constabulary: Historical Context, International Comparisons and Contemporary Themes*, ed. by Karen Bullock and Andrew Millie (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 51–55.
- 6 Standish Meacham, “The Sense of an Impending Clash,” *American Historical Review* 77 (December 1972): 1346. On the psychological dimension of the “Great Unrest”, Henry Phelps Brown, *The Growth of British Industrial Relations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1959), 332.
- 7 On the Great Unrest, see, generally, Hugh Clegg, *A History of British Trade Unions since 1889, Vol. 2: 1911–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). See also a first-hand account of the industrial troubles written by Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes* (London: J. Murray, 1920).
- 8 Robert J. Holton, “Revolutionary Syndicalism and the British Labour Movement,” in *The Development of Trade Unionism in Great Britain and Germany 1880–1914*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Hans Gerhard Husung (London and Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 270.
- 9 David Smith, “Tonypany, 1910: Definitions of Community,” *Past and Present* 87 (May 1980): 158–84.

- 10 Élie Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, VI: *The Rule of Democracy, 1905–1914, Book II* (London: P. Smith, 1952), 479.
- 11 On the 1911 uprising of seamen and dockers in the English ports, see, generally, Ken Coates and Anthony Topham, *The Making of the Labour Movement: The Formation of the Transport and General Workers' Union, 1870–1922* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1994).
- 12 Halévy, *The Rule of Democracy, 1905–1914*, 441–556.
- 13 Eric Taplin, *Near to Revolution. The Liverpool General Transport Strike of 1911* (Liverpool: Bluecoat, 1994); H. R. Hikins, “The Liverpool General Transport Strike, 1911,” *THSLC* 113 (1961): 169–96.
- 14 On the Llanelli riot, see John Edwards, *Remembrance of a Riot: The Story of the Llanelli Railway Strike Riots of 1911* (Llanelli: Llanelli Borough Council, 2010); Deian Hopkin, “The Llanelli Riots, 1911,” *Welsh History Review* 11 (1983): 488–513.
- 15 Geoffrey Alderman, “The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales,” *Welsh History Review* 6 (1972): 190–200.
- 16 “The Strikes,” *The Times*, August 8, 1911.
- 17 On the crisis of Edwardian Britain, see George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961; 1st ed., 1935).
- 18 General Manager of H. L. Raphaels’ Refinery to Home Office, 11 August 1911, in PRO HO 144/5491/212342/28.
- 19 Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 13 March 1911, Vol. 22 cc. 1862–3.
- 20 “News of Day,” *The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, August 30, 1911.
- 21 Liverpool Athenaeum, Civil Service League, CSL/1/1 and CSL/4 (Membership).
- 22 W. T. Stead, “What We Have Learned from the Railway Strike. Hints from the Hague for the Regulation of Industrial War,” *The Review of Reviews* 44 (September 1911): 249–55.
- 23 “General Strikes and General Strike-Breakers,” *The Times*, August 26, 1911.
- 24 [Letter to the Editor] “The Strike Peril,” *Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser*, September 16, 1911.
- 25 Montagu of Beaulieu, “Road Transport During Strikes,” *The Times*, August 23, 1911.
- 26 Parliamentary Papers, Employment of Military during the Railway Strike. Correspondence between the Home Office and Local Authorities relating to the Employment of the Military during the Railway Strike in August 1911, 22.
- 27 “Our London Correspondent,” *Forres Elgin and Nairn Gazette*, September 20, 1911.
- 28 On the class character of the Special Constabulary, see Tony Bunyan, *The History and Practice of the Political Police in Britain* (London: Julian Fiedmann Publishers, 1976), 98.
- 29 Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 7 May 1923, Vol. 163 cc. 1973–2010.
- 30 For a comprehensive examination of policing in the pre-war years, see Clive Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991); Roger Geary, *Policing Industrial Disputes: 1893–1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Jane Morgan, *Conflict and Order: The Police and Labour Disputes in England and Wales, 1900–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Barbara Weinberger, *Keeping the Peace? Policing Strikes in England and Wales 1906–1926* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- 31 “Citizen Police: Home Secretary Seeks to Raise Volunteer Force,” *Birmingham Mail*, September 14, 1911.
- 32 On the setting up of police reserve, see Clare Katherine Leon, *Special Constables: An Historical and Contemporary Survey* (PhD thesis, University of Bath, 1991).
- 33 “Special Constables as Reservists,” *Tower Hamlets Independent and East End Local Advertiser*, September 2, 1911.
- 34 For biographical information on William Mailes Power, see PRO, WO 339/93876. Also, see his profile in *The Business World: Men & Methods of the New Georgian Era. Imperial Interests, Pen Sketches and Illustrations* (London: DoD Publications, 1913), 130–31.

- 35 "A Volunteer Police Force," *The Standard*, September 8, 1911.
- 36 Letter from W. M. Power to Home Secretary Winston Churchill, 16 September 1911, in PRO, HO 45.10666.216733, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–14.
- 37 Letter from (Sd) E. Blackwell to W.M. Power, 2 October, 1911, in *Ibid.*
- 38 "The Duty of a Citizen," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 11, 1911.
- 39 "A Volunteer Police," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 12, 1911. In response to Power, Edward Johns Urwick, at the time professor of economic science at King's College, criticised the VPF as a potential source of hooliganism and mob-justice. See Edward Urwick, "The Manners of Pavement," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 13, 1911.
- 40 The Nelsonian quote was made the motto of the Volunteer Police Force.
- 41 "Volunteer Police: To-day's Demonstration at the Crystal Palace," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 21, 1911.
- 42 The proceedings of the inaugural meeting were printed and circulated in a booklet titled *The Volunteer Police Force*. Copy of the booklet is in PRO HO 45.10666.216733
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 10. This passage is also quoted in Clive Emsley, *The English and Violence since 1750* (London: A&C Black, 2007), 109.
- 44 "A Volunteer Police Force," 3.
- 45 The Grand Council of the VPF included, among others, the Earl of Meath, the Earl of Lonsdale, the Viscount Templeton, Lord Cheylesmore, Lord Ninian Stuart, the Archdeacon Sinclair, the stipendiary magistrates John De Grey Albert de Rutzen and William Chichele Plowden, the Major A.J.N Tremearne, Captain Walter Waring, the mayors of Peterborough, Guilford and Basingstoke, Joseph Lyons, and several prominent London lawyers.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 14–15.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 48 "Unofficial Scheme of Citizen Service," *London Daily News*, October 14, 1911.
- 49 "Unrest Among Railway Employees," *The Railway Times*, November 18, 1911.
- 50 "Volunteer Police and a Railway Strike. Directions to Commanding Officers," *The Times*, November 13, 1911.
- 51 "The Need for Motors," *Pall Gazette*, November 14, 1911.
- 52 Home Secretary's Minutes, 16 November 1911, HO 45.10666.216733/2, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–1914.
- 53 [no title], *Henley & South Oxford Standard*, December 1, 1911.
- 54 Cicely V. Wedgwood, *The Last of the Radicals: Josiah Wedgwood, M.P.* (London: Cape, 1951), 89–90.
- 55 Quote in Josiah Wedgwood, "The Honorary Strikebreakers," *The Eyewitness*, December 21, 1911, 16–17.
- 56 "A Volunteer Police Force," *The Times*, November 23, 1911.
- 57 "The Volunteer Police Force: To the editor of the Yorkshire Post," *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, November 22, 1911.
- 58 "Derby and the Volunteer Force Movement," *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*, November 17, 1911.
- 59 Labourite, "Labour Topics," *Derbyshire Courier*, October 20, 1911.
- 60 "A British 'Pinkertons' Organization," *Justice*, November 18, 1911.
- 61 [By a Trade Unionist], "The Labour Movement," *Christchurch Times*, December 2, 1911.
- 62 "The Railway Situation: Men in Militant Mood," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 4, 1911.
- 63 Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 4 December 1911, Vol. 32 cc. 1009–10.
- 64 "Volunteer Police," *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, December 5, 1911.
- 65 "The Volunteer Police Force: A Reply to Criticism," *The Times*, December 6, 1911.
- 66 Aims and Objects of the Volunteer Police Force. Volunteer Police Force, afterwards Civilian Force, London, [1911], in PRO, HO 45.10666.216733.
- 67 "The Volunteer Police Force," *Chard and Ilminster News*, December 9, 1911.
- 68 "The Volunteer Police Force," *Bristol Times and Mirror*, December 4, 1911.

- 69 "Volunteer Police Force," *The Times*, December 12, 1911.
- 70 "The Volunteer Police Force," *Globe*, December 16, 1911.
- 71 "Civilian Police London. Functions explained by Mr. Statham," *London Daily News*, December 20, 1911.
- 72 "London Letter," *Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, December 29, 1911.
- 73 The Civilian Force. Founded on Trafalgar Day as the "Volunteer Police Force," 7–8. A copy of the booklet is in PRO, HO 45.10666.216733, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–14.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 11–24.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 76 Letter from Edward Troup to Russell Scott, 12 March 1912, in PRO HO 45.10666.216733, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–14.
- 77 Letter of the Duke of Abercorn to the Home Secretary, 8 March 1912, in PRO HO 45.10666.216733, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–14.
- 78 Modern Record Centre, Shipping Federation, General and Executive Council Meetings, Proceedings at General and Executive Council Meetings. Bound volume. May 1912–November 1914, Annual General Meeting Friday, 17 May 1912, 8.
- 79 "Civilian Force: Organization to Protect Property," *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 8, 1912.
- 80 "The Civilian Force: Oxford Undergraduate Offer," *The Times*, March 7, 1912. Students at the University of Cambridge followed the example by forming their own anti-strike service division.
- 81 "London Letter: Civilians for Public Protection," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, January 19, 1912.
- 82 "Amateur Police: Over a Thousand Enrolled in London," *London Evening News*, March 6, 1912.
- 83 "The Civilian Force," *Near and Far Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, April 3, 1912.
- 84 [no title], *Illustrated London News*, March 9, 1912. The manager of the London and South Western Bank was the Stephen Trott, who was also a member of the Grand Council of the Volunteer Police Force.
- 85 "North Devon Scout Notes," *North Devon Journal*, March 7, 1912.
- 86 PRO HO 45.10666.216733/12, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–1914. For the proposal of the Duke of Abercorn to raise an "Indian Service Company" in connection with the Civilian Force see "The Civilian Police. An Appeal to Indian Officers," *The Times*, March 7, 1912.
- 87 Letter from the Under-Secretary of State for India to the Under-Secretary of State Home Office, 9 March 1912, in PRO, HO 45.10666.216733/12, Volunteer Police Force, 1911–1914.
- 88 Reply of the Undersecretary of State Home Office to the Under-Secretary of State for India, 11 March 1912 in *Ibid.*
- 89 Letter of the Duke of Abercorn to the Secretary of State Home Office 13 March 1912, in PRO HO 45.10666.216733/14.
- 90 Civilian Force: The Danger of a National Strike, in PRO HO 45.10666.216733/15.
- 91 "Food Supplies at the Markets," *The Times*, May 30, 1912.
- 92 Modern Record Centre, Shipping Federation, Policy and Administration, Grey Books, Transactions of the Federation, 1911–1914. Report of the General Purposes Committee to the Executive Council, 29 November 1912, 2–3.
- 93 "Blackleg Outrage. Revolver Shots fired at Gravesend Pickets," *Daily Herald*, June 7, 1912.
- 94 "The Civilian Force," *The Times*, June 6, 1912.
- 95 Hansard Parliamentary Debate, 12 June 1912, Vol. 39 cc. 872–995.
- 96 "Mr. Wedgwood, M.P. and Strikes," *Staffordshire Sentinel*, June 24, 1912.
- 97 "The New Slave Guards," *Daily Herald*, August 28, 1912.
- 98 "The Menace to the Workers," *The Syndicalist and Amalgamation News* IL, no. 2, February 1913.

- 99 "Mr. Tillet's Ultimatum: Use of Arms by Blacklegs Severely Condemned," *Daily Herald*, June 7, 1912.
- 100 PRO HO 45.10666.216733/21.
- 101 "Founder's Suit Against Committee," *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 28, 1913.
- 102 The V.C.F. Notes was later renamed the Volunteer Civil Force (July 1914 – February/March 1916).
- 103 Report on Strikes and Lock-Outs and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards in the United Kingdom in 1913, with comparative statistics (London: Printed for H.M. Stationery Office by Darling & Son [etc.], 1914), X.
- 104 "Another Riot," *Daily Herald*, June 30, 1913.
- 105 "How England is Ruined. Salvation against Socialists and Suffragists," *Daily Herald*, July 30, 1914.
- 106 "Now Gaol Abercorn," *Daily Herald*, October 28, 1913.
- 107 "Civilian Force for Dublin," *Belfast Newsletter*, November 12, 1913.
- 108 "Gifts for Child Refugees," *The Bystander*, December 2, 1914.
- 109 On the interpretation of the Volunteer Police Force as a failed precursor of fascist paramilitarism see Josiah Clement Wedgewood, *Memoirs of a Fighting Life* (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1940), 80.
- 110 R. C. Maguire, "The Fascists . . . are . . . to be Depended Upon. The British Government, Fascists and Strike-breaking during 1925 and 1926," in *British Fascism, the Labour Movement and the State*, ed. N. Copsey and D. Renton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 6–26.