

ONE BRITAIN OR MANY: THE BRITISH PRESS, PEOPLE, AND
CONSTRUCTING PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY
DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR,
1854-1856

by

Bryce C. Wicker, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a Major in History
December 2022

Committee Members:

Caroline Ritter, Chair

Louis Porter

Bryan Glass

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2022

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DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I first began writing what would become my thesis, I had no notion I had it in me to produce this thesis. When it all started, I wanted to summarize how the British press told the tale of the Crimean War. Under the guidance of Dr. Margerison, acting as the instructor for general research, and Dr. Ritter as my advisor, they pushed me to think and look beyond a simplistic retelling of how the press acted during a time of war and instead opened up new avenues to how the press impacted societies and for that I am forever thankful for that insight. I wish to continue the recognition of the efforts put in by Dr. Ritter acting as my thesis advisor chair. The hours, weeks, and months we have spent refining details and philosophizing over this thesis have been and will forever be enlightening moments I will always cherish. Dr. Ritter, your guidance as my advisor, has made me a better historian and made me see British history in a new light by appreciating the subject repeatedly. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of my other committee members, Dr. Louis Porter and Dr. Bryan Glass. Your feedback has been invaluable, and I am indebted to your efforts. I am also grateful to all the faculty and lecturers at Texas State University for all the classes I attended and the papers written over the semesters. Some courses forced me to look into subjects outside of my comfort zone and write essays and papers, which equally challenged me, and I appreciate the challenges and gratification that came with it. I also want to thank the staff at the British Library and National Archives at Kew Garden. You made my first visits to the archives seamless and easy for a student who had a tiny idea what he was getting into, but thanks to you made,

the few weeks I spent in London during the summer of 2021 were not only memorable but easy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Crimean War is a unique conflict in the vast history of humans waging war against themselves. Wedged between two of Europe's greatest wars, the Napoleonic and the Great War, the Crimean War was arguably Europe's most significant conflict of the nineteenth century, particularly for Britain post-Napoleon. The Crimean War fought between a coalition comprising Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire¹, and later the Kingdom Piedmont-Sardinia against the Russian Empire, involved armies in the hundreds of thousands and casualties to reflect equally the scale and significance of the conflict. However, for all the reasons behind the war ranging from issues over Catholic or Orthodox authority over the eastern churches, imperial rivalries, or nations stepping up to defend the waning power of the Ottoman Empire, from a geopolitical context, the war and the resulting peace of Paris in 1856 left Europe territorially unchanged. Of course, historians like Orlando Figes and Trevor Royale, among others, would argue that the war, from a political standpoint, did matter.² Despite a lack of territorial change, the Crimean War jeopardized an already fragile Concert of Europe. The Crimean War left Russia weakened, its economy on the verge of collapse, forcing a retreat within itself. The Crimean War also jumpstarted Sardinia-Piedmont's bid for Italian unification with a resurgent France at their backing. Britain had for decades kept Europe at arm's length and became forced to reevaluate its position due to its involvement in the war.

¹ During the nineteenth century, British newspapers would frequently refer to the Ottoman Empire as Turkey. For clarity, I opted to use the country title of the Ottoman Empire, which can also mean Turkey.

² Orlando Figes, *The Crimean War: A History*, (Metropolitan Books, 2010), XIX-XX.

However, the Crimean War was crucial for many reasons, separate from the affairs of geopolitics. From Britain's perspective, the Crimean War came at a momentous time in an ever-evolving landscape: Britain's press and British society. The outbreak of war in March 1854 came just as Britain had already undergone significant changes dating back to the turn of the century. Technologically, the British press had already witnessed the emergence of new innovative steam printing machines, gradually allowing British newspaper publications to increase their output throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century.³ Legally British newspapers experienced a boon in their ability to stay viable and stimulate their growth thanks to the gradual reduction of the stamp, postage, and advertisement duties conceived initially as an indirect form of censorship. By 1851, Parliament began investigating whether these duties were, in fact, necessary.⁴ Amongst the Britons themselves, industrialization advanced literacy among the British social classes, particularly the middling and working classes. Literacy allowed Britons to understand and crave knowledge, and they turned to the newspapers to gain access to information on the wider world.

This thesis will demonstrate how the Crimean War from 1854-1856 was a perfect storm for Britain as a nation and for Britain as a society. Despite falling between conflicts like the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century and the Great War of the

³ A.E. Musson, "Newspaper Printing in the Industrial Revolution," *The Economic History Review*, 1958, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1958), 411; James C. Moran, "The Development of the Printing Press," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, April 1971, Vol. 119, No. 5177 (1971), 287, 290.

⁴ Howard Cox, Simon Mowatt, "The Economics of Press and Periodical Production," in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, Volume 2: Expansion and Evolution, 1800-1900*, ed. David Finkelstein, (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 36-37; Graham Law, "Distribution," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (Routledge, 2016), 44-45.

twentieth century, the Crimean War was a bridge between these two centuries and conflicts. On the one hand, armies waged war as they had during the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic conflicts, with armies marching in line abreast to defeat their enemies, resplendent cavalry charges, and codes of chivalry informing doctrine. However, on the other hand, the war was also uniquely modern. Modern instruments of war meant armies were much more deadly, and modes of communication and transport were much more advanced, with telegraph and rail networks being the most noteworthy examples. Still, the people at home were much more informed than those of the Napoleonic Wars.

The Crimean War, in many ways, is a story of tragedy and progress. Technological innovation collided with the mass public desire to learn of what transpired in Eastern Europe, and the newspapers utilized technology and desire to deliver the war in near real-time. In contrast, during the Napoleonic period, news of battles fought abroad reached home at a snail's pace to a tiny reading audience. However, by 1854 the reading audience of Britain had vastly grown, and the press's mechanisms to deliver information to the reading audiences drastically improved and modernized. Now Britons across the Isles could interact with not only the tragedies of war, such as casualty reports from battles like Alma and Inkerman. Britons could now lionize valiant efforts such as the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. Readers could, with information at their beck and call, celebrate the actions of individuals like Florence Nightingale and her efforts to care for the sick and wounded or turn the rank-and-file British soldier into

heroes while also admonishing political and military elites for letting them down.⁵ The war was unprecedented in that the amount of interaction generated between Britain's reading public and the vast plethora of British newspaper publications, both large and small, became the bridge and primary source of interaction between the reading audience and the war.

It is via this war pitting Britain and its allies against Russia that newspapers took center stage for Britain's society, acting not only as a repository of information, a forum of debate and dialogue, but a foundry of identity, both regional and national. At the provincial level, newspapers fuelled local and provincial identity via poems, reports, and letters from local soldiers about Manchester, Bath, Newcastle, or Nottingham and their local heroes. However, via initiatives like the Patriotic fund or editorial-leading articles, newspapers generated the idea of Britishness alongside local and regional efforts to foster their own identities. These efforts came along with nationwide initiatives to support the British army fighting in Russia while also taking the opportunity to criticize the blunders of Parliament and the military high command. Thanks to the newspapers, this war became a mass media affair and a means for the British Isles' people to interact with each other and define themselves at all levels.

Themes in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Printing by the turn of the nineteenth century as a practice remained relatively unchanged since its creation back in fifteenth-century Germany. The printing process by 1800 still relied upon a fleet of hands doing various jobs, from setting the texts casting,

⁵ Lara Kriegel, *The Crimean War and its Afterlife: Making Modern Britain*, (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 3.

punches, and striking matrices. All resembled the techniques of centuries past.⁶ However, radical changes began to unfold within British printing by the nineteenth century, setting itself up for decades. The factors which contributed to the success of British printing in the nineteenth century are varied. A new and ever-growing reading public and growing trade internally and externally fostered a culture of innovation and tinkering within Britain, coupled with an air of free enterprise, allowing inventors to enter the realm and revolutionize an industry that had remained dormant for quite some time.⁷

British printing remained the same throughout the years because the content they were printing had, for the most part, not changed much. News from the fifteenth century through the eighteenth century remained printed on a one-page sheet. The information publications had access to was also infrequent. The infrequency of news available at this time forced many publications to only produce news issues weekly rather than daily.⁸ However, by the late eighteenth century, newspapers became much more dynamic in their content, producing multi-page issues on various topics. The printing press machines desperately needed modernization to keep up with these changes. Attempts at updating the printing press (by the early nineteenth century comprised of wood) came from individuals such as Wilhelm Haas and the Earl of Stanhope. Men like Haas and Stanhope looked to build more durable machines (by integrating iron parts), which increased production to meet the growing demands of reading audiences.⁹ With the need to produce

⁶ Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970: an Illustrated History of its Development and uses in England*, (British Library, 1970), 48.

⁷ Ibid, 48.

⁸ The *Daily Courant*, established in 1702, was the first newspaper to produce daily issues, but the *Daily Courant*, in the eighteenth century, was the exception, not the rule; Musson, *Newspaper Printing in the Industrial Revolution*, 413.

⁹ Moran, *The Development of the Printing Press*, 282-283.

large quantities of newspapers at rapid rates a necessity, the invention of ever more extensive and more complicated machines also required radical changes in the working environment. In the eighteenth century, printing could be done easily and quickly, usually in family-run print shops and publishing houses. However, by the early nineteenth century, with print processes becoming more complicated and extensively forced, family-run print shops evolved into more sophisticated entities with specialized labor to run day-to-day operations.¹⁰

Specialization of a printing workforce and new printing machine inventions was becoming much more necessary for publications like London's *Times*, whose circulation had reached 5,000 by 1813. What followed from 1814 till the eve of the Crimean War was a cycle of inventors and entrepreneurs constantly improving previous machines and increasing output levels, with newspaper publications eagerly awaiting to buy their machines. Some of the most notable machines to emerge from the years 1814-1851 included the Koning Steam Press (1814), the Cowper & Applegath printing machine (1828), and the Applegath vertical rotary press (1848).¹¹

With the frequency of new, more complex, and more expensive machines hitting the markets, certain publications began to assert themselves within the British printing

¹⁰ Musson, *Newspaper Printing in the Industrial Revolution*, 414; Dallas Liddle, "The News Machine: Textual Form and Information Function in the London 'Times', 1785–1885," *Book History*, Vol. 19 (2016), 134.

¹¹ Musson, *Newspaper Printing in the Industrial Revolution*, 414-415, 417; Liddle, *The News Machine*, 157; Moran, *The Development of the Printing Press*, 288-290; Shannon Rose Smith, "Technologies of Production," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (Routledge, 2016), 34.

scene.¹² With a vast reading base and wealth to draw upon money, publications like the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, rather than look to the market for the latest invention, began to strike exclusivity deals with inventors like Augustus Applegath to create in-house printing machines. Exclusively built printing machines not only gatekept the latest technology from the competition but also brought prestige to the publication that possessed it.¹³ Meanwhile, other publications continued to be a printing machine iteration behind. By 1854, British printing, along with other sectors of manufacturing, had reached its known heights; nineteenth-century editor Robert Chambers even quoted how transformative the steam printing press was, “the power of steam was transforming the outward face of English life.”¹⁴ With most publications either having the most up-to-date machine or a machine an iteration behind, regardless, publications could now comfortably provide the news to an increasing reading base. We shall see the place newspapers again, and the printing press had within Britain and the British imagination with the Great Exhibition of 1851, the vast iterations of steam power, and the printing press with displays showing how technologically far steam-powered innovations had come.

Of course, advancements in printing technology tell only one facet of why the British press succeeded in the early and mid-nineteenth century and continued to succeed at an exponential rate afterward, particularly after the Crimean War. One explanation for

¹² A Koning Steam Press costs ten times as much when compared to a Stanhope hand press (£95). One can infer that this trend of printing presses becoming increasingly more expensive happened throughout the century.

¹³ Twyman, *Printing*, 53; Rose, *Technologies of Production*, 35.

¹⁴ Quoted in Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 186-187.

British printing and its success is the gradual easing of harsh fiscal and legal restraints targeting the press from the early nineteenth century till the midpoint in 1855. Attempts by the English/British government to restrict the growth of the press dated back to as early as the late seventeenth century with the Press Licensing Act in 1693; however, this law soon lapsed in 1695.¹⁵ The first proper duty or tax on newspapers occurred in the early eighteenth century, specifically during the midst of the War of Spanish Succession, as a way to generate revenue and thus began another cyclical process of Parliament gradually increasing the duty on newspapers to censor the growing press.¹⁶ Parliaments dabbling with speech speaks to another theme common within early and mid-nineteenth-century discourses within Britain, whether the state had the power or could, in fact, censor speech and views and whether taxation as a form of censorship was effective.

Parliament's attempts to stymie the growth of the British press through taxation came from the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century and the succeeding Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century. Fearful of the purveyance of radical thought across the country, the Tory lead governments of Pitt the Younger and Addington took extra measures to crack down on the press by increasing the stamp duty even further from 1 ½ *d* to 2*d*.¹⁷ Further price hikes would follow in the wake of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, which sparked even further fears of the spread of radicalism in Britain. However, by clamping down on the perception of radicalism, the British government created numerous opportunities for further expansion. Expansion came in several forms,

¹⁵ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Scolar Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁶ Law, *Distribution*, 43.

¹⁷ Cox, Mowatt, *The Economics of Press and Periodical Production*, 36.

one being prestige publications and periodicals ranging from 6s publications like the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly* while also cementing a quasi-monopoly for publications like the *Times*.¹⁸

Interestingly enough, by the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, the *Times* had seen record sales due to public interest in the war. This fact coincided with parliaments clamping down on the presses' growth, leaving many Britons with no choice but to turn to the *Times* as their primary source of information.¹⁹ It should be no surprise that scholars would point to the *Times* between 1815 to 1841 as Britain's first national publication. However, the likes of Andrew Hobbs would conversely argue that Britain's provincial press needs re-examining. Rather than looking at publications as a singular entity, many of Britain's provincial publications operated and viewed themselves as a networked and collective entity.²⁰

The second area of expansion that emerged was that of the radical underground or "unstamped" press, which looked to circumvent the laws laid down by Parliament. Some of the earliest "unstamped" publications to rise out of Parliament's legislation were titles like *Political Register*, *Black Dwarf*, and the *Twopenny Register*. These publications escaped taxation due to technicalities and wording in the law regarding the material these publications printed their news. However, in 1819 under the Six Acts legislation, ambiguous technicalities such as what material information found itself on became

¹⁸ Ibid, 36.

¹⁹ J. Holland Rose, "The Unstamped Press, 1815-1836," *The English Historical Review*, Oct. 1897, Vol. 12, No. 48 (Oct. 1897), 712; Law, *Distribution*, 45.

²⁰ Cox, Mowatt, *The Economics of Press and Periodical Production*, 38; Andrew Hobbs, "WHEN THE PROVINCIAL PRESS WAS THE NATIONAL PRESS (c.1836-c.1900)," *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies* 5, no. 1 (2009), 19.

clearly defined, opening more publications to taxation.²¹ Following the passing of the Six Acts was an explosion of unstamped publications with estimates of new, often deemed "radical" publications numbering 163 between 1815 and 1830. Still, many of these publications only survived a short time due to the sparse numbers of readers.²²

What Parliamentary legislation did do, though, was imbue these publications with a new sense of purpose, on the one hand, fight to end the stamp duties, which would, in turn, allow for more press freedom. However, restrictions on the press came to embody an attack on the civil liberties of Britons, whose freedom of choosing which publication they wanted to read was severely limited. Aled Jones quoted as much, saying, "the connection between freedom of the press and civil liberty, established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had by the turn of the nineteenth century become a firmly rooted English tradition...producers of cheap newspapers whether they regarded themselves primarily as forces of radical opposition, or as pioneers of a new commercial medium regarded themselves as heirs to that tradition."²³

The unstamped press would adhere to this mantra in the significant decade of the 1830s. The 1830s was a time of substantial political reform with the Reform Act passing in 1832, citizens and politicians pining for the end of the Corn Laws (which would not occur until 1846), but for the press, the reduction of stamp duties.²⁴ The legislation of the 1810s and 1820s showed efforts not only attempting to stem the growth of the press. Legislation during this period also sought to stem the flow of thought to the people

²¹ J. Holland Rose, *The Unstamped Press, 1815-1836*, 713-714.

²² Ibid, 717.

²³ Jones, *Power of the Press*, 12.

²⁴ Cow, Mowatt, *Economics of Press Production*, 39.

negatively. As J. Holland Rose succinctly put it, "A study of the unstamped press is important, not only as showing its tendency to degrade the public taste and lower the tone of the legal journals but also as illustrating the increasing prevalence of leveling and communistic ideas among working men after 1815."²⁵ For this reason, many advocates for reducing or outright abolishing the stamp duties argued that stamp duties were 'taxes on knowledge,' and this concerted effort led to the reduction of stamp duties from 4d to 1d in the 1836 Newspaper Act.²⁶

Passing the 1836 Newspaper Act killed the unstamped press but allowed its immediate successor, the provincial press to thrive. Of course, like prestige and unstamped publications, the provincial press grew concurrently, albeit slowly, but not on the scale of publications like the *Times*. However, the provincial press, as noted by scholars such as Andrew Hobbs, Andrew J.H. Jackson, and Aled Jones, insisted that viewing the provincial press is viewed as a network or syndicate rather than viewing them as a singular entity. Many provincial publications viewed themselves as interconnected entities, and local and regional publications frequently reported on each other, thus binding both publication and their readers.²⁷ Viewing the provincial press as a separate entity away from the center of London also allows local newspapers to have their own agency in their affairs. Of course, some local papers were more reliant upon

²⁵ Rose, *Unstamped Press, 1815-1836*, 716.

²⁶ Law, *Distribution*, 44; Jones, *Powers of the Press*, 20-21; Rose, *Unstamped Press, 1815-1836*, 725.

²⁷ Andrew J.H. Jackson, "The Provincial, Local, and Regional Press," in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, Volume 2: Expansion and Evolution*, ed. David Finkelstein, (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 711; Hobbs, *When the Provincial Press was the National Press*, 22-23; Hobbs, "Provincial Periodicals," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (Routledge, 2016), 221.

London than others. However, in cities like Manchester, Dublin, or Edinburgh, with vibrant literary cultures, the emphasis on relying on London for news or information was much diminished, instead readers in these areas viewed their local papers as the center of information with London papers like the *Times* as a tertiary or peripheral source.²⁸ To add to contributions like Jackson and Hobbs, understanding why local papers were keen to keep the news local will go a long way to understanding how the provincial press operated during the Crimean War. By maintaining a local perspective in their reporting, local papers not only fostered more significant endorsement of local and regional identities while at times connecting the local/regional to the nation while also keeping the influence of London at bay.

Terms like “provincial” can be very ambiguous and mean many things. Thus further explanation is required. Using the provincial press and framing it as a non-London entity further exemplifies the diversity in print that existed within the periphery. However, it further explains how many local and regional publications were divorced from London. Still, it also shows how many non-London publications came to operate independently without needing London newspapers. Still, they also viewed themselves as the center of social and political life. In the early nineteenth century, the provincial press, especially in the mid-nineteenth century, was a tapestry of literature and news encompassing England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. It would be fair to shine a light on

²⁸ Harry Stopes, “From Manchester and Lille to the World: Nineteenth-Century Provincial Cities Conceptualize Their Place in the Global Order,” In *Re-Mapping Centre and Periphery: Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Contexts*, edited by Tessa Hauswedell, Axel Körner, and Ulrich Tiedau, 94–108, (UCL Press, 2019), 91-92.

Scottish, Welsh, and Irish publications to show how they operated within the broader British press landscape and to show how they differentiated from each other.

By the nineteenth century, Scotland and, by extension, Edinburgh became, to quote David Finkelstein, the “second literary city in Great Britain (outside of London),” with influential publications like *Blackwood’s Magazine*, *Edinburgh Review*, and *Chamber’s Edinburgh Journal* dominating the city.²⁹ Within the Scottish press alone, serialization and essay-length review articles became the hallmark of publications and journalism within Scotland. Edinburgh dominated the Scottish press throughout the eighteenth century, but the city faced new competition from cities like the industrialized Glasgow and Aberdeen by the nineteenth century.³⁰ During this period, a healthy Scottish Gaelic press within the highland regions of Scotland helped preserve the Gaelic identity during a time of emigration away from the regions.³¹ A distinct lowland and highland divide emerged, which came to characterize the Scottish press landscape. The Gaelic Press reported on the news with a Celtic tinge in mind, which not only uniquely placed them separately from the rest of Britain (except perhaps Ireland). But, the Scots Gaelic press helped it distinguish them from their lowland cousins, whose publications looked more akin to Northern English publications to denote the cross-border exchanges.

²⁹ David Finkelstein, “Periodicals in Scotland,” in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (Routledge, 2016), 185.

³⁰ Jackson, *The Provincial, Local, and Regional Press*, 711.

³¹ Sheila M. Kidd, “The Scottish Gaelic Press.” In *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, Volume 2: Expansion and Evolution, 1800-1900*, edited by David Finkelstein, (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 340.

The Irish press during the nineteenth century, similar to the Scottish, centered around urban areas like Dublin, Belfast, Cork, and Galway. However, the Irish press in these urban areas was mainly produced in English even though the Irish, until the 1850s, conversed in Irish Gaelic rather than English. Additionally, literacy rates in rural Ireland remained low, particularly in Catholic areas, with Connaught reporting literacy rates at 15 percent compared to Ulster's 85 percent in the 1841 Census.³² The Irish press and its readership remained contained within the urban areas. Content amongst Irish publications was highly politicized, covering a range of topics of interest from the 1800 Acts of Union, the tithe wars, and of course, the great famine were all moments that galvanized parts of the Irish press. The Great Famine and the Young Ireland movement and uprising of 1848 proved highly significant in fostering Irish nationalism through the press. Of course, the famine devastated and depleted much of Ireland's population through starvation or immigration to new parts of the world. The effects of the famines' destruction ushered in fresh attempts to anglicize the Irish. However, attempts at anglicization, in turn, only fostered more and more efforts to promote Irish cultural identity.³³ The 1850s, unlike the 1830s, proved crucial for the Irish press, be sure the 1836 Newspaper Act helped facilitate growth as it had done elsewhere, but by 1850 literacy amongst the Irish (albeit via an English language education) significantly

³² Elizabeth Tilley, "Periodicals in Ireland," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (Routledge, 2016), 208.

³³ Ann Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers: The Dublin Nationalist Press in the mid-nineteenth century*, (Liverpool University Press, 2014), 13-14.

accelerated. By the 1850s, many more Irish flocked to the press to learn about the world or hear of nationalist movements.³⁴

The 1850s and the Crimean War, in particular, played a unique role in Ireland's relationship with the rest of Britain. According to Paul Huddie, Ireland, a few years removed from the Famine and Young Ireland Movement, found itself in a lull of nationalistic sentiments.³⁵ During the war, the Irish economy, in fact, grew thanks to reinvestment in the agricultural sector and the Irish populace largely rallied to support the British Army, which still held a substantial number of Irishmen in the army. However, as we shall see in chapter four, the anti-English sentiment still lingered if letters from Irish newspaper readers indicated lingering resentment. Yet I argue that Ireland's popular response to this war set itself up for the coming Home Rule movement of the 1870s, popular support for Irish exploits in the war coupled with the Indian Uprising in 1857 reignited notions of a free Ireland away from Britain.

Welsh newspapers faced the most significant challenge compared to their English, Irish and Scottish counterparts. Limitations on Welsh newspaper growth were primarily because of geographic obstacles facing Welsh publications. Despite passing the 1836 Newspaper Act, which benefited nearly all British publications, the Welsh newspaper landscape still struggled for growth.³⁶ Several factors contributed to Wales's slow press development. During the nineteenth century, Wales remained a relatively rural region, separated by rugged terrain with limited infrastructure to help facilitate the transmission

³⁴ Andrews, *Newspapers and Newsmakers*, 15.

³⁵ Paul Huddie, *The Crimean War and Irish Society*, (Liverpool University Press, 2015), 7.

³⁶ Lisa Peters, *Welsh Periodicals and Newspapers*, 195.

of information from one area to another. Of course, the existence of two languages (Welsh and English) did not help the situation either, but it begs the question if Scottish and Irish Gaelic presses could maintain growth, why did the Welsh struggle? Again, this speaks to the troubles of communication and infrastructure Wales faced during this time. Still, the Welsh press, like the Gaelic Irish press, faced troubles of anglicization by the southern Welsh publications (printed in English) and publications coming out of border towns such as Bristol and Chester. In effect, the proliferation of English-language newspapers left the possibility of a flourishing Welsh-language press severely limited.³⁷

The provincial press was, in fact, not the sole product of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the early provincial press originated in the late seventeenth century with publications such as *Worcester Post*, *Hull Courant*, and the *Edinburgh Courant*, to name a few.³⁸ The growth of the provincial press throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and until 1836 remained relatively stagnate due in part to the stamp duties, which forced publications to keep the prices of their papers high and discouraged aspiring printers from starting their paper due to high start-up costs. However, the provincial press advanced in other ways by producing local identities. Local identity has often been difficult to nail down amongst scholars. On the one hand, we understand that local identity and pride exist, we have all felt it during our lives, but in the same vein, we struggle to describe it precisely.³⁹ While expressions of identity come in many forms, local newspapers were one of, if not the most significant expression of locality during the mid-nineteenth

³⁷ Peters, *Welsh Periodicals and Newspapers*, 196.

³⁸ Jackson, *The Provincial, Local, and Regional Press*, 711.

³⁹ Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900*, (Open Book Publishers, 2019) 268.

century within Britain. Some localities had a much more defined sense of self and place because some towns existed much longer than others. Take, for example, Manchester in Northern England. By the mid-nineteenth century, Manchester had a much more urban and industrial sense of self from which they could define and differentiate themselves compared to other towns. On the other side, towns of Southeastern England, with their closeness to London, reflected in their expressions of identity and how they reported the news.

The style and format of the provincial press also warrant attention as it further exemplifies expressions of local identity. Much of the provincial press formatted their newspapers in line with the larger London-based publications with dedicated sections, often republished from reports coming out of London on international events.⁴⁰ Of course, the provincial press would report on local and regional news and matters to set themselves apart from the London press. Still, provincial publications held numerous and diverse miscellaneous or topical stories within their pages to draw in new readers. This topical content could include geography, history, literature, poetry, satire, business-related topics, and scientific news.⁴¹ The frequency of publication production is also noteworthy. Unlike London publications, which could afford to run their business as a daily newspaper outlet, the provincial press could encompass anything from quarterly magazines and weekly publications with extensive supplementary add-ons comprising 12 pages to the regular daily publication.

⁴⁰ Jackson, *The Provincial, Local, and Regional Press*, 713; Hobbs, *Provincial Periodicals*, 226.

⁴¹ Hobbs, *Provincial Periodicals*, 226.

One cannot discuss European events during the nineteenth century without addressing the formation of identity and national consciousness throughout the century. Of course, I have noted how local identity was already occurring within England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, but what of a coherent national identity? Scholars of Britain had long discussed the development of a collective British consciousness comprising English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish cultures and when this process began. To further add to the idea of forming national identity, using Benedict Anderson's framework of the role newspapers had in propelling and enhancing the promotion of identity on a national level. Scholars who have looked at the history of the British Isles have long debated precisely when the idea of Britishness emerged. Was it a development of the eighteenth century, nineteenth-century, or did it occur before or after these two periods, and under what circumstances contributed to the emergence of British identity? One of the most impactful theses on Britishness came from Linda Colley's work *Britons* which argued that Britain's national identity emerged with the 1707 Acts of Union between England and Scotland, growing throughout the eighteenth century and culminating with the ascension of Queen Victoria. According to Colley, war, and religion, mainly in opposition to France, was the primary factor that forged the English, Scottish, and Welsh cultures together during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴²

While war as a force from which people and cultures can unify and rally behind is an influential factor, it cannot be the only factor people require to formulate a coherent identity. It is here that Colley's argument, while important, has come under scrutiny from

⁴² Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, (Yale University Press, 1992), 5-6; Colley does not include Ireland into the equation, given that Ireland was only added to the Union in 1801 and due to the complicated nature of relations.

other scholars. The problem with using 1707 and war as a cause for forming a British identity opens this argument to other interpretations. For example, could an argument be made that British identity formed when James ascended the throne of England, thus binding it with Scotland? Also, while France often acted as England and Britain's foil for many years, what of states such as Spain and the Netherlands, which at various points in history also acted as existential threats to England? ⁴³ There is also the issue of proclaiming a firm date of the inception of identity as it implies Britishness began in 1707, all the while Scottishness, Englishness, or Welshness stopped at that moment. Of course, these cultures were themselves in a constant state of evolution. If Britishness began in 1707, it would have to adapt along with the cultures of England, Scotland, and Wales proving challenging to pin down.⁴⁴ The idea of English hegemony has often arisen when discussing the affairs of Britain, did the Welsh and Scottish act as their own agents? In the case of eighteenth-century warfare, did the Irish, Welsh, and Scottish fight with Britain in mind or for the benefit of England? Take, for example, the Scottish Highlands until 1746. The Scottish Highlands remained outside the affairs of the army and state due to Jacobite affiliations. However, only after the Stuarts dynasty's final defeat at Culloden did all of Scotland play a more active role in affairs. While I partly agree with Colley's notions that Britishness was an "invented" idea to unite the British Isles, Colley's

⁴³ J. C. D., Clark, "Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity, 1660-1832," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 1 (2000), 260-261; Colley also contends that anti-Papal sentiment was also a reason to form a British identity throughout the eighteenth-century that only died away with the outbreak of revolution within France.

⁴⁴ Categorizing the British Isles' inhabitants under English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish cultures only touches the surface. Of course, sub-cultures also exist with Northumbrians and Lowland Scots compared to Highland Scots, Cornish, and a North-South Welsh divide, to name a few.

arguments downplay the role of regional and local identities across Britain. For national identity to occur, one must understand their identity and place at the local level. Of course, local identity was but one type of identity at play, and there are always different types of identities overlapping or playing off each other ranging from political and religious to those of class.

A more apt historical event that could better unify all the inhabitants of the British Isles was the Industrial Revolution.⁴⁵ Scholars like Krishan Kumar, Linda Connors, and Mary Lu MacDonald have noted how the process of industrialization within Britain served as a better event or process from which to forge a British identity. With industrialization, all peoples of Britain could be a part of it as it affected England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland to different degrees. Through industrialization came the idea that Britain and its people were not only technologically ascendant compared to their closest neighbors or rivals but were increasingly progressing forward.⁴⁶ The process of industrialization also feeds into previously mentioned themes. Industrialization allowed for the more significant expansion of print media, which allowed for the greater fostering of local, regional, and national identities. According to Mary Lu MacDonald and Linda Connors, the expansion of print media allowed publishers to shape and create new national identities along with regional and local identities. Compound the shaping and forming of identities with the fact that information was becoming much more readily

⁴⁵ Throughout the rest of this thesis, the Industrial Revolution will be regarded as industrialization to emphasize it as a process rather than a singular event.

⁴⁶ Krishan Kumar "Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 5 (2000), 590-591.

available. Newspaper readers could quickly identify foreign civilizations and easily compare them to their own.⁴⁷

With the progression of industrialization along with print media becoming much more firmly placed within Britain by the nineteenth century, newspapers and newsmakers could define what it meant to be English, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish and mend these distinct cultures into a workable understanding of Britishness as well, and readers guarded with a greater knowledge of the outside world could use this information to compare their civilization with those surrounding them. However, using industrialization has its shortfalls, namely the disparity it affected classes, with the working classes suffering incredible hardships toiling away in workshops across Britain. In contrast, the rising middle class gained much more in terms of profits. Hence, it also begs the question of whether the working classes identified the process of industrialization as a symbol to identify with.

The role of newspapers as shapers and creators of national identity and nationalism warrants further examination because newspapers became the most readily accessible medium for all social classes. The first and most important argument for the role print media played in creating national identities comes from Benedict Anderson's timeless work, *Imagined Communities*, which attempts to address how and why nationalism and national consciousness emerged and dominated human history.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Linda Connors and Mary Lu MacDonald, *National Identity in Great Britain and British North America, 1815-1851: The Role of Nineteenth-Century Periodicals*, (Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 4-5.

⁴⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (Verso, 1993), 4.

Throughout *Imagined Communities*, Anderson presents many compelling arguments into why nationalism emerged, but perhaps the most impactful and pertinent to my work is the argument on the role print and print language had in propelling national consciousness. According to Anderson, the rise of the printed word allowed for the formation of print capitalism and printed languages of power, or in other words, the creation of high languages and monolingualistic glues to unite a diverse group of peoples.⁴⁹

It is through print capitalism and languages of power Anderson argues that we begin to see the creation of imagined communities. Through a streamlined print language, a large conglomerate of people largely ignorant of each other's existence is brought together in the shared experience of partaking in the reading of news or the printed word. I agree with Anderson's assessment that languages of power help form identity. Newspapers and their proprietors used language and keywords to reinforce notions of identity. I also believe identity building happened at multiple levels, from local newspapers with low circulation to larger, more urban publications with a wide circulation area, such as the Times. Still, in the context of Britain, newspaper diversity, circulation and interconnectivity made readers quite aware of how similar or different their town was to one another by reading various newspapers. In many cases, newspaper readers had a fundamental understanding of what defined Britain as a patchwork of different towns existing in different regions that shared similar characteristics.

Anderson, like other scholars, has noted that states have attempted to implement "official nationalism" upon the populace despite the diversity in regions and localities. In

⁴⁹ Ibid, 42-45.

the case of Britain, this manifested itself in promoting English as the primary language of communication, much to the detriment of regional languages such as Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, and Irish Gaelic.⁵⁰ In terms of when Britishness emerged, other scholars place the early to mid-nineteenth century as a crucial moment for this formation. I agree that the mid-nineteenth century was crucial for a greater fostering of Britishness but adding the 1850s in conjunction with the outbreak of the Crimean War was even more significant. The Crimean War brings together all the factors and arguments by Colley, Anderson, Anne Andrews, Connors, MacDonald, and Kumar. Britain, in 1854, found itself in the middle of a significant European conflict forty years removed from the last major one, but now with a highly sophisticated newspaper apparatus with a presence throughout the isles, this thanks to the processes of industrialization. With an extensive reach across the isles and newspaper publications, their writers and editors could effectively report on the war and, using framework works like Anderson's "languages of power," could influence and mold identities, whether regional or national. It was not the state doing it but newspapers and those who ran them.

Nevertheless, one cannot explain the importance British print media would play throughout the nineteenth century without mentioning or discussing the importance of class and its role in Britain in the nineteenth century. Class and its significance within society always have been and will continue to be a contentious topic of discussion. Many famous scholars have approached this topic from various angles; who held power in nineteenth-century Britain, the upper, the middle, or the working? Were there three distinct classes that were the most learned, and what was the target audience of

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 89-90.

newspapers? One of the most noteworthy scholars to look at the social setting in nineteenth-century Britain comes from Richard Altick's seminal work *The English Common Reader*. The English Common Reader provides a deep understanding of reading practices, literacy rates, and the explosion of print in Britain. Altick argues that at the turn of the nineteenth century, the British Isles experienced rapid population growth expanding from 9 million in 1800 and growing to 18 million by 1850.⁵¹ Population growth coincided with the rise of industrialization in Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. With industrialization came more sophisticated jobs that required levels of literacy previously not needed. Altick argues that industrialization began the process of the middle class becoming a mass reading class which slowly trickled down to the working classes. Altick's work, a remarkable achievement in the 1950s, still holds to this day. However, it is limited in scope in that it only covers the mass-reading public of England with scant mentions of the social situation within Scotland, Wales, or Ireland during this time. Altick also keeps his work grounded by looking solely at the people who read nothing more and nothing less. He does not foray into ideals of whether class consciousness emerged because the ability to read or access newspapers factored in. Instead, the works give the reader a fair indication of which class did read, not how they felt about it.

Since Altick published *The English Common Reader* in the 1950s, many scholars have followed in his footsteps to expand upon his initial thesis on how the people of the British Isles became a mass reading public, and all have viewed this progression through

⁵¹ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, (Ohio State University Press, 1998), 81-82.

the lens of class. As already mentioned, under the best circumstances, class is a complex term to understand and apply to societies because scholars apply several interpretations of the term and concept. Class makeup within nineteenth-century Britain is equally tenuous because, for all intents and purposes, Britain became defined by changes to class structure, and its people broadly defined themselves along those lines. Of course, scholars have debated just how far a class consciousness permeated society during the nineteenth century, and scholars have also discussed just how much power and control each class had and did we define it.

Of course, one cannot discuss class in Britain without invoking the work of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. In his timeless work, Thompson argues that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century became the moment class consciousness from both working middle and upper classes formed and defined themselves along those lines.⁵² Thompson's thesis has, since the 60s, undergone numerous reexaminations. Scholars like R.S. Neale argue that dividing class along upper, middle, and working stratifications is far too simplistic and an explanation for the complexities of class during this period. Instead, Neale expanded the class hierarchy to include numerous sub-divisions of classes to reflect the nuances separating families and social mobility experienced during the century.⁵³ Thompson's thesis also falls under too narrow of a view of motivations and circumstances facing the British during the nineteenth century, no doubt, economic factors were crucial during this period, but

⁵² Martin Hewitt, "Class and the Classes," in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, edited by Chris Williams, (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 311.

⁵³ R.S. Neale "Class and Class-Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?" *Victorian Studies* 12, no. 1 (1968), 6.

interpretations of this kind overlook the political consciousness which permeated this period. We can see how vital political consciousness played in nineteenth-century Britain with the passing of the hotly debated Reform Act in 1832 and the emergence and contentions surrounding the chartist movement of the late 1830s into the 1850s.

There is also the matter of defining who held power in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The British working class undoubtedly suffered under the rapidly changing conditions of industrialization. Still, it does not explain whether the newly emerged middle or middling classes usurped the aristocracy as the most powerful class in Britain. Much historiography concluded that the middle class was the dominant class of the century. This consensus became prevalent in the 1960s, influenced by Marxist interpretations of class conflict. However, these interpretations fell short of encapsulating the diverse makeup of classes that occupied Britain. Most early discussions of the middle class looked at the industrial sector of the middle class but not members of the middle class who held salaried jobs or commercial jobs. These interpretations also overlooked the equally diverse makeup of the working class. Most recent scholarship has unsurprisingly reevaluated the power and trajectories of classes within Britain during the nineteenth century. Reevaluating power within Britain is especially true of Britain's aristocracy. Traditionally views of this class viewed the aristocracy and landed gentry as a class under siege, conceding power to the middle class throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 ate into the power of the aristocracy. However, according to Linda Colley, the upper classes still held considerable power, which did not wane until the latter decades of the nineteenth century. As for the middle and working classes, the trajectories of these classes gradually became more

favorable throughout the decades, particularly after the mid-century in the wake of the repeal of the Corn Laws.

This thesis will be divided into four succeeding chapters spanning the early to mid-nineteenth century. In chapter two, I argue that early nineteenth-century developments within the press and British society placed the press in a readymade position to report on the war. Thanks to technological developments in printing technology brought on by enterprising inventors, various iterations of steam printing machines came onto the market, allowing publications to reach new heights in output and production. There were, of course, societal changes happening in Britain as well, most significantly the rise in literacy and the predisposition amongst Britons to turn to newspapers to get information on the wider world.⁵⁴ By 1854, the British press and people were primed to engage with the war in various ways; the press could comfortably meet the demands of the people who would soon clamor for news coming out of Russia.

Looking at the London press through the lens of three different publications, the *Times*, *Illustrated London News*, and *Punch Magazine*, chapter three argues that certain publications such as the *Times* and *Illustrated London News* were in better positions (when compared to other British publications) to report on the war. However, with the inclusion of *Punch* in the discussion, London offered a variety of stylistic news coverage ranging from traditional reporting styles, reporting interjected with a visual representation of events, or satirical commentary on the war. With these resources at their disposal, publications like the *Times* could accurately and quickly bring the war home as if in real-

⁵⁴ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 4-5.

time. Still, these publications, based in London, were also in a prime position to exert a certain level of influence on not just British citizens but also British decision-makers.

Conversely, chapter four will address the provincial press. Among the questions surrounding the provincial press is how they covered the war compared to the London press. I argue that it varied from publication to publication and depended upon the publication's size at the time of the war's outbreak. Publications in urban areas such as Manchester, Edinburgh, Dublin, or Liverpool could devote more resources to covering the war. They could produce their own independent reports while other publications could not. However, provincial publications still deferred to London on much of the war coverage in one form or another. Instead, I argue, many provincial publications covered the war pertaining to that publication's locality. Publications wished to inform their local readers about residents turned soldiers. Provincial publications wished to inform their readers in myriad ways, all in some form or another, published letters from residents of a local town who went into the army and were now acting as impromptu correspondents. Other publications glorified army regiments usually associated with specific regions, the most notable example being the Scottish press and its praise for their beloved highlander regiments. However, as I note, the provincial press faced a second issue: their continued lobbying and fighting against "taxes on knowledge." Since 1836 the provincial press, not settling for the 1d stamp duty, argued for (some even against) the abolition of this last form of censorship, their wishes finally being answered in June 1855. The abolishment of the penny stamp and the continued coverage of the war led to exponential growth in the provincial press, establishing new publications and facilitating sales in others.

Chapter five will address how the British people interacted with the war via the press. As argued by other historians, Stefanie Markovits being one of the most prominent, the Crimean War significantly impacted British society.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Crimean War accelerated a process started in previous decades. The Crimean War compelled or inspired more people to approach and interact with the press. Citizens, soldiers, and politicians alike all found a use for the press in some capacity. Citizens and soldiers, many of them belonging to the same social classes within Britain, already saw the value the press brought. Still, amid war, these two groups of society felt more drawn to the press than ever before. The press allowed groups to enter public spheres, many of them for the first time; soldiers wrote letters to loved ones expecting them to end up in a newspaper publication, while citizens interacted with the war and public spheres via “letters to the editor.” British politicians likewise adjusted to the press and their war coverage. Politicians maintained a constant correspondence with editors of newspapers, held debates in public settings, and yet it still allowed the press to mount enough pressure to force a change in government events. However, this matter is still a topic of much debate.⁵⁶

The story of the Crimean War, apart from showing how crucial the press played within society, but how Britain’s middle and working classes were equally vital to the press’s success during this period. The press could not succeed without a mass reading audience. Via the newspapers and how they framed the Crimean War, local and regional

⁵⁵ Stefanie Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

⁵⁶ *The History of The Times: The Tradition Established, 1841-1884*, (Times, 1939),

identities became more apparent to a more significant number of people. Not only did local and regional identities become more apparent, their contributions blended into understandings of national identity and pride. Peripheral intermingled with the nation's ideals just as private struggle intermingled with public struggle, as reported by the press. The events of the war and how Britain's press presented it showed how lacking Britain's leadership was, which was further conflated with the lionization of Britain's rank-and-file soldiers through moments like the "thin red line" or the Charge of the Light Brigade. The Crimean War was indeed a significant event for Britain. It brought to the fore how far technology had come if it was not already clear, compelled more people to interact in the public sphere, and firmly cemented the press's place within society

II. RISE OF THE BRITISH PRESS: POPULAR READERSHIP AND NEWSPAPER GROWTH BEFORE CRIMEA

To understand how Britain's press reported on the Crimean War, one must first understand the context from which the press and people developed. Among the most significant developments that impacted Britain's printing landscape ranged from the rapid growth of technological innovation in the printing process, which allowed large and small publications to increase newspaper and periodical output. Legal and fiscal reforms though slow and not as impactful as intended, opened the door for future more important reform heading into the mid-1850s and the growth and appetite for readership among the British people, particularly the growing middle class. These three developments resulted in a highly sophisticated and diverse newspaper and news reporting landscape with an increasingly literate population with a desire for knowledge and a production apparatus uplifted with technology and steadily loosening rules and regulations. This highly developed press landscape would inherit the events of the Crimean War of 1854-1856. Britain, when compared to any other nation of Europe at the time, proved the most prepared and able to report on every facet of the war, thanks in no small part to these developments in the early nineteenth century.

Technological Developments in Printing, 1814-1851

To explain how the British press became pivotal to the British nation during the Crimean War, one must first explain how the press developed before the outbreak of war in March 1854. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the technological developments of printing and explain how, at the turn of the century, a manual process transformed into a semiautomated one with production from London publications and others reaching

unimaginable heights. What emerged from technological innovation was a system ready-made to report and distribute not only British affairs but affairs in the wider world. The British clamored for information, and the rapidly industrializing landscape of Britain's press responded to this desire through invention and innovation in printing and distribution. Even Parliament responded through fiscal and legal reforms to expedite the process, leading to a media landscape willing and able to report on any scenario, whether local or foreign news.

The practice and art of printing within the British Isles had already undergone many changes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For practicality, this section will not delve into the intricacies of multiple centuries of early British printing development. Instead, for this chapter, the critical year of 1814 will be the start of this chapter's analysis of British press development.¹ In November 1814, the *Times*, London's most noteworthy newspaper publication, installed two Koenig steam presses to increase newspaper production. Co-invented by Thuringian inventors Frederick Koenig and Andreas Bauer, both men had made their way to London by the early nineteenth century. As common in early nineteenth-century London, Koenig, and Bauer were best characterized as tinkerers and inventors. Koenig and Bauer invented a steam-powered press that increased output from 250 impressions per hour to 1,100 impressions per hour. Upon the machine's debut, the *Times* published an article stating that the new steam printing press was "the greatest improvement connected with printing, since the discovery of the art itself."² Koenig, authoring a detailed article for the *Times*, expanded

¹ For more information on late eighteenth-century British printing developments, see Michael Twyman's *Printing: 1770-1970*.

² "London, Tuesday, November 20, 1814," *Times*, Nov 29, 1814, Times Digital Archive.

further into how his steam press is a new, more updated version of the previous printing process. Koenig states, “Impressions produced by means of cylinders, which others had already attempted without the desired effects, were again tried by me upon a new plan, namely, to place the sheet round the cylinder, thereby making it, as it were, part of its periphery.”³

Unlike before, two men operated the printing machine, where one worker focused on managing the impressions, and the second worker concentrated on feeding the paper into the machine. Koenig’s new steam press revolutionized printing by doing away with one worker substituting him with cylinders, who would now manage the impression process. To further exemplify the importance of Koenig’s invention and application of the steam press, *Penny Magazine*, a London-based publication, provides a detailed analysis of the requirements needed to produce a book or newspaper. In volume four of *The Commercial History of a Penny Magazine*, the author Charles Knight states that:

Two men, working eight hours a day each, would produce 1000 perfect impressions (impressions on each side) of a sheet per day; and thus, if a book consisted of twenty sheets (the size of an ordinary schoolbook), one press would produce the twenty sheets in 200 days. If a printer, therefore, were engaged in the production of such a schoolbook, who could only devote one press to the operation, it would require nearly three quarters of a year to complete 10,000 copies of that work. It is thus evident that if the work were to be published in a given day, it must begin to be printed at least three-quarters of a year before it could be published.⁴

Knight surmised that even under perfect conditions, the *Times* using the old printing method with two workers (one feeding, one pressing), struggled to produce five thousand copies of its daily paper in time for morning distribution. Knight also states that by 1814

³ “To The Public,” *Times*, Dec 8, 1814, 2, Times Digital Archive.

⁴ Charles Knight, “The Commercial History of a Penny Magazine, Vol 2, Issue 112,” in *1833 Penny Magazine*, London (1833), 507.

more Londoners were interested in the daily news in Britain and abroad. According to Knight, newspaper reading was becoming vogue, and readers began to rely upon publications like the *Times* to provide this information.

Following the implementation of the steam press in November 1814, production more than doubled, allowing the *Times* to produce ten thousand copies in two and a half hours.⁵ Reception to the new printing machine was widely positive. In one article from the *Bristol Mirror*, the author states that the print's clarity was unmatched. After going through a learning curve regarding the intricacies of how the machine operates, the *Bristol Mirror* states that the cost of acquiring the steam press would be a worthy investment due to the number of papers printed and distributed to the people.⁶ The public declaration of Koenig's steam press also prompted other copycat patents similar to the Koenig steam press to enter the printing market. The *Saunders's News-Letter* of Dublin, Ireland, writes in December of 1814 that a Mr. Bacon of Norwich claimed to have created his own steam press, which he claims could out-produce the steam press employed by the *Times*.⁷ The introduction of Koenig's steam press certainly impressed other publishers within the London area and across Britain. Following the *Times'* announcement of the steam press auctions and sales of machines similar to Koenig's description began to emerge within newspapers' advertisement and auction sections with

⁵ Ibid, 508.

⁶ "The New Printing Press," *Bristol Mirror*, Dec 17, 1814, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷ "Great Improvement in Printing," *Saunders's Newsletter*, Dec 7, 1814, 2, British Newspaper Archive; Throughout the nineteenth century, provincial publications constantly kept tabs on London-based and other provincial publications. The interconnectivity of the provincial press scene will be fleshed out further in chapter four, which covers the provincial press during the Crimean War.

inventors looking to sell their patents, whether it was the machine or components themselves.

However, the prestige enjoyed by the Koenig steam press would only last for fourteen years before a new printing invention would hit the markets and again change the output capability of publications. In 1828, two English inventors, Augustus Applegath and Edward Cowper, introduced a new iteration of the printing press. Dubbed the Cowper & Applegath four-cylinder printing press, the machine was not a total overhaul in print press design but an improvement upon Koenig's original design. Edward Cowper authoring an article for the *Journal of Science, Literature, and the Arts*, explains how his and Applegath's innovation proved superior to Koenig's. Within the article, Cowper states, "They have (Cowper & Applegath machines), in fact, superseded Mr. Koenig's machines, in the office of Mr. Bensley⁸... the form (paper) passes through four cylinders, which are fed with sheets of paper by four lads, and after the sheets are printed, they pass into the hands of four other lads; by this contrivance, 4000 sheets per hour are printed on one side."⁹

From Cowper's article, it is clear that within fourteen years, newspaper production had significantly increased. From 1814, Koenig's peak production could reach 1,100 impressions per hour. In contrast, the Cowper & Applegath printing press, thanks to the addition of extra printing rollers, could reach 5-6,000 impressions per hour and have cleaner prints when compared to Koenig's design. Cowper concludes his article by

⁸ Mr. Bensley was the chief proprietor of *The Times* while they were introducing the Cowper & Applegath printing press.

⁹ Edward Cowper, "On the Recent Improvements in the Art of Printing," in *The Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature, and the Arts*, (London, 1828), 188-189.

stating the publications outside the *Times* that have also purchased his and Applegath's machines. Cowper listed the publications: *The Morning Chronicle*, *St. James's Chronicle*, *Morning Herald*, *Whitehall Evening Post*, and *Sunday Times*. *Bell's Messenger*, *John Bull*, and *The Evening Standard*. It is important to note that all the publications listed in Cowper's article were publications found in London, with immediate provincial access to the machines limited. Provincial access to printing machines would soon change. Within three years of Cowper and Applegath's introduction, other British publications adopted the new machine, such as the *Scotsman*, who purchased their machine in 1831. In the *Scotsman's* view, the new machine proved a revelation in their ability to quickly produce and distribute news to their readers. Of particular importance, at least to the *Scotsman*, is the ability to produce the news coming out of London and give readers this information within two to three hours of arrival by mail.

In contrast, before, this news could only be available by the following day. It was now possible to have this news in customers' hands by late afternoon/evening.¹⁰ Besides needing to report news coming out of London quickly, publications like the *Scotsman* recognized the need to maintain a high level of output in production, not necessarily to compete with publications like the *Times* in terms of papers bought but instead to maintain their own advantage in the Scottish market against publications like *Blackwood's Magazine*, *The Edinburgh Review*, *Edinburgh Evening Courant* or the *Inverness Courier*. Within the same 1832 *Scotsman* article, the publication claims that

¹⁰ "The Press Printing Machinery," *The Scotsman*, March 7, 1832, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

implementing the Applegath & Cowper press would increase productivity “eightfold” compared to other “common presses” employed by local competitors.¹¹

It is essential to note the significant role the *Times* has thus far played and will continue to play in the development of print technology. From the Koenig press in 1814 to the Cowper & Applegath press, the *Times* of London continuously sought new and better technology to meet the growing demands from its reading base, which by 1850 numbered 40,000.¹² From 1814 to 1851, the *Times* constantly pined for improvements in print production, leading to the Cowper & Applegath machine of 1828. This trend continued in the 1840s when the *Times* directly commissioned Augustus Applegath to improve his existing design, which led to the creation of the vertical rotary press in 1848. To expand further, the *Times* personally commissioned Applegath to invent an entirely new steam press for the exclusive use of the Times and no one else. As mentioned previously, the *Times* during the nineteenth century was the dominant force in British news reporting and printing. To maintain this edge over potential rivals, the *Times* constantly sought new means of maintaining their superiority throughout the early nineteenth century, going so far as to commission an in-house steam press other British publications could not get their hands on.

The invention of the vertical rotary press came in response to developments in printing technology in the United States. Richard Hoe of New York in 1843, following in the steps of men like Koenig, Cowper, and Applegath, improved printing technology by

¹¹ Ibid, 1.

¹² A. E. Musson, “Printing in the Industrial Revolution,” *The Economic History Review*, 1958, New Series, Vol 10, No. 3 (1958), 415.

introducing the rotary press technique. Hoe's new printing machine allowed for adding extra impression cylinders to the printing process, numbering as many as ten cylinders (if the space allowed).¹³ News of Hoe's new printing press not only showed British understanding of developments outside their own country, but information of this type would prompt British publications to respond in kind, thus leading to the invention of Applegath's vertical press in 1848.

Building off the idea of Hoe's extra cylinders, Augustus Applegath, at the commissioning of the *Times*, began to patent and create a new process in printing, namely inverting the cylinders. Prior to 1848, inventors placed their impression cylinders horizontally, not vertically. While less productive than the Hoe rotary press, which proved capable of producing 20,000 impressions per hour, the Applegath vertical rotary press, which also utilized ten cylinders, could only produce 10-12,000 impressions per hour. However, due to the in-house nature of the invention, the *Times* had the added benefit of exclusivity. Introduced in the *Times* on December 29, 1848, the *Times* article laboriously explains how paper makes its way through the machine and thus produces a *Times* daily newspaper.¹⁴ The critical thing to note is the requirement of additional "feeders" in the process. For every cylinder incorporated into the process, individuals must continuously man each cylinder and provide said cylinder paper from which daily newspapers emerge. Following the announcement of the *Times*' latest printing machine, other newspaper publishers quickly picked up on the new invention. Some publications, such as the *Hull Packet*, the *Hereford Times*, and the *Brighton Gazette*, expressed their

¹³ Ibid, 416.

¹⁴ "London Friday, December 29, 1848," *Times*, Dec 29, 1848, 4, Times Digital Archive.

astonishment at the number of impressions Applegath's machine could produce.¹⁵

Despite the excitement surrounding the newest implementation in print technology, the machine remained an exclusive product of the *Times*. Vertical rotary presses similar to those used by the *Times* also appeared in the *Illustrated London News* and the *Standard* in 1849.¹⁶ The *Illustrated London News*, in an article covering the Great Exhibition of 1851, stated that the ever-increasing demand for their publication convinced them to approach Applegath to create a similar vertical press for their own in-house use.¹⁷ As shown by the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, larger London publications, rather than wait for the next technological innovation to appear on the market. Instead, metropolitan publications took it upon themselves to reach out to proven inventors of the printing press and directly commissioned men like Applegath to build a vertical rotary press for that publication's use. Personal commissioning of printing machines thus gatekept new and innovative technology, allowing more prominent and already established publications to maintain a technological edge over potential competition.

Thus far, we have seen a scant view of what the advancement of print technology meant for British publications and the British people. In 1851 and the opening of the Great Exhibition, publications like the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* clarified

¹⁵ "Home News," *Brighton Gazette*, Jan 25, 1849, 2, British Newspaper Archive. "The New Vertical Printing Machine," *Hull Packet*, Jan 5, 1849, 7, British Newspaper Archive. "Improvements in Printing Machinery," *The Hereford Times*, Jan 27, 1849, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁶ Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970: an illustrated history of its development and uses in England*, (The British Library, 1998), 53.

¹⁷ "Applegath's Vertical Printing Machine, Exhibited by the Proprietors of the 'Illustrated London News,'" *The Illustrated London News*, 31, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

how impactful and significant these developments were. Opening on May 1, 1851, the Great Exhibition or known by its official title as *The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations*, was, as the name implies, meant to demonstrate the progress of industry and technology up until the year 1851. Within the *Official Illustrated Catalogue*, the art of printing falls under class six. Inside the voluminous pages of the catalog, the recently patented Applegath printing machine was fully described and illustrated what decades of progress and innovation had to offer. In a somewhat confusing illustration, the catalog shows how the printing process works for Applegath's new machine, with the letter "h" denoting individuals working the machine paper, all the while, the paper makes its way around the numerous cylinders for inking and impressions.¹⁸ Further within the catalog, the writers of this particular section explain how the Applegath machine came to being with a brief description of past feats of innovation to denote how Applegath's current piece of technology has become the pinnacle of printing technology at the time. Within both the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, Applegath's printing machine became much lauded. The *Illustrated London News* claimed the printing press display was one of the most visited in the exhibition. Within the columns of daily newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, the relationship between man and machine became paramount in their description. The interplay between man and machine was to demonstrate the complexity of the process but also to inform their readers how important technological development led to the newest steam press, which then brought them the latest issue of either the *Times* or the *Illustrated London News*. Shannon Rose

¹⁸ *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue/ Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, Volume 1, 281.

Smith states that by focusing on the relationship between man and machine, newspapers like the *Times* and *Illustrated London News* were attempting to “draw attention to the press as exemplary of the kind of technological production and operation that was understood to be a central part of Britain’s nineteenth-century industrial identity, both home and abroad.”¹⁹

Printing and many other inventions stemming from industrialization became synonymous with progress and prestige within Victorian-era Britain. Publications like the *Times* strove to convey this sense of progress and the importance of progressing by constantly finding and commissioning new and improved machines to meet the demands of its readers. Soon other publications sought to emulate the *Times* by likewise possessing the most up-to-date iteration of print technology. By the onset of the Crimean War, print technology within Britain had reached its known zenith in producing mass amounts of issues to the population, with the *Times* leading the way but with provincial publications not lagging too far behind.

Taxes on Knowledge

However, print technology is one part of why readership and access to knowledge became more readily available by the 1850s. From 1815 until 1851, Britain’s Parliament brought forth changes regarding fiscal and legal reforms, slowly chipping away restrictions on production and distribution and allowing for greater availability of daily newspapers and periodicals to the awaiting masses.

¹⁹ Shannon Rose Smith, “Technologies of Production,” in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, eds Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (London: Routledge, 2016), 37.

Ironically, by the time Frederick Koenig's steam-powered printing press came into use at the offices of the *Times*, restrictions upon print production were at their highest in the form of duties upon printed goods. Duties on stamped goods were not unknown to the British people of 1815. Britain first enacted legislation on paper and printed products as early as 1712 in the form of the Stamp Act 1712 as a revenue-generating scheme to help fund Britain's involvement in the War of Spanish Succession. According to Graham Law, besides serving a fiscal problem the British faced, there were also political motives behind the passing of the 1712 act. The 1712 act also censored and restricted the production of newer publications which, in the eyes of MPs, showed more signs of possessing radical tendencies and thus would write or report more critically upon the actions of Parliament.²⁰ Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, parliamentary regulations upon paper and printed goods would only increase with criminal punishment introduced in 1743 upon selling and distributing unstamped periodicals and the 1765 Stamp Act, which eventually led to the Thirteen Colonies' independence.

By the turn of the century, the price of newspapers and duty on printed goods was at an all-time high, with newspaper stamps costing four pennies and an added three-shilling, six-penny tax for advertisement. These fiscal costs all amounted to a seven penny price tag for a copy of the *Times* which would remain throughout the early nineteenth century.²¹ According to Richard Altick, the typical British family could not

²⁰ Graham Law, "Distribution," in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, eds Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (London: Routledge, 2016), 43.

²¹ Throughout the thesis, symbols such as (*s*) denote a shilling, while (*d*) indicates a penny.

hope to possess enough funds to purchase a daily newspaper regularly. The conundrum British newspaper readers faced beyond high newspaper prices was the fact that information at this time was in high demand because of Britain's involvement in the Napoleonic Wars. To rectify this problem, Altick states that it became a customary practice among middle and working-class British citizens to purchase one newspaper, or any periodical for that matter, and pass it amongst themselves in public spaces such as coffeehouses.²² However, further restrictions upon the press and printing increased after the 1819 Peterloo Massacre, prompting Parliament to pass the Six Acts, which cracked down on perceived radicalism within Britain. For this section, the critical section of this Act was the passing of the Newspaper and Stamp Duties which placed further restrictions upon smaller provincial publications by placing a tax rate of 4d upon publications that produced monthly papers, not daily papers. Further, the Act defined the definition of news which in the eyes of the Tory government at the time became defined as publishing information and opinion. In the eyes of Parliament, especially after a tumultuous event like the Peterloo Massacre, duties and taxes on paper and the press were viewed as a safety measure against potential radicalism.²³

Parliamentary attempts to restrict the publication and production through taxation bred contempt amongst various publications, particularly those outside the London area. By the 1830s, the so-called "Taxes on Knowledge," a term coined by Scottish teacher

²² Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, Second Edition, (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1998), 322.

²³ 1819: 60 George 3 & 1 George 4 c.9: Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act, Dec 30, 1819, <https://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/nineteenth-century/1819-60-george-3-1-george-4-c-9-newspaper-and-stamp-duties-act/>.

Alexander Adam, became one of the most widespread and discussed topics amongst the smaller local publications. By the 1830s, "taxes on knowledge" became a rallying cry against paper and printed goods duties. In an 1835 article for the *Edinburgh Review*, James Williamson explains Adam's position on taxation on printed goods stating, "A tax upon paper is a tax upon Knowledge," he continues by stating how a nation that had just recently abolished slavery within the British Empire could still carry out such "barbarous" taxation upon its people.²⁴ Williamson's article then transitions into the London-based publications' role and their role in subverting attempted calls to repeal stamp duties. Williamson concedes that many London publications continue to play a crucial role in providing knowledge to the British people. However, Williamson claims some unnamed London publications were actively subverting and deadening the discussion of stamp duties. This issue became the crux of much frustration and animosity between the provincial and London press during the 1830s and 1840s. The provincial press accused London publications of swaying MPs to maintain the taxes upon papered goods to prevent the growth of potential competition.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, provincial publications across the British Isles ran articles calling not only for the end of "taxes on knowledge" but also attacks against London papers for their perceived hand at keeping said taxes alive as a means to keep the cost of their papers high continually. Non-London publications also viewed the continued existence of taxes as a ploy to stifle the growth of newer publications which could potentially chip into larger publications' sales of papers and thus dent their quasi-

²⁴ James Williamson, "On the Diffusion of Knowledge amongst the Middle Classes," in *The Edinburgh Review*, Volume 62, Oct 1835- Jan 1836, (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Company, 1836), 126-127.

monopolistic hold on newspaper sales. Across Britain, smaller newspaper publications and monthly periodicals criticized the tyranny of taxes on knowledge. In an 1832 article from the Irish newspaper, the *Mayo Constitution*, the article claims that MPs feared mentioning the idea of abolishing the tax because of pressure from London publications. MPs were equally hesitant to immediately abolish stamp duties citing it would rob the government of £20,000 per annum profit. The article also refutes the argument that taxation is a measure against new publications from rising up and writing libel and seditious writings, to which the *Mayo Constitution* counters that even starting a newspaper published in the 1830s is already a burdensome task without the added trouble of paying paper duties and advertisement taxes.²⁵

Provincial publications' arguments against taxes on knowledge were not monolithic. Rather, local and regional publications focused on different matters. Some publications leveled criticism against London publications, while others focused on MPs for their reluctance. For example, in a letter to the editor of the *Morning Advertiser*, a London publication, Mr. J. Parker argues that maintaining duties and taxes on daily newspapers robs the literate population of valuable information. Mr. Parker continues by stating that readily available information to the masses is a net benefit for the individual and the community.²⁶ Provincial newspapers called upon their constituent MPs to take their concerns to the House of Commons and Lords. One such instance came in 1835, as reported by *Carlisle Journal* meetings were held at the *Crown and Anchor* tavern in

²⁵ "The Taxes on Knowledge," *Mayo Constitution*, Dec 20, 1832, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁶ "Taxes on Knowledge," *Morning Advertiser*, Jan 24, 1833, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

London, attended by MPs and Lord Brougham, a member of the House of Lords. As summarized by the *Carlisle Journal*, the meeting decried the current lack of access the British people had to the papers citing how American citizens paid no taxes on newspapers or periodicals. The article continues by stating that fellow civilians and, at present, MPs should draft a petition and present it to both houses of Parliament, calling for an end to taxes on knowledge.²⁷ The *Times* also reported on the same meeting held at the *Crown, and Anchor* had this to say on the issue of abolishing the stamp duties.

In the eyes of the *Times*, abolishing the duty on stamps and paper would only lead to publications like the *Times* outpricing the competition and further monopolizing the printing and production market. The *Times* believed *that* duties on paper and stamps were unconnected when starting a new newspaper publication from scratch. In the *Times*'s words, "they will find (petitioners for abolishing the tax) that the purposes for which capital is required in are wholly unconnected with the stamp office," the article continues by stating that the abolishment of the stamp duty would dent Britain's economy namely erasing £574,430.10s.8d in revenue per year.²⁸ Financial considerations and ramifications were but one stance publications such as the *Times* maintained for their continued support for duties on paper. In the same article on the meeting at the *Crown and Anchor*, the *Times* claims that abolishing the duty would damage Britain morally because it would allow "Irish papist" and "English destructives" a voice, which in the eyes of the *Times* was just as detrimental to society as the financial considerations.²⁹

²⁷ "Taxes on Knowledge," *Carlisle Journal*, Jul 25, 1835, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁸ "Tuesday July 21, 1835," *Times*, Jul 21, 1835, 5, Times Digital Archive.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

Discourse between publications for and against stamp duties raged throughout the 1830s, and despite the best attempts by publications like the *Times* to deter changes to the law, changes did occur. However, they would come in the form of compromise and gradual reduction in the cost of duties, not a total abolishment of all duties. Meetings, like the ones held at the *Crown and Anchor*, gradually forced both houses of Parliament to reevaluate the current state of stamp duties within Britain. By the summer of 1836, the House of Commons introduced a new bill to significantly reduce the cost of stamp duties, reduce advertisement taxes on newspapers, and outright abolish duties on almanacks and pamphlets. The bill, which passed in the House of Commons on July 25, 1836, reduced the stamp duty on newspapers from 4*d* to 1*d*, which by calculations presented during the debates, would reduce the per year revenue from £450,000 to £300,000.³⁰ Having passed the House of Commons, the bill was introduced in the House of Lords on August 8, 1836, but faced stiffer resistance. Upon the bill's first reading in this chamber, Viscount Melbourne stated and recognized the growing influence and power the press possessed within Britain even though hindrances such as stamp duties existed. One point of contention mentioned by Melbourne is the vast network of underground publications or "un-stamped" works, which by 1836 was extensive. According to Melbourne, in his opinion and the opinion of many other members of the House of Lords, reducing the stamp duty on newspapers would allow for more distribution of radical papers.³¹

³⁰ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HL Aug 8, 1836, v. 35: col. 968-69.
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1836-08-08/debates/d308e951-1dfc-46e0-a038-61184b5e79e6/StampDuties—Newspapers#contribution-b4177719-14e9-4175-8b1b-c47192a2965f>

³¹ *Ibid*, col. 970-71.

However, despite these misgivings by certain members of the House of Lords, after three readings, the bill passed, thus reducing the price of duties on paper and printed products to 1*d*, which brought mixed reactions from various publications across Britain. The *Morning Advertiser*, a London publication, reacted positively to news of the bills' passing, stating that the passing of the *Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill* was "a most severe blow which since the Reform Act has been dealt with the enemies of just and popular government."³² Within the pages of the *Times*, one of the biggest advocates against the bill viewed the new legislation as "contemptibly ludicrous, and shuffling has been the whole conduct of the Government in regard to this measure!"³³ The *Times* proclaimed that the only saving grace in the bill is maintaining some semblance of the stamp duty even if the cost dropped from 4*d* to 1*d*.

The passing of the 1836 Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill significantly reduced the cost of producing newspapers. However, producing dailies still proved an expensive endeavor. However, the bill's original intent was to encourage and stimulate growth toward new publications. Instead, the new bill barely made a dent in the status quo, which the *Times*, despite a loss of revenue, still enjoyed its semi-monopoly on the distribution of knowledge. The reasons for the bill's shortcomings were numerous. One such reason for the lack of progress is a point brought up by the *Times* in their argument against the 1836 bill. Even if the cost of stamp duties drastically fell, the high start-up cost for a new publication remained. Even with reduced stamp and postage duties, the cost of operating a publication with a fully functioning staff, machinery, and distribution still acted as

³² "The Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill," *Morning Advertiser*, Aug 15, 1836, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

³³ "The Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill," *Times*, Aug 12, 1836, 4, Times Digital Archive.

obstacles to operating a successful publication.³⁴ According to Andrew King, after pouring over various sources and calculating various factors conducive to the print industry, he estimated the annual expenses a British newspaper publication could expect to incur, totaling around £64,657 4s on a per annum basis.³⁵

There was still the issue of distribution that many publications struggled to grapple with, particularly the issue of postage duties which the 1836 bill failed to address. Writing in 1847, the *Londonderry Sentinel* voiced its frustrations at the stagnated growth of their publication and the still lingering cost of distribution. The *Londonderry Sentinel* commented, “no paper be allowed to pass through the post office without a stamped slip or cover, obtainable in the same way as those in use for letters, and charged at a penny.”³⁶ Even though postage only costs a penny to transport the bulk of newspapers outside the immediate locality, the postage charges apply to every copy in circulation. In essence, small provincial publications could not hope to cover these costs. There was also the issue of procuring the necessary stamps and postage to produce and distribute the news under the new regulations legitimately. As pointed out by Graham Law, the problem was that there were no stamp offices outside of London, Manchester, and Edinburgh.³⁷ Given this predicament, smaller publications in regions such as Ireland, northeast England, and Wales, or a publication in the Scottish Highlands, would have to pay extra fees to import the required postage on top of the cost already required for producing daily or weekly

³⁴ Law, *Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, 45.

³⁵ Andrew King, “Periodical Economics,” in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, eds Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, (London: Routledge, 2016), 68.

³⁶ “Stamp Covers for Newspapers,” *Londonderry Sentinel*, May 29, 1847, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁷ Law, *Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, 46.

papers. Aside from navigating these various barriers of stamp and postage procurement that restricted publications from distributing outside their immediate areas, the reading practices of everyday people also contributed to the stagnated growth of the provincial press. In the same 1847 article from Londonderry, the article outlines how on multiple observations, citizens would purchase one issue of their paper and pass it between five and six people. Richard Altick also stated that the vast majority of the public received their news in public settings like reading rooms. This communal practice of sharing newspapers also hindered newspaper growth. However, with the continued existence of stamps and postage duties, local publications became forced to keep the price of newspapers high to cover the production and extra-legal cost.

During the 1840s, little progress or addressing of these issues occurred in Parliament with the token passing of bills that dealt with copyright infringement and intellectual property of publications. It was not until 1850, and at the continued beckoning of provincial and metropolitan publications, Parliament organized an investigatory committee to look at and correct the legal and fiscal state of printing and distributing knowledge within Britain. During 1850-1851, the Parliamentary select committee investigated every facet of Britain's printing landscape, from stamp and postage duties to clarifying definitions like what 'news' was and how applicable it was to Britain's press. Within the opening pages of the report, the committee outlines the current state of the distribution of knowledge and taxation on knowledge in the wake of the 1836 bill in which it states:

The duty on newspapers is imposed by the Act 6 & 7 Will. 4, c. 76, and is as follows: For every sheet or other piece of paper whereon any newspaper shall be printed, 1*d*. A further additional duty of ½ *d*. and 1*d*. is imposed in case the paper

exceeds certain sizes specified in the Act. These additional duties are, practically, not incurred. On supplements not exceeding a certain size, $\frac{1}{2}d$...Any paper containing public news, intelligence or occurrences printed in any part of the United Kingdom, to be dispersed and made public. *2d.* Also, any paper printed weekly or oftener, or at intervals not exceeding 26 days, containing only, or principally, advertisements... or shall be published for sale for a less price than *6d.*, exclusive of the duty by the Act imposed.³⁸

As one can glean from this opening summary on newspaper regulation, the current state of printing in 1851 was full of frivolities, ambiguities, and questionable regulations, which amounted to an annual return in revenue of £350,418 from stamp and postage taxes. Perhaps the most crucial role tasked with this committee was understanding what news was. The understanding of "news" in the eyes of the Board of Inland Revenue regulations stemming from the Newspaper and Stamp Duties Bill of 1836 was undefined and haphazardly applied.³⁹ One such example brought forth by the committee explains how a speech given by Queen Victoria and posted within the pages of a newspaper constituted "news" and thus subject to stamp duty. In contrast, a speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not constitute news and, therefore, was not subject to stamp duties.⁴⁰ Other issues concerning the application of stamp duties were the frequency in which certain publications issue their papers, whether daily, weekly, or monthly. As we have already seen from the committee's summary, monthly issues of publications that contained mostly advertisements rather than 'news' did not fall under a taxable newspaper.

³⁸ *Report on the Select Committee on Newspaper Stamps; With The Proceedings of the Committee*, July 18, 1851, 4.

³⁹ The Board of Inland Revenue was the governing body that upheld the regulations stemming from the *Newspaper and Stamp Duties Bill of 1836*.

⁴⁰ *Report on the Select Committee on Newspaper Stamps*, 5.

Misunderstanding and wrongful application of the term ‘news’ came to define the importance of the select committee’s report, ‘news’ according to the committee’s understanding not only applied to the reporting of facts on specific topics and events but also second-hand commentary from other publications. However, as the committee points out, “cheap publications” and social commentary periodicals such as *Punch* had thus far evaded paying for duties due to the vague understanding of the word ‘news.’⁴¹ Ultimately, the committee concluded that the term ‘news’ fell under many interpretations. In the case of applying stamp duties, the 1836 bill improperly applied the term, which negatively affected some publications. The committee implies that the deregulation of the diffusion of knowledge may be in order to rectify this situation. In the committee’s view, abolishment would increase publication revenue across Britain and grow readership. Despite the committee’s report change, the fiscal and legal change would not occur in 1855, with Parliament eliminating stamp duties.⁴²

A Thirst for Knowledge: Readership in Britain, 1815-1851

As this chapter has already established, technological developments in printing brought increased production and output. Mechanical developments coupled with slow but progressive legal and fiscal reforms sought to eliminate hindrances or barriers to establishing new publications and stimulating their growth. However, the progress of the sort just mentioned would have mattered little if there was no audience to reach and a population within Britain that pursued knowledge and the pleasures of reading.

⁴¹ Ibid, 6-7.

⁴² Chapter four will address the process by which Parliament abolished the stamp duty.

The growth of the British reading public in the early nineteenth century coincided with the industrial revolution's continuing progress, which began in the late eighteenth century. As stated by Richard Altick, the population of England and Wales between the years of 1760-1801 jumped from seven million to nine million, and the British population, including England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, by 1851 rested at 21,121,967, up from the total 1801 population of 10,917,433.⁴³ One glance from the 1801 population to the 1851 population shows that potential readership from which publications could utilize gradually rose in the five decades between 1801-1851. Of course, a healthy rise in population does not immediately mean the vast majority of the twenty-one million of Britain's population had the ability, let alone access to the printed word provided by various publications across Britain and Ireland. Aside from having a large well to draw from, the desire to read or let alone become literate depends on social change and changes in the social condition of society. During the early nineteenth century, Britain found itself amidst such changes.

One such social change Britain underwent in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century was the emergence and growth of the middle class, which began to distinguish itself from the working class. According to Altick, the working class, meaning lower class and lower middle class, "constituted at least three-quarters of the total population."⁴⁴ Of course, simplistic characterizations such as upper, middle, and lower classes will prove insufficient when describing and trying to understand early

⁴³ Edward Cheshire, "The Results of the Census of Great Britain in 1851, with a Description of the Machinery and Processes Employed to Obtain the Returns," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Mar. 1854, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1854), 46.

⁴⁴ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 82.

nineteenth-century Britain. Scholars have long argued the meaning of class and which person falls into specific classifications. Scholars of Victorian-era Britain have debated such matters. For example, R. S. Neale broke down the traditional three-class distinction of upper, middle, and lower classes into five by adding what he describes as a working-class 'A' and 'B' category along with the middling class.⁴⁵ Other scholars who expand upon the idea of a middle or middling class include Simon Gunn, who explains the middle class as an 'abstract' class idea during the Victorian era. However, 'class consciousness' indeed emerged when it came to political issues, whether it was the Reform Act, the repeal of the Corn Laws, or abolishing taxes on knowledge. Gunn does specify, however, the growth and formation of the middle/middling class was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon.⁴⁶

With a growing distinction between upper, middle, and working classes also came with it a diversification of jobs and skills required for employment, one such skill being literacy. As stated by David F. Mitch, from 1800 to 1851, literacy requirements in specific jobs gradually rose. According to Mitch, aside from apparent occupations like writers, doctors, lawyers, and members of the clergy, roles such as the army and navy officers were required to learn to read and write by the mid-point of the century for non-

⁴⁵ R. S. Neale, "Class and Class-Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?" *Victorian Studies* 12, no. 1 (1968), 5. Neale argues that social classes and stratification are dependent on the one hand with that class's relationship with authority and subjection. On the other hand, status and wealth also help place people within certain classes, and from there, as Neale argues, we begin to see the formation of class consciousness.

⁴⁶ Simon Gunn, "Class, Identity and the Urban: The Middle Class in England, c.1790-1950," *Urban History* 31, no. 1 (2004), 34-35.

commissioned officers as well.⁴⁷ To explain how vital literacy became within British society during the nineteenth century, one only needs to look at the advertisement section of any British newspaper to understand how crucial one's ability to read became in society. For example, in the *Worcestershire Chronicle*, an ad was put out by the publication needing an errand boy who "can read and write."⁴⁸ Another example, this time from the city of Manchester, where the town council required applicants for the position of constable, required the ability to read and write⁴⁹. In the case of the General Infirmary of Northampton requiring the role of 'in-door servant/porter,' again, requiring reading and writing ability to apply for the position.⁵⁰ While these three examples are not indicative of the British labor market during the mid-nineteenth century, they can give the reader an idea of just how vital literacy as a skill was becoming within society.

No longer were white-collar jobs like bankers, accountants, and lawyers, the only occupations that required the ability to read. Now the need to possess the skill of reading permeated throughout society into roles like domestic service, even within lower positions, porters, nurses, and shopkeepers. Both men and women who occupied these roles began to understand the benefit of reading in the job sense and as a means of pleasure. The people of the middle class and, increasingly, the working class benefitted most from the growing print industry and strove to get their hands on the printed word.

⁴⁷ David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 14.

⁴⁸ "Errand-Boy Wanted," *Worcestershire Chronicle*, Mar 31, 1841, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴⁹ "Public Notices," *Manchester & Salford Advertiser*, Oct 22, 1842, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁰ "Servants Wanted," *Northampton Mercury*, May 3, 1851, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

Access to better jobs and societal advancement brought an ever-increasing class consciousness, a phenomenon some publications would readily feed into and exploit. However, with more awareness amongst the masses, there would naturally be a reactionary backlash amongst the aristocracy and gentry to this turn of events. For this reason, as explained earlier in the chapter, stamp duties and narrow views of news persisted throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century as a form of censorship to deny citizens access to the printed word and deny potentially dangerous publications from seeing the light of day.

Besides giving someone better access to the rapidly evolving British economy and job force, reading also allowed people to access the vast array of literature becoming available to Britons. With a more dynamic society and economy, Britons in the nineteenth century had much more leisure time compared with their predecessors of the eighteenth century. With the onset of industrialization in the late eighteenth century, the cottage industry increasingly became phased out in British society, and with the family no longer required to exert their full efforts and time into producing essential goods. Rising income and less strenuous work allowed more and more families to have at their disposal time, time in which many dedicated to reading.⁵¹ As pointed out by Richard Altick, leisure activities for the new middling-class Victorian families were plentiful. Still, he notes these new families were also a part of the rising evangelism taking root across Britain during the 1830s and 40s, bringing proclivities such as adherence to the

⁵¹ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 85.

Sabbath. Altick noted that since many families did not wish to appear immoral, which left reading as one of the primary activities families partook in.⁵²

Having established reading as one of the few activities in which middle-class British families could realistically partake, one must now imagine the reading experience for these families. It is almost stereotypical now to imagine the prim and proper Victorian family sitting in the common room of their home reading whatever they had in their possession, whether it be a six-penny novel, newspaper, or magazine. It is important again to emphasize that only a particular group of people, namely the upper and middle and middling class, could have the time to partake in evening reading circles during this period of Victorian Britain. The working class of unskilled workers did not have the ability or privilege to involve themselves in leisure activities like a reading circle; the life of the Victorian-era worker became defined by hard labor in appalling conditions. David F Mitch notes that even by the 1830s and 1840s, some jobs began to require partial reading skills to gain employment. However, for the most part, reading was not the utmost requirement, and the ability to read only sometimes translated into the desire to read. Long hours in the mills or mines meant that by the time the final whistle blew, many workers had no desire to partake in an activity such as reading, assuming they had the ability. Rather, as was often the case, mill workers would instead spend their available time at the beer hall or in public reading rooms.⁵³

Even among the working classes who did possess the means to read the printed word, there was no guarantee that they could get their hands on newspapers, magazines,

⁵² Ibid, 86.

⁵³ Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England*, 46.

or cheap novels. Due to the purveyance of stamp duties and high postage rates, newspapers across Britain had relatively high prices for individual copies, which outpriced many aspiring buyers. As noted, stamp duties before 1836 rested at 4d and only dropped to 1d following the *Newspaper and Stamp Duties Bill*. However, despite this change, the price of daily newspapers like the *Times* remained at 4d. One could now imagine if the price of the *Times* stood at 7d (pre-1836 stamp duties bill) throughout the 1820s and 30s what the price of a daily newspaper publication whose operations and facilities paled in comparison to that of the *Times*.⁵⁴ Attempts at producing cheap forms of news that Britain's middling and working-class peoples could access more readily came in the form of penny magazines/journals such as Charles Knights' *The Penny Magazine*; however, this publication only survived from 1832-1845. The *Penny Magazine* was not the only publication to attract new readers from the middling and working classes; examples include *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*.⁵⁵ With prices of daily newspapers still high throughout the early nineteenth century and, as mentioned previously, assembling in coffeehouses and passing around various daily newspapers throughout the room became a common sight in urban settings such as London and Manchester. Reading rooms allowed all social classes to interact with newspapers and

⁵⁴ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 322.

⁵⁵ Analysis and discussion surrounding the target audiences and reach of publications like *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News* will be discussed in later chapters involving London-based publications. In short, *Punch* appealed to new readers for its satirical commentary on government and the upper classes. At the same time, the *Illustrated London News*, via its use of illustrations rather than lengthy articles, gained much notoriety among the middling and working classes.

events. Even if civilians did not actively read the news, simply listening to the news was satisfactory enough.⁵⁶

Another important distinction that needs addressing is that acquiring reading materials and reading as an activity during the early nineteenth century was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon. With Britain increasingly becoming industrialized during this period, more and more jobs emerged in urban centers such as London, Bristol, and Manchester. With it came people settling in cities seeking out these jobs. Literacy and the activity of reading in the rural setting became severely limited due in no small part to the cost of transportation of newspaper copies to these areas. Like many working-class families in urban areas, agricultural workers spent much of their waking moments in the fields tending to the land. When that was not the case, they opted instead to focus their respite on other distractions or purely rest. Reading in the rural setting came in the form of reading holy scripture, whether it was the Bible or the Psalter.⁵⁷

An overlooked causality for the steady increase in reading amongst the upper and middle classes is the continued development of the railroad and, thus, travel by rail. Whether for holiday or business, more and more Britons utilized the growing rail networks to get from one place to another and pass the time, and with rail travel came more opportunities to read. What emerged from these developments was printed matter commonly referred to as ‘railway literature,’ by the 1840s and 50s, many train cars carried copies of the *Times* for those traveling to get caught up on the news.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 342.

⁵⁷ Separately sold copies of the Book of Psalms.

⁵⁸ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 89.

Publications also utilized railways to distribute their issues across the British Isles, particularly by the *Times*, exemplified by railway literature and individual copies appearing in cities across Britain.

By the turn of the decade to the 1850s, the British printing industry had undergone many changes, from technological developments, legal and fiscal reform, and the Britons' reading habits. Nevertheless, certain shortcomings remained, namely the lingering existence of stamp and postage duties that stymied print and publication growth.

The 1850s, as we shall see, will prove essential for various reasons, but in context to this study, the 50s proved defining for Britain's print media industry and British geopolitics. By 1850 a new crisis would emerge in the east involving the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, to which Britain would soon find itself as a mediator along with France. Concurrently Britain's print media was in the process of radical change. As previously mentioned, the Parliamentary select committee on newspaper stamps made it clear that stamp and postage duties were detrimental to the growth of large and small news publications. Change did come in 1855 when the House of Commons did away with the penny duty on newspaper copies, which would come amid Britain's war with Russia. During that time, people of all stripes within British society sought new information on the crisis in the east, and newspapers, both daily and weekly, and magazines and journals clamored to cover it. Britain's print industry, despite many challenges, especially regarding the fiscal and legal side of things, stood poised to deliver the news to the people.

III. LONDON'S PRESS AND THE CRIMEAN WAR

As shown in chapter two, the press within London was at the forefront of progressing print technology further to help facilitate the growth and distribution of their papers while also fighting to maintain its monopoly over readership, particularly from publications like the *Times*. By March 1854, when Britain formally declared war against the Russian Empire, the press scene within the city of London was highly diverse. By 1854, various styles of publications were in circulation ranging from daily newspapers such as the *Times*, *Evening Standard*, or the *Globe*. Illustrated publications like *The Illustrated London News* popularized pictorial or drawn news rather than simply reporting the news. There were also satirical works such as *Punch*, whose bawdy and unashamed satire found much love from all.

This chapter will look at how London publications reported on the Crimean War by looking at three distinct styles of reporting coming from three different publications: the *Times*, *Illustrated London News*, and *Punch*, which informed their London readers on the war but also their readers throughout the whole of the British Isles. London, being among the most important cities in the world during this period, allowed publications based there to draw on an expansive array of readers who were also keen on consuming news. London also allowed publications access to various sources of information, whether via foreign government officials, Britain's government, or other European publications and their correspondents. London publications viewed their role as purveyors of international news allowing for many of their accounts of the war to reach a broader reading audience found throughout the British Isles. The London metropolitan publications and their accounts of the Crimean War would work in tandem with the

British provincial press coverage of the war, focusing on how the war affected the locals rather than Britain as a whole.

In chapter four, we will see how the British provincial press distinguished itself from London in its coverage of the war by focusing on more detailed examples of how non-London-based publications created a sense of identity via reporting on how localities contributed to the war. The provincial press of Britain could rely upon London publications to provide reports and news explaining the grander picture of the conflict, which would allow the provinces to focus on more personal details and reports coming out of the conflict. London publications also worked closely with other leading European publications to report the war from all angles. From peace negotiations to the movements of troops, fleets, and supplies, clashes of armies to the leaders' thoughts and motives, whether it was the Emperor of France, the Tsar of Russia, or the Sultan of the Ottomans.

Besides its connections with the international press, the London press was also essential in its ability to provide an unprecedented view of the war via the new occupation of war correspondents, thanks to the actions of *Times* correspondent William Howard Russell and illustrations within the *Illustrated London News* and their artist on the ground. Through William Howard Russell's unprecedented access to the British Army and along with the *Illustrated London News's* artistic depictions of war, William Howard Russell and ILN artists brought forth ground-breaking details of war accompanied by shocking visuals right into the hands of the readers in not only London but also the whole of Britain. Apart from looking at how London reported on the war, this chapter will also show how much political influence London publications placed on public officials, namely the war Prime Ministers Aberdeen and Palmerston, and upon the

army itself, commander-in-chief Lord Raglan.¹ Constant outcry coming from the prominent London publications and their ability to sway public sentiment was, indeed, significant. The most prominent example of public outcry came after the winter of 1854-1855 when the British Army besieged Sebastopol. Outcry in both the press and people forced Aberdeen's resignation in early 1855 and caused Raglan's more active role in the siege.²

London Publications Prior to the War

The *Times*, by 1854, was Britain's most influential and powerful standalone publication, with a reading audience that spanned the whole of the British Isles and across Europe. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Times*, whose origins date back to the late eighteenth century when John Walter began *The Daily Universal Register*, came to dominate much of London and Britain's daily reading by the mid-nineteenth century. No paper across the British Isles regarding reading a singular publication could hope to reach the number of readers the *Times* could.³ The broad audience the *Times* garnered by the 1850s is why they took the measures they did in the early part of the century, mainly investing and seeking out the latest innovations in print

¹ This chapter will not cover the effects of certain London-based publications on decision-making. A more in-depth analysis of Aberdeen's resignation and Raglan's military choices following public outcry will be addressed in chapter five. Instead, this chapter will show how London publications attacked aroused public opinion against the government or military members.

² Modern-day naming has the city spelled as Sevastopol. In the nineteenth-century British newspapers commonly referred to the city as Sebastopol. I have opted to keep the naming conventions of nineteenth-century newspapers.

³ As noted by Andrew Hobbs, while the total number of issues the provincial press had in circulation was more than the *Times*, ordinary citizens in 1854 had more access to the *Times* than the *Carlisle Journal* or the *Scotsman*.

technology to stay on top of demand and competition. For this reason, the publication was keen to maintain certain fiscal and legal restrictions over Britain's press community to maintain its quasi-monopoly on print, distribution, and readership.

Apart from maintaining a dominant footing in readership amongst the British, the *Times* strove to distinguish itself as the leading publication on international matters and provide this information to its reading audience. The *Times*' first foray into covering international events came during the Napoleonic Wars when the publication sent out amateur writer Henry Crabb Robinson to cover the British Army's Peninsular Campaign, but particularly for Robinson, the battle of Corunna. However, according to Stefanie Markovits, Robinson's reports came via second-hand knowledge only days after the battle. Indeed a truly accurate portrayal of events was missing.⁴

Despite the failed first attempt at writing on foreign dealings, the *Times* still sought to maintain international connections across Europe by the late 1830s and into the 1840s to cover the ever-volatile political situation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The *Times* maintained its pulse on the various regions and countries of Europe through resident correspondents who regularly publish articles informing the readers of the socio-political situation in the city where they resided. For the context of the Crimean War, the *Times* utilized the services of their Constantinople correspondent Thomas Cherney who would play an integral role in providing the *Times* with valuable information in the run-up to the Crimean War.⁵ The *Times*' use of embedded reporters showed in many of their articles, with many subheadings denoting where journalists were

⁴ Markovits, *The Crimean War in The British Imagination*, 16.

⁵ *Ibid*, 16.

reporting from. For example, in an April 1846 issue of the *Times*, articles found within this issue outside of the usual public notices, local and global market news, leader articles, and parliamentary news were exclusively foreign news. Articles regarding European news ranged from a Polish uprising in the Russian Empire, whose information was provided by multiple German publications, Carlist uprisings in Spain, again information provided by the Spanish and French press, and affairs of Persia information supplied by the *Times*' Persian correspondent.⁶

Despite its prominence within the British press landscape, the *Times* was one of many publications in circulation during the nineteenth century. The British press, London publications, and provincial publications were a kaleidoscopic patchwork of various forms of reading, enriching many Britons' reading experience. From dailies, weeklies, and periodicals to satirical works, Britons could get their information from myriad sources and absorb the news via different means. Britons, by the 1850s, could reliably have information on many different topics. British readers could read the *Times* for the latest information on international affairs or affairs within London or Parliament. Contrasting this, Britons, whether in the metropole or the provinces, could rely on other newspaper publications to have better information on local affairs and not just the affairs of the capital or the globe. As we shall see in chapter four, despite its large circulation, the *Times* did not always come first in the minds of some British newspaper readers.

In many cases, mostly found outside of London, the local paper took precedence over the *Times*. Nevertheless, the *Times* still had a place and role within almost every

⁶ "London Tuesday, April 14, 1846," *Times*, 1-12, The Times Digital Archive.

town to varying degrees, but this mostly came as a republished article on international news. To add to the varied publications, British readers from the 1840s had new styles and forms of news reporting to choose from detached from those encountered in the *Times*. These new and innovative publications came in the form of illustrated and satirical press.

The first iteration of the illustrated news came in the 1830s through Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine*. Although the illustrations were of inferior quality, this emergent style of news took hold amongst Britain's working and middling class. It also inspired similar publications in other parts of Europe.⁷ While illustration publications were quickly taking hold across Europe and not just in Britain, these early iterations of the illustrated press did not actually count as news. As Michèle Martin states, illustrations aimed "to vulgarize various aspects of the arts and sciences in order to educate/entertain, but not to disseminate news/information." In other words, early illustration periodicals were tools to cope with the rapidly industrialized society British citizens began to experience.⁸ With the emergence of the *Illustrated London News*, artist renderings in tandem with journalism became another legitimate avenue from which people absorbed the news.

Started in 1842 by Herbert Ingram, the *Illustrated London News* would form the medium between traditional journalism and new forms of illustration. On the one hand, the ILN operated similarly to the *Times*, emphasizing reporting facts and current events.

⁷ Michèle Martin, "The Illustrated Press in Its Sociopolitical Context," in *Images at War: Illustrated Periodicals and Constructed Nations*, (University of Toronto Press, 2017), 12.

⁸ Ibid, 13.

However, on the other hand, ILN harkens back to Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine* with an inference of being light on the news instead opting for a more easily understandable pictorial retelling of issues. Ingram believed that the middling class of Britain and, to an extent, the working class by the 1840s was sophisticated enough to understand and appreciate an illustrated press. However, Ingram wanted an illustrated publication focused on reporting news rather than just the arts and science. In essence, the illustrated press could satisfy some readers' intellectual needs while also entertaining others' needs. Alison Hedley, in her work *Making Pictorial Print*, also makes this point when she states, "combining letterpress and illustrations on topics ranging from industrial print technologies to the history of journalism, pictorial magazines offered a rich education in media literacy to a popular audience...they (illustrated publications) embodied the industry's latest techniques in their layout, ornamentation, and illustration."⁹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, *The Illustrated London News* was savvy enough to understand its reading audience. The ILN, in their Great Exhibition article depicting their latest iteration of the steam press, the article went beyond just describing the process. Instead, the ILN (*Illustrated London News*) expanded and inferred that this occasion, the Great Exhibition, and their article on the newest steam press was a moment of international prestige and inference many of their readers could and would pick up on.¹⁰ The artistic representation of the printing process was yet another example of the London/British press proudly presenting the progress of their civilization when compared

⁹ Alison Hedley, *Making Pictorial Print: Media Literacy and Mass Culture in British Magazines, 1885–1918*, (University of Toronto Press, 2021), 8-9.

¹⁰ "Applegath's Vertical Printing Machine, Exhibited By The Proprietors of the 'Illustrated London News,'" *Illustrated London News*, May 31, 1851, 31-32, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

to contemporary societies of the time. London and, by extension, England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were at the forefront of progress, technological ascendancy in the field of print, distribution, and industry, and publications like the ILN were keen to recognize and highlight this fact.

Similarly to the ILN, *Punch Magazine* or the *London Charivari* sought to tap into Britain's increasingly growing and becoming more literate middling classes. However, unlike the ILN, who blended the *Times'* reporting style on current events combined with illustrations. *Punch* would instead approach current events with an air of comedy and satire targeting the upper classes of society, similar to how Charles Knight and his *Penny Magazine* initially did. *Punch* began in 1841 by Henry Mayhew and Ebenezer Landells. Both men took inspiration from the French satirical magazine *Le Charivari* and applied the same approach of commenting on current events via satirical reporting and caricatures but used it to comment on London and British society.¹¹ According to M.H. Spielmann, both Mayhew and Landells looked to create what they called "new humor." Through caricature engravings, "novel schools of comic writing, motley moralist and punning philosophers," *Punch Magazine* could deliver this literary writing style and report to the people.¹²

After initial struggles in sales, *Punch* soon found a home in Britain's highly diverse press landscape. Like the ILN, *Punch* found its audience in the middling classes of London and Britain, who appreciated its witty but not too vulgar humor, plus the added appreciation towards *Punch's* attacks against the establishment, namely, the upper

¹¹ M. H. Spielmann, *The History of "Punch,"* (London: Cassell & CO., 1895), 15-16.

¹² Ibid, 26.

class and the government. *Punch* also found admirers amongst the smaller London-based publications and the provincial press across England, who appreciated the magazine's writing style. Like *Punch*'s reading audience, the satirical attacks and humor toward the establishment. In one such article from the *Buxton Herald*, they proclaimed *Punch*'s style as "unapproachable" by other would-be magazines; the *Buxton Herald* went even further in stating *Punch Magazine* could be the bringer of social reform and philanthropy across Britain.¹³ By the 1850s, *Punch* was an integral part of British daily readership and enjoyed the acclaim of many people. *Punch*'s ability to connect with its readers is perhaps why Spielmann went so far as to say, "*Punch* is an Englishman of intense patriotism, but primarily a citizen of London, and a far truer incarnation of it-for all his chaff of alderman and turtle-than the Lord Mayor and Chairman of the County Council put together."¹⁴ As the previous statement suggests, *Punch*, through its commentary and caricatures, came to encapsulate how many London and British citizens came to feel about the world around them.

Thus far, we have seen three styles of newspaper/periodical writing. With its vast connections across Europe, *The Times* provided accurate news reporting on the critical issues of the moment. The *ILN* struck a middle ground between covering essential topics and issues but blended this style of news with illustrative representations to draw upon London and Britain's growing middling and working classes. At the same time, with its unabashed demeanor and witty commentary, *Punch* made light of the same topics covered by the *Times* and the *ILN* but instead decided not to take these topics too

¹³ "The Punch Office," *Buxton Herald*, September 13, 1845, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁴ Spielmann, *The History of "Punch,"* 110.

seriously and opted for a more toned-down and entertaining commentary or analysis of the situation.

By the spring of 1854, with Britain finding itself amidst a political crisis and soon-to-be war between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, these three publications and their different approaches to reporting on the news would find themselves covering this conflict and Britain's involvement in vastly different ways. Through the *Times*, *ILN*, and *Punch*, the people of London and, to an extent, the people of Britain would experience the war in vastly different ways. With their centrality to the political epicenter coupled with their vast reader base, London-based papers would use this fact to exert their will upon important decision-makers while also providing vital information to the people.

Russophobia in the London Press

Thanks to their connections to the whole of Europe, it should come as no surprise that London and its various publications became the hotbed for Russophobia in the years leading up to the Crimean War. As author John Howes Gleason states, *Russophobia in Great Britain* was a political and policy strategy designed and carried out primarily by later British MP David Urquhart to shed light on the backwardness of Russia when compared to Britain. Urquhart, according to Gleason, recognized the rising importance of the press in the 1830s and 1840s as a critical tool for drawing attention to specific subjects. Thus, men like Urquhart utilized publications like the *Times* or *Morning Chronicle* to present their anti-Russian policy to the people and shape public opinion on

the matter in their favor.¹⁵ Forming an anti-Russian sentiment amongst the British masses was only further helped by geopolitical crises throughout the early parts of the nineteenth century. Several events shaped Britain's mostly negative opinion towards Russia. Russian encroachment in central Asia prompted fears of an invasion of British-held India, leading to the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842). There was also the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, suppression of the Polish November Uprising in 1830-1831, and Russian intervention in support of Austria during the Hungarian uprising in 1848 resoundingly shaped British public opinion against Russia.

There is, however, a caveat to this discourse into anti-Russian sentiment throughout the 1830s and 1840s. According to Gleason, by 1850, the public perception of Russia began to cool slightly due to public gestures of goodwill by ministers from both Britain and Russia, which Gleason states translated to the slowing of anti-Russian articles coming from the British press.¹⁶ Gleason notes that despite the cooling of rhetoric from government officials and the press. However, during the 1830s and the 1840s British public opinion was resoundingly set against it. Russophobia became firmly planted in the British psyche and many Britons, despite goodwill gesturing from both British and Russian governments, still harbored a healthy mistrust of the machinations of Russia. Thanks to the utilization of London-based publications like the *Times*, *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Morning Herald* and the provincial press's contribution, whose continuously growing readership meant constant interaction with anti-Russian articles,

¹⁵ John Howes Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 2-3.

¹⁶ Gleason, *Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*, 274.

led to a zeal of mistrust of anything perceived associated with Russia.¹⁷ It should come as no surprise then, when on March 29, 1854, following Britain's declaration of war on Russia, the London press, as it had done in the 1830s and 1840s, responded with not only a patriotic, almost jingoistic zeal but also responded in kind with anti-Russian sentiment as well.

The Times' War

I am prepared to contend that the paper to which I have alluded-the *Times*- has exceeded the bounds of free discussion, and I am prepared to contend that it has exercised its influence against some individuals holding high situations of confidence and of trust in our army-men who are now fighting England's battles at this moment in the Crimea.¹⁸

This remark, delivered by Lord Lyndhurst during a debate in the House of Lords, demonstrated how concerned some members of the House of Lords had become towards the *Times'* coverage of the war over the winter months of 1854-1855. As stated in the previous section, the *Times* was Britain's and perhaps continental Europe's integral publication with its vast resources and means of gathering intelligence with various correspondents entrenched in the leading cities of Europe and a broad reading audience. Read by individuals from across the class spectrum, the *Times* was by far the most read and consumed newspaper publication by the mid-nineteenth century. The *Times*, according to Stefanie Markovits, also had at their disposal a talented assortment of writers who had a good understanding of what the people sought and used that

¹⁷ Ibid, 278-279.

¹⁸ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HL Jan 26, 1855, v. 136: col. 950.

knowledge of the people's sentiments to drum up particular feelings, particularly patriotic ones.¹⁹

An excellent example of the *Times*'s savvy writing style and ability to draw upon patriotic tones came on April 4, 1854. barely a week had passed since Britain's formal declaration of war against Russia when one writer for the *Times* called upon its younger reader, the ages of which were not specified, to appreciate what it feels like to be within a country in a state of war. The article continues by harkening back and comparing Britain's current war with Russia with that of Britain's wars with Revolutionary/Napoleonic France. The *Times* stated that "We wage war with a Government whose domestic system is despotism and whose foreign policy is conquest...sixty years ago it was imagined that the indignation and the selfishness of all Europe would concentrate all her armies against devoted France...now there are thousands of miles of frontier and an unapproachable and unknown interior to be attacked."²⁰ In the same leading article, the *Times* writer proudly proclaims that the *Times* as a publication proudly fights against oppression, in this case, Russia, in a similar manner as Britain's armies would soon find themselves. The *Times* in many respects viewed this upcoming conflict as a clash of civilizations pitting what they viewed as a progressive and technologically advanced Britain against the backwardness of Tsarist Russia. The *Times* also placed itself and framed its role in the upcoming conflict as a leader in providing information to its mass reading audience while also molding public

¹⁹ Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, 21-22.

²⁰ "London, Tuesday, April 4, 1854," *The Times*, April 4, 1854, 6, Times Digital Archive.

opinion towards Russia. Essentially, the *Times*, at the onset of the war, viewed themselves as the mouthpiece of Britain to the wider world.²¹

Similar conclusions to the ones just made have also been espoused by Orlando Figes, who states that “the *Times* acted and perceived itself as nothing less than a national institution, a ‘Fourth Estate.’”²² Stefanie Markovits, like Figes, has come to the same conclusion that she claims “the paper (the *Times*) was not just expressing a public opinion but also (literally) dictating it.”²³ The practice of dictating public opinion to its reading audience would become a common theme across Britain during the early stages of the war. Both the *Times* and the provincial press effectively curated public opinion. As we shall see in this chapter and later in chapter five, the *Times* understood its “national” stature within the British Isles, explaining why this publication had such sway and varying reactions amongst its readers. However, for this chapter, the *Times* would report on the war in several ways utilizing new techniques in journalism, namely the newly created profession of war correspondent and relying on the application of technologies like the telegraph to bring quick and accurate information to its readers. The *Times* and many other publications during the war would become a repository for public discourse on various topics on the Crimean War. However, publications such as the *Times* would also be a vehicle of truth and free speech through which readers, via “letters to the editors,” could voice their concerns. Soldiers, too, through articles titled “Letters from the Crimea,” could enlighten the readers back home by describing their experiences in war

²¹ Scholars still debate whether *The Times* did, in fact, speak for the whole of Britain, an already complicated understanding in the 1850s. What is essential, however, is that this is how *The Times* viewed their role at the outbreak of war.

²² Figes, *The Crimean War: A History*, 147.

²³ Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, 23.

while also critiquing Britain's war leaders. Through its daily coverage of the war and vast array of resources, the *Times* could effectively inform the whole of the British Isles about the war and level harsh truths to their readers if they so choose.

As stated previously, the *Times*' initial response to the war was one of patriotic enthusiasm for Britain's declaration of war against Russia, which the publication likened to Britain's conflicts with Napoleonic France. Again, we see news publications framing the conflict as one society with a strict set of ideals confronting another. Much of the early headlines coming from the *Times* in the immediate wake of the declaration of war espoused how Britain was not only fighting a war against an expansionist state. Britain was also fighting a war of virtue. From the *Times*' perspective, a war against Russia was tantamount to upholding 'British values,' particularly liberalism and civility against Russian 'barbarism' and authoritarianism. Apart from demonizing the Russians, Orlando Figes notes how the *Times* and other publications across Britain began to lionize the Ottoman Empire for their gallant defense against Russian aggression, despite having poor views of the Ottoman Empire in the preceding months and years.²⁴ In one such *Times* article dated April 12, a leader article expressed confidence in the fighting ability of the Turkish soldier, arguing, "it is manifest, from all the intelligence we receive of the engagements on the Danube or Asia, that the Turkish Soldier, taken by himself, is fully equal to the Russian soldier."²⁵

²⁴ Figes, *The Crimean War*, 150; much debate swirled around the idea of a European Christian state supporting and fighting alongside a Muslim state against another Christian.

²⁵ Leader, *Times*, April 12, 1854, 7, Times Digital Archive.

Apart from espousing patriotic rhetoric and virtue, demonizing Russia, or lionizing the Ottomans, another contribution of the *Times* was to provide up-to-date information on the embarkation of Britain's armies and navies. Immediately upon the commencement of hostilities between Britain and Russia, the *Times* gathered and reported on the British Army and fleet movements utilizing all its available resources. For readers of the *Times*, it became common to see one-two page swaths of a daily issue filled with the most recent report of Britain's contribution to the war. Whether it was British admirals Sir Charles Napier and his fleets movement in the Baltic or the movement of British Army regiments transferring from Malta to the soon-to-be camp at Varna. For the *Times* and their ability to receive and distribute reports from the front quickly and accurately, they relied on two resources: the already embedded correspondents within the theater of action. The other was the use of the telegraph.

For the British press, let alone the press in general, the telegraph was a vital source for transmitting information over vast tracts of land in a relatively brief period. The Crimean War, aside from playing a pivotal part in the development of the British press, was also crucial to the further development and innovation of telegraphy. According to Yakup Bektas, during the early phases of the war (March-August 1854), the average travel time a message from Eastern Europe could reach London was three days. The process of passing information from Crimea to London was arduous, from travel via steamship, horse travel to the first telegraph station in Bucharest, and finally, from Bucharest to Paris and then to London proper.²⁶ However, a three days travel from

²⁶ Yakup Bektas, "The Crimean War as a Technological Enterprise," *Notes, and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (20 September 2017), 243.

Crimea to the telegraph room at the *Times* was not always guaranteed. One example of issues stemming from telegraph use came in the wake of the battle of the Alma, which took place on September 20, 1854. However, it would not be until eleven days had passed till the first snippets of news regarding that battle reached the pages of the *Times*, and this news also came with a stunning and later proven false report of Sebastopol's fall.²⁷ Inconsistency in news reporting would continue to hamper the stream of totally reliable reports until mid-1855. By 1855 the British government hired the Newall and Company to lay submarine telegraph cables between the two main British camps in Varna (Modern-day Bulgaria) and Balaklava (in the Crimea) to Istanbul and from there to Bucharest-Paris and then to London.²⁸

Even though a telegraphic line became present within Crimea by 1855, this did not immediately translate to the press having access to the telegraph and its offices. According to British Army regulations for the use of the telegraph, Article III stated that "The Telegraph from Bucharest to Varna, although a Government Line may be employed at the discretion of the Directors at the several Stations, for the transmission of private Messages, not being of a Military or Political Character, and not being in cypher. The same discretion may be exercised on the Line from Varna to Constantinople."²⁹ While telegraphing offices at Varna were accessible for newspapers, offices within Crimea were strictly for military use. Strict access to the telegraph meant that on the ground, reporters still relied upon steamships to deliver their reports to Varna. Only then from Varna would

²⁷ "The Fall of Sebastopol," *Times*, October 2, 1854, 6, Times Digital Archive.

²⁸ Bektas, *The Crimean War as a Technological Enterprise*, 244.

²⁹ British Army regulations of Telegraph usage during the Crimean War, WO 33/3A, National Archives, UK.

reports make their way to London via telegraphic communication. Even though issues arose from using the telegraph to transmit news, it was the most practical way to get information into the hands of the reader in a timely fashion. Despite the certain lag in communication, the war, for many readers, still unfolded for them as if it were happening in real-time despite limitations. For this reason, many scholars, including Markovits, claim the Crimean War was the first genuinely mass media. Whether in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland, Britons had access via personal copies of newspapers or listening to readings from the public and could be kept up to date on the events of the war as they transpired, with time and space no longer being a hindrance.

While speedy transmission of news was vital to the *Times* to communicate the war to its readers, all those efforts would have been for naught if not for the exploits of a new emerging profession: the war correspondent. The chapter has already established the *Times*' first foray into using a correspondent who would cover a war that occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. However, the individual involved lacked total access to the army and did not have a journalistic background. Accompanying the British Army to Russia had been an unknown writer to the *Times* by the name of William Howard Russell. Indeed, by the war's end, his name would become synonymous with reporting extraordinary events from the front, refining the profession of the war correspondent, and thanks to his efforts, it would take the *Times*' notoriety to new heights. Russell embedded himself with the British Army since the start of the war traveling with the army from Malta and then to Varna. Indeed most of Russell's early reports pertained to capturing the daily life in the camp. Thus, his early reports gained little traction within the *Times*. However, Russell's early reports portend the British Army's struggles in the future,

alluding to the fact that officers looked as though they were play-acting in war rather than fighting in a war.³⁰

Russell's first eye-catching report from the front came after the Anglo-French Army engaged with the Russians at the Battle of Alma. However, as mentioned before, Russell's first proper, fully detailed recount of the events on September 20 would not reach London until October 10, but the report was resoundingly striking. Aside from capturing the carnage of battle, Russell also captured the human suffering caused by warfare. Russell observed the state of the wounded following the battle of the Alma "racked with agony of every imaginable wound-famishing with thirst-chilled with the cold night air-the combatants lay indiscriminately, no attempt being made to relieve their sufferings until the next day."³¹ Passages just used are one reason Russell, are why the *Times* dubbed Russell "Our Own/Special Correspondent," Russell's near spellbinding reporting brought much acclaim to the *Times*.

Dogged and meticulous in his observations, Russell, according to Stefanie Markovits, drew in readers with this writing style.³² Russell was also the beneficiary of the previously mentioned troubles of transmitting news across vast distances. So much of Russell's reporting suffered unintentional lag, leaving the readers of the *Times* in a perpetual state of suspense as they waited for the release and publication of his reports.

³⁰ William Howard Russell, *The Crimean War: as Seen by Those Who Reported It*, Edited by Angela Michelli. Fleming, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), XII; Phillip Knightley, "The Miserable Parent of a Luckless Tribe," in *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from Crimea to Iraq*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 5-6.

³¹ Russell, *The Crimean War*, 58; "The Battle of the Alma," *Times*, October 10, 1854, 7-8, Times Digital Archive.

³² Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, 26.

This demand for further information coming out of the Crimea from William Howard Russell would again only increase following the news of two more pitched battles against the Russians at Balaklava and Inkerman in the autumn of 1854 and the ongoing siege of Sebastopol. However, Russell's most important attribute when it came to reporting on the war, as noted by Philip Knightley, was his search for the truth and reporting on what he was observing without any hint of downplaying the events behind flowery rhetoric. During the siege of Sebastopol, Russell, through his contacts within the army (mainly through rank-and-file soldiers), exposed in all its disastrous state how woefully unprepared the British Army in terms of logistics it was for this campaign. Not only did Russell's reports shine a light on the stricken nature of the British Army before Sebastopol, but they also helped stir public outrage and allowed the *Times* to criticize the government for this state of affairs more confidently.³³

Reinforced with the detailed reporting of William Howard Russell, the *Times*, a publication that even before British forces were truly underway in both the Baltic and Black Seas, was wont to criticize the Aberdeen government for the slow prosecution of the war. However, with a greater and more intimate knowledge at their disposal, the *Times'* scathing criticism of the government would only continue and become more damning, particularly during the siege of Sebastopol over the winter of 1854-1855.

The siege of Sebastopol truly allowed the *Times*, its writers, and readers (via letters to the editor) to operate in their truest form, meaning the catastrophic events for the British Army while besieging the city allowed both *Times* writers and readers to

³³ Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 11-12.

question and criticize the government. Once the first reports from Russell began to filter in describing the loss of supplies and the soldiers suffering in cold and damp trenches without any indication of the city's imminent fall, the *Times* and other publications went on the attack to hold those responsible accountable. In one November article, a writer suggests, if not implores, that the army currently besieging the city of Sebastopol did not require extra reinforcements but instead the army's need of supplies. The writer would go on to chastise the government and army leadership for failing to supply the army in their hour of need.³⁴ In another article from December, the *Times* attacked the army leadership. One writer of the *Times* ponders the possibility of Sir Richard England leading the army as "a public danger," and his leadership would be more disastrous than Raglan, who had already suffered much from the press's attack.³⁵ The *Times* and their writers were not the only ones allowed to participate in public discourse on the incompetency of British Army leadership. The *Times* also allowed its reading audience to voice their opinions on these matters through letters to the editor.

Letters to the editor, alongside soldiers' private correspondences, speak to how the citizens interacted with the war and their comprehension and the development of literacy within Britain at this point. As discussed in the previous chapter, literacy was constantly increasing through the early to mid-nineteenth century. The Crimean War inspired many newspaper readers to voice their opinions, whether those opinions were to lionize British soldiers, lament the war, or discuss logistics.³⁶ Some of the most important

³⁴ "Leader," *Times*, November 13, 1854, 6, Time Digital Archive.

³⁵ "Leader," *Times*, December 11, 1854, 6, Times Digital Archive.

³⁶ Soldier's letters to the Crimea will be thoroughly analyzed in chapter five which addresses how the army, navy, politicians, and citizens interacted with the war.

dialogues that readers engaged in involved strategy between the British Army and the Royal Navy, as shown in one editorial by a man named Q.B., to which he suggests the rapid capture of Sebastopol. At the same time, the Royal Navy in the Baltic Sea should remain anchored there until the Black Sea campaign concluded.³⁷ Another critical topic, as brought up by Stefanie Markovits, was that of the weather in Crimea. During the winter months, weather almanacs in the *Times* spawned even further discussion and publishing of letters with the headlines of "Winter in the Crimea."³⁸

As seen thus far, the *Times*, with an arsenal of resources at its disposal, ranging from its technological innovations to the utilization of the war correspondent, authoritatively conducted itself when it came to reporting on the war. Nevertheless, now it begs the question, did the *Times* impact the war? Did any of their actions matter? This question continues to drive debate amongst scholars of the Crimean War and the Victorian press. Even in the *Times*' official history, they stated, "It may well be doubted whether the *Times* influenced the actual course of events as much as contemporary readers believed," however, it is those last few words "contemporary readers believed."³⁹ Yes, the *Times*, amidst the Crimean War, believed they were making a difference. Again, within the *Times*' history, they stated that the publication not only acted as the chief recorder of the war's events but "it (the *Times*) can be counted among the protagonists."⁴⁰ In a sense, the publication generated greater public discourse via letters to the editor. Their coverage allowed for an uptick in paper sales and demands for more distribution to

³⁷ "The Future Conduct of the War," *Times*, December 7, 1854, 10, Times Digital Archive.

³⁸ Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, 49-50.

³⁹ *The History of The Times: The Tradition Established, 1841-1884*, 191-192

⁴⁰ *The Tradition Established*, 166.

areas outside of London. Even the political landscape shifted due in no small part to public outcry, with the resignation of Prime Minister Aberdeen in early 1855 being the most visible indicator. The *Times* saw itself as a vital institution for dialogue amongst the people. While the *Times* viewed itself as a forum for dialogue, it was a dialogue in many ways shaped and formed by them and their collection of writers. With vast resources and access to information at its disposal, the *Times* could provide the most up-to-date and accurate picture of the Crimean War with a vast reading audience to consume it.

Visualizing the War: The Illustrated London News and the Crimean War

With the commencement of hostilities in the spring of 1854, the war came to dominate most of the content coming out of the British press. As mentioned previously, the *Illustrated London News* (ILN), since the 1840s, now strove to find a middle ground in its presentation between the factual and informative style of the *Times* and the caricature and illustrative style of previous publications like *The Penny Magazine* and *Punch*. The fusion of illustration alongside news served the ILN well. By 1853, this weekly publication could boast of weekly sales numbering 50,000.⁴¹ With a standard issue of the ILN ranging from 24-to 32 pages (supplemental editions ran as high as 47 pages), the ILN would soon come to dedicate much of its issues to covering the topic of war in Russia. Similarly to the *Times*, the ILN struck a nationalistic tone and attacked any perceived friends of Russia. The ILN even went so far as to assert that the current Prime Minister, the Earl of Aberdeen, with his lax towards Russia, was a key factor in why

⁴¹ Christopher Hibbert, *The Illustrated London News' Social History of Victorian Britain*, (Angus & Robertson, 1975), 11-13.

Britain was now in a state of war.⁴² Again, like the *Times*, the ILN utilized a corps of correspondents (though less extensive than the *Times*) to gather information and retransmit information from the war back to the awaiting audience.

Of course, the most significant contribution the ILN had regarding how their readers understood the war was through the artist renderings and woodblock engravings of scenes emerging from the conflict zone. How the ILN obtained its illustrations, whether it was scenes from a battle, daily life at camp or on the high seas, or within the military hospitals at Scutari, came via ILN-hired artists or via a free enterprise. Soldiers and sailors offered their artistic works to the ILN for free or at a fee. Like the *Times*' utilization of William Howard Russell in his daily letter writing and reports back to that publication, the *Illustrated London News* likewise sent out three artists to capture the war for the publication. Their names were Edward Goodall, Joseph Archer, and Constantin Guys.

The artists Goodall, Archer, and Guys sought to capture every aspect of the British expedition to Russia. One example of the variety of scenes these men captured appeared in a July issue of the ILN, which included various renderings showing British soldiers milling around a public fountain in the town of Varna with the illustration titled "Varna-public fountain." Alongside the artistic renderings, the ILN would accompany said renderings with an associated story.⁴³ Furthermore, within this same July 1 issue,

⁴² "The Friends of Russia," *Illustrated London News*, May 6, 1854, 1, Illustrated London News Digital Archive; "THE WAR AND ITS CRITICS," *Illustrated London News*, 1 Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

⁴³ "Arrival of the First Division at Varna," *Illustrated London News*, July 1, 1854, 1-2, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

another rendering from either Goodall, Archer, or Guys depicts the Turkish Sultan Abdulmejid's visit to the recently arrived British at their camp again in Scutari.⁴⁴

The free-enterprising nature from which the ILN gained many of its fantastic depictions of the war came in the wake of pitched battles from which many observers were present. For example, at the Battle of Inkerman, fought on November 5, 1854, numerous images emerged depicting the battle's carnage. However, many of the received sketches came from uncredited artists. One such example shows British and Russian soldiers caught up in a melee to which the ILN explained the fierce hand-to-hand combat between British and Russian soldiers, followed on the second page with an artistic representation.⁴⁵ Again another sketch showing the battles during the Battle of Inkerman depicts French and British soldiers firing upon an advancing Russian column. Still, besides the artist's rendering came from an anonymous observer.⁴⁶ There were, of course, named artists whom the ILN did credit. Throughout the war, a certain flag officer in the Royal Navy named Montagu O'Reilly provided in-depth drawings of many notable events during the Black Sea campaign ranging from sketches of Sebastopol, which came to dominate much of the public discourse in the winter of 1854-1855. O'Reilly also provided unique views of the battles of the Alma and Balaklava not from the frontline but instead from the deck of a man-of-war with a near bird's eye view of the fighting.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "Visit of the Sultan to the English Camp at Scutari," *Illustrated London News*, July 1, 1854, 15, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

⁴⁵ "Repulse of the Russians by the Second Division," *Illustrated London News*, December 2, 1854, 7, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

⁴⁶ "The Battle of Inkerman-The Final Effort of the Russians," *Illustrated London News*, December 16, 1854, 9, Illustrated London News Digital Archive.

⁴⁷ "The Battle of the Alma," *Illustrated London News*, November 8, 1854, 8, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

Unlike the detailed reports of correspondents at the front, like those of William Howard Russell, which beyond all doubt, were beneficial in explaining the situation on the ground, the artist renderings themselves also proved influential and profound to the readers of the ILN. The woodblock engravings, which retransmitted the works of the ILN's artists in the field in conjunction with the associated article, helped contextualize and clarify what the article was describing for the reader. What these illustrations did for many readers of this publication was that they brought the written word to life, transported them into the heart of the action, and dispelled any illusion of the brutality of battle or the monotony of the camp. For instance, in the popular response to the ILN's style of covering the war, many provincial publications and their readers heaped praise upon the ILN and their depictions of the war. For example, in the *Oxford University and City Herald*, an article reviewing the job and work done by the ILN had this to say:

The *Illustrated London News* has, by its impartial and consistent advocacy of the public's welfare, secured a political influence scarcely second to any Newspaper in the Empire. On the question of the Russian War, during the year 1854, ONE THOUSAND ENGRAVINGS appeared in the *Illustrated London News*. Extensive arrangements, calculated to improve this popular Journal, and engagements, such will greatly enrich its Literary, Scientific, and other departments.⁴⁸

Unsurprisingly there would also be detractors to this reporting style; from time to time, there would crop up within the ILN's letters to the editor criticism of specific artist's rendering of scenes, usually citing over-exaggeration as the cause for the grievance. In a November issue of the ILN, an assistant surgeon in transit to the Crimea stated his frustrations, "I wish some of your scribblers to the papers who direct the military

⁴⁸ "Illustrated London News," *Oxford University and City Herald*, January 13, 1855, 16, British Newspaper Archive.

evolutions of the Crimea from their secure firesides, or perhaps from some garret redolent of beer and harmless smoke could be condemned to a twenty-four hours' campaign in the siege batteries, and made stand to their guns!"⁴⁹ However, the assistant surgeon, who went by the name of J.W.E., accuses other London publications of similar pitfalls of dictating on affairs about the war they (publications and their writers) had very little knowledge of. However, despite these noted grievances, the public was receptive to how the ILN covered the war, exemplified in the sales returns of the publication. At the beginning of the war, in March 1854, the ILN could claim to have 4,116,598 stamp-issued copies of the ILN in circulation.⁵⁰ A year on from March 1854, in March 1855 returns, the ILN could now proclaim stamp-issued copies increased to 5,627,866 with an uptick in weekly sales to 130,000, up from the 79,000 a year prior.⁵¹ One such conclusion from the numbers just presented is that the ILN and its newspaper style appealed to many potential readers. Still, it also speaks to the gravitational pull conflict, and war have upon society. The people of London, regardless of reading the *Times* or ILN, became enraptured with news from Crimea. Whether consumed via columns and columns of reports or reports interspersed with artist drawings of events, news on the war was compelling enough to draw people in and rabidly seek all information associated with the conflict.

⁴⁹ "English Journalism and the War," *Illustrated London News*, November 18, 1854, 10, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

⁵⁰ "Newspaper Stamps," *Illustrated London News*, April 8, 1854, 1, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

⁵¹ "Newspaper Stamps," *Illustrated London News*, March 10, 1855, 6, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

The ILN, like many other leading publications, recognized the draw a war had upon society and understood the role the press had in providing information to their reading audiences. Like the *Times*, the ILN and its writers used the publication to offer up criticisms and, at times, outright attacks against the government or military when it came to politics and strategy, respectively. However, the ILN showed more restraint in its attacks against the government. Apart from providing a picture of the war for their readers, the ILN, like a lot of London-based publications, used their articles to form public opinion on matters pertaining to the war but also helped support the war effort, again through initiatives like the Patriotic Fund and the ILN's own fund as well.

War and Parody: Punch and the War

As we have seen thus far, *Punch* struck a different chord with the British reading populace by focusing on the bawdy and absurd. Humorous depictions of significant figures and events *became the hallmark of this publication in the years before the war and the method of reporting on the Crimean War*. *Punch*, like much of the British press, maintained the anti-Russian stance in the lead-up to the actual outbreak of war with their first official jab at the Russian Empire in April 1853, which depicted Russia in the animal form of a bear embracing the caricature of the Ottoman empire in the form a turkey.⁵² This initial caricature demonstrated the evolving geopolitical situation involving Russia and the Ottoman Empire with displays titled "A Very Sick Man," with depictions of France and Britain also appearing as keen observers in the fate of Europe's sick man.

⁵² Anthony Cross, "The Crimean War and the Caricature War," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Jul. 2006, Vol. 84, No. 3 (Jul. 2006), 462.

By the outbreak of the war, *Punch* delighted in attacking the leader of Russia itself, that being Tsar Nicholas I. The appearance of the Tsar, as it appeared in the cartoons of *Punch*, could best be described as a menacing figure who sought nothing but to disturb the peace of Europe at the expense of the Ottomans. In one such cartoon titled "The Mad Czar's Song," Tsar Nicholas has an absurdly large head attached to an equally comically small body looking on. Adding to this, the caricature of the Tsar looks worryingly on as news had just reached him that both Britain and France had just declared war on him for his aggression against the Ottomans.⁵³ Beneath this same caricature of the Tsar reads a poem telling the reader that the Russian Tsar was acting in bad faith during peace negotiations in the months leading up to Britain and France's declaration of war.

Another cartoon found within *Punch's* pages shows the Tsar as a would-be knight standing before a windmill and on each blade the names of all the major European powers, "England, France, Austria, and Prussia." The title of this amusing representation of the Tsar was "The Don and the Windmills," a reference to Miguel de Cervantes' seventeenth-century work *Don Quixote*. In this caricature, the *Punch* depicts the Tsar as the character Don Quixote who chooses to view his world as if it were a chivalric tale of old rather than looking at the world as it is. Another crucial point to note is the depiction of whom *Punch* playing the character of Sancho Panza, Quixote's realistic counterpart.

⁵³ "The Mad Czar's Song," *Punch*, vol. 26. No. 661., (1854), 93.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106019785614?urlappend=%3Bseq=113%3Bownerid=9007199272484761-135>

For this role, *Punch* showed the Russian people as Panza suggesting they understood what a war with the other western powers would entail.⁵⁴

Punch, of course, did not deal exclusively with caricatures in its depiction of the war. *Punch Magazine* also expressed itself through poems, which attacked Russia and the British government and members of government like Lancashire MPs like Richard Cobden and John Bright, whom they perceived as weak towards Russia. A reader of *Punch* could also find whimsical, if not outright crude, commentary on the whole situation that was Britain's war with Russia. One enlightening show of this clever but crude view of the war came with an article titled "The Bear in Mr. Punch's Menagerie." The article details the crimes Russia had thus far committed against Europe and its people with lines like "The hanimal (sic) now before you, ladies, and gentlemen, is well known. He is better known than trusted. He keeps his eyes upon his prey for years together, awaitin' his opportunity an underd times patienter and slier than a cat watchin' a mouse."⁵⁵

However, Russia was not the only target for *Punch's* cartoons and musings. Attacks against the establishment allowed them to have their readership in the first place, and the Crimean War and some of the missteps by the government and military gave *Punch* even more license to provide amusing attacks against the government and later the

⁵⁴ "The Don and the Windmills," *Punch*, vol. 26. No. 662., (1854), 110.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106019785614?urlappend=%3Bseq=130%3Bownerid=9007199272484761-152>

⁵⁵ "The Bear in Mr. Punch's Menagerie: by the Keeper," *Punch*, vol 26. No. 663, (1854), 123.
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106019785614?urlappend=%3Bseq=144%3Bownerid=9007199272493135-168>

military. A month following Britain's declaration of war, *Punch* published a witty explanation of how the Aberdeen Ministry would pay for the war, to which *Punch* suggested that government officials would begin chloroforming citizens and "acquiring" their possession to help fund the war. Again, during the summer of 1854, *Punch* recreated a scene from Homer's *The Iliad* between Hector and Paris. However, instead, The Duke of Cambridge represents the blasé Paris while the dutiful Hector, represented by *Punch* magazine, calls upon the duke and the whole army into action.⁵⁶

Punch also did not shy away from poking fun at other publications and their own coverage of the war. In a fall article, the magazine posted a fake letter from "our special correspondent, from the seat of war," a jab perhaps at correspondents sent out from various other publications but most famously the *Times*. Within this "letter," the correspondent complains of the hardships of covering the war. Within the comical article, the correspondent makes complaints about the delay of his breakfast, the lock on his hotel door not being secured, and cold coffee. The "journalist" continues by proudly proclaiming that they will continue covering the war by attending the opera in Constantinople, a jab to the fact that some correspondents reported on events away from the frontlines.

While jabs at other publications were indeed a part of *Punch's* whole ethos, Anthony Cross points out that many of the caricatures *Punch* produced, along with associated poems or comedic scenario articles, were due to information supplied by leading London publications, including the *Times* itself. This fact even emerges

⁵⁶ "Hector Chiding Paris," *Punch*, vol. 26. No. 669., (1854), 175.

in *Punch's* cartoons. The cartoon titled "Enthusiasm of the Paterfamilias" shows an ordinary English family huddled around the father as he reads a London newspaper reading the reports surrounding the battle of Balaklava.⁵⁷ The *Times* even stated in an 1891 article commemorating *Punch's* fifty-year jubilee, saying, "May we be excused for noting that fact that he (*Punch*) has generally in regard to public affairs taken his cue from the columns of The *Times*?"⁵⁸ The magazine would also recognize this fact when in 1856, *Punch* ran an article praising the work done by *Times* correspondent William Howard Russell and his reports on the war.

The relationship of *Punch* to other British publications is something to note because it also speaks to how the public regarded *Punch Magazine* and its approach to reporting on the war as a positive experience. From the beginning of the war, many publications, both provincial and London publications, reposted articles coming out of *Punch* daily. Dubbed with titles like "Pilfering's from *Punch*" and "Bits/Pickings from *Punch*," these columns usually found in the literature section of most publications contained what one could assume were the favorite articles found within *Punch* on that given day. Some of the selections that ran in the provincial press were so amusing that they caused readers of provincial publications to praise *Punch* for their work. In one letter to the editor of the *Isle of Wight Observer*, which appreciated the depiction of Prince Albert skating with French Emperor Napoleon III, all the while, Tsar Nicholas I attempted to foul both men.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Cross, *The Crimean War, and the Caricature War*, 468.

⁵⁸ "The Jubilee of '*Punch*,'" *Times*, July 17, 1891, 4, Times Digital Archive.

⁵⁹ "To the Editor of the *Isle of Wight Observer*," *Isle of Wight Observer*, January 6, 1855, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

As mentioned before, the caricatures or articles found within *Punch Magazine* were not random or spur-of-the-moment choices but instead calculated to invoke the people's feelings at that moment. All of the caricatures or articles previously described in this section were feelings many readers of *Punch*, if not the whole of Britain, felt at that moment. Whether it was Russia depicted as a cold and calculating bear, articles making fun of British commanders for being inactive at the front, or articles like the Paris from Homer's *Iliad*, *these caricatures were reflections many felt during the war*. From its inception, *Punch* sought to portray to feelings and sentiments of the working and middling class in a humorous and bawdy manner, and thanks to those efforts, not only did it reflect in sales of the magazine but upon those who read its pages. It should come as no surprise that *Punch* found a home in many of the social classes of Britain during the Crimean War for its whimsical approach to a tragic human event, that being war.

This chapter has shown that London-based publications sought to inform their readers about the war differently, whether through traditional methods or caricatures. Whether it was the *Times*, *ILN*, or *Punch*, the readers of these publications responded in kind with avid consumption of the news, which showed in the increasing sales numbers of their publications. The British press, especially the London-based press, was well suited to report on the war between Russia and Britain. One obvious advantage of being in the heart of one of if not the most important cities on the globe at the time, with their plethora of resources and expansive reading base, the London publications brought home the war in their way. However, they also used these circumstances to exert their will, not only to sway public opinion and mold it but also pressuring politics and military strategy.

Throughout this thesis, we shall continue to see how people responded to the reports from London and the provincial press.

IV. FIGHTING TWO WARS: BRITAIN'S PROVINCIAL PRESS AND THE CRIMEAN WAR

To contrast London's view of the war and to understand the importance of place and local identity found within many English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh newspaper readers, we must also look at how impactful provincial publications were during the Crimean War. From the perspective of the provincial press, the outbreak of war against Russia came at a unique time for many non-London publications. Not only did Britain now find itself at war with an imperial rival, but lobbying against "taxes on knowledge" was still ongoing for many provincial publications. Provincial publications, by March 1854, faced two challenges that played at the forefront for many newspaper proprietors. First, their continued lobbying towards Parliament to end stamp and postage duties upon newspapers. The second challenge the provincial press faced was reporting on the newly arisen war between Britain and Russia. Unsurprisingly, the war dominated much of the attention and dialogue between newspaper readers and newsmakers. By March 1854, some publications had the means to report on the war without total reliance on London, with their own unique local reporting techniques. There were exceptions to the rule, namely publications in Southeastern England whose views reflected those within London, Britain's metropolitan and imperial heart. However, for the most part, provincial publications, as they had done for years, contextualized and reported on this war between Britain and Russia for their local audience.

This decision to report on the war from a local perspective informed their readers on how their specific town contributed to the war effort. But in many cases, former residents now found themselves in Britain's armed forces, and their neighbors were keen

to learn where they went and their exploits abroad. Newspapers reporting on the war with a locality in mind lent further weight to the gravity and significance for many local newspaper readers. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, harnessing the power of local identity during wartime not only bolstered and further embedded said local identities in many towns but, in some cases, contributed to forming British identity. Andrew Hobbs's works on the provincial press are extremely useful for demonstrating how local publications focused on local history and news, which was responded to favorably by readers.¹ Where Hobbs has the process placed within 1870s Britain, I argue that this practice began in the 1850s with the Crimean War acting as a crucial catalyst for the provincial press.

In the eyes of an average reader of the local newspaper, combining elements of local and regional identity with that of the nation might have seemed fanciful if not forced. However, a war pitting Britain against its rival Russia allowed for concepts of national identity to take hold in a press landscape that would have otherwise exclusively emphasized local and regional identity. As I demonstrate, for newspaper proprietors, journalists, and columnists, the outbreak of war allowed for the bestowing of local virtues and projecting them onto a national level from which a national consciousness could form. Indeed, national institutions like the British Army or national fundraising efforts such as the Patriotic Fund act as the point of contact between local, regional, and national identities. Newspapers themselves demonstrated the mingling of local and regionally driven news. However, in some cases, locally and regionally driven news unknowingly brought forth ideals of a British nation. Whether in the employment of the newspaper or

¹ Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 285.

not at times, writers brought together the multiple levels of identity at play during this moment from which newspaper readers across the British Isles could also engage with.

Provincial Publications on the Eve of War

As discussed in chapter two, the provincial press waged a protracted battle against "taxes on knowledge" throughout the 1830s and 1840s with mixed success. The most noteworthy success came with the Newspaper and Stamp Duties Bill of 1836, which lowered stamp duties from 4*d* to 1*d* and reduced paper duties from 3*d* to 1 ½ *d* per pound of paper, both drastic reductions. However, the bill still failed to address other costs of the printing and distribution processes, namely, postage duties survived, which many publications struggled to purchase or obtain. Struggles with lingering postage duties were not the only obstacles that remained. MPs and newspaper proprietors squabbled over the issue of understanding the term 'news.' Parliament's confusing understanding of the term frequently frustrated many publications citing it was too restrictive. By 1851 Parliament, still under pressure from dissatisfied publications, convened a select committee to investigate the state of the British press. In their findings, Parliament concluded that much work remained, especially regarding understanding the term news and outright abolishing lingering duties on paper and stamps.

In many ways, the fight to end the stamp duty within Britain further consolidated the provincial press into well-connected and organized interest groups in opposition to London and the surviving duties. Andrew Hobbs notes that the provincial press formed a 'network' or 'system' of publications that acted as a foil to London-based publications such as the *Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, or the *Evening Standard*. However, Britain's provincial press also acted as a mostly consolidated front against unfair taxes leveled

against them.² While many provincial publications sought to distance themselves from the metropole, London news still had a place within the provincial press, namely the republishing of leading London articles within the pages of local newspapers. However, for the most part, local newspaper proprietors understood that local news took center stage for most readers of the local press. The importance of local matters in conjunction with the provincial presses' interconnectivity with itself helped solidify an already strong bond at the local and regional level in terms of identity and engagement. For this reason, scholars like Andrew Hobbs have considered the provincial press much more "national" than perceived national papers like the *Times*.

To further show how the provincial press was, in loose terms, more national and more informative on British matters when compared to London publications, one only needs to glance at a newspaper issue from a provincial publication. For example, in a July issue of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, one glance at the pages, one can quickly see the importance locality played for newspaper readers. Within the twelve pages of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, readers could find anything from local corn prices, travel logs from residents abroad, meetings of local merchants and council members, or local advertisements. Non-local news, which only took up a few pages, usually dealt with parliamentary, imperial, or highly discussed foreign events, such as flaring tensions between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.³ Using the *Leeds Intelligencer* as a template to go by, one can assume provincial publications followed a similar trajectory with an emphasis on local matters. The vast majority of pages within provincial newspapers

² Hobbs, *When the Provincial Press was the National Press*, 22-23.

³ "Saturday, July 23, 1853," *Leeds Intelligencer*, July 23, 1853, 1-12, British Newspaper Archive.

concerned their time and effort with local matters because that is what their readers wanted.

In contrast to this July issue of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, let us look at what appeared in the *Times* on the same day. One can see how the provincial press came closer to capturing the many unique local cultures found across Britain at a time when London publications viewed themselves as more national. The *Times* on the same day, July 23, 1853, reported on the following issues: Parliamentary news and foreign intelligence, shipping and rail news and reports on market prices, and only scant mention of British events outside of London. Again, information regarding rising tensions between the Ottomans and Russia appeared alongside news of the British Empire and advertisement notices/public notices but only for the London area. The only mention of domestic reports (domestic in this case, meaning the British Isles) was a potato crop report emerging from Ireland.⁴ As shown, the provincial press provided a more British picture and portrayal of British events. Local and regional news of all types shared pages with metropolitan and imperial news. Contrasted with London publications like the *Times*, very little, by ways of capturing the diversity within Britain, could be found within this London paper. However, by 1854, the provincial press had yet to have a single publication that could compete with the *Times* on merit. Nevertheless, as a collectively interconnected community, the provincial press was more informed on British matters and news and could collectively compete with London.⁵

⁴ “London, Saturday, July 23, 1853,” *Times*, July 23, 1853, 1-16, Times Digital Archive.

⁵ Individual sales of provincial publications still paled in comparison to many London publications, but the networking and distribution among different localities tipped the scales in favor of the provincial press.

Russophobia in the Provincial Press

Discussions and news of fractious Russo-British and Russo-Ottoman relations were present in many provincial publications dating back to the 1830s. Many newspapers and periodicals gravitated toward events, be they glorious or disastrous, like Britain's successful intervention in the Oriental Crisis of 1840 or the failed First Anglo-Afghan war. Geo-political duels of this nature led publications like the *Newcastle Courant* to analyze the Russo-British intervention on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, that Britain, despite fighting alongside the Russians in this instance, still needed to remain skeptical of the Tsar's intentions.⁶ When it came to disastrous military campaigns, such was the case in Afghanistan in 1842. Publications quickly decried what this meant for Britain's position in Central Asia and what it meant for India in 1842. The publication *Essex Standard* viewed Britain's war in Afghanistan as unnecessary, citing Russophobia from the London-press for the ultimately unsuccessful campaign in Afghanistan.⁷ As we can see from the *Essex Standard's* reaction, Russophobia was not a consensus feeling all over Britain's print landscape.

Of course, when discussing a topic as vast as the provincial press, various opinions emerge with varying views on conflicts or other topics. For example, the *Monmouthshire Merlin* viewed the failed Afghan military campaign as a blow to imperial prestige. But, from *Merlin's* perspective, this publication believed fighting in Afghanistan was a risk worth taking to halt Russia's perceived advance on India. From this Welsh

⁶ "Daily and Periodical Press," *Newcastle Courant*, September 11, 1840, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷ "Friday, December 9, 1842," *Essex Standard*, Dec 9, 1842, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

publication's view, Russia represented underhanded diplomacy and threatened trade between British holdings in India and thus threatening all of Britain.⁸ For the most part, the provincial press shared the same views as the London press, and many publications and their readers were predisposed to mistrust Russia.

There are several characteristics of the provincial press which need addressing before a proper analysis of their role during the Crimean War. For starters, many provincial publications in Southeast England held views similar to that of London, thanks to their proximity to Britain's imperial and cosmopolitan heart. Many publications in this part of England, those in close proximity to London, often reflected the imperial and cosmopolitan mindset. In other provincial publications, those not dependent upon London still carried articles from London, but it did not overwhelm their pages or alter their worldview. Regarding Russophobia, like in chapter three, we see that anti-Russian sentiment was the rule rather than the exception. As we shall see in the popular response to news of Britain's declaration of war upon Russia in March of 1854, Britain was largely Russophobic at this time. Still, some publications did not always espouse jingoistic rhetoric despite mistrusting the Russian state.⁹ Discussions regarding Russia during the 1830s and 1840s allowed the British press to form rhetoric pitting British civilization against that of Russia. They demonstrated a tool used by the press to create a national identity by pitting themselves against a great 'other.

⁸ "Russia and India," *Monmouthshire Merlin*, September 17, 1842, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

⁹ Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*, 3-4.

The Provincial Presses Coverage of the War

Dissecting how the provincial press covered the events of the Crimean War is crucial to understanding how local and regional identities came to be so embedded with newspaper readers. But how the provincial press covered the war is also critical to understand the relationship between London and non-London areas. London, to be sure, had a critical role to play for the provincial press throughout the Crimean War. Reading headings of many articles within the provincial press, beginning with ‘from the *Times*,’ the provincial press understood London’s ability to provide a more precise picture of the war than they could ever hope to achieve. However, this did not hinder the provincial press from delivering their views and perspectives on the war. Throughout the war, the provincial press deferred to London to provide general information thanks to London’s place as the capital. But, thanks to the expansion of the telegraph across Britain in the nineteenth century, news from London could quickly be transmitted to the telegraph offices in various provincial towns or cities and promptly turned around and printed in the latest newspaper edition.¹⁰ With a free and near seamless exchange of information, the provincial press focused on how the war affected their immediate area during the Crimean War. Keeping the war fixed within a specific local and regional level would become the hallmark of the provincial press’s war coverage. While London provided a birds-eye view of the conflict, the provincial press used London’s information and contextualized and tailored it to the local and regional level.

¹⁰ Hobbs, *Provincial Periodicals*, 226.

The provincial press encompassed many titles and publications, far too many for any single thesis to cover, let alone this one. Instead, this section will attempt to succinctly cover the provincial press across the British Isles (Scotland, Wales, and Ireland) while also covering English publications from vastly different settings, from the industrial north to idyllic southern England. I hope this approach can give the reader a sense of each publication's regional uniqueness and perspective regarding reporting on the Crimean War.

When Britain declared war on Russia in March 1854, the initial response from the Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and English provincial press, similar to London, showed hawkish overtones signaling an eagerness and excitement at the prospect of fighting Russia. The pages of Dublin's *Freeman's Journal* stated, "Monday the 27th of March 1854 will be a memorable day in the histories of Northern and Western Europe. From that day will be dated the triumph of great principles of justice, or the ascendancy of barbarism and violence, and the diffusion over two continents of Muscovite Despotism."¹¹ In contrast, the Belfast publication *The Banner of Ulster* mused that while Britain would be victorious in the war against Russia, it feared that the conflict could damage the local economy, citing the proliferation of Russian goods that passed through Belfast's docks. Already we see contrasting views emerge from newspaper publications. The *Freeman's Journal* and the *Banner of Ulster* both viewed the war as a war of civilizations pitting 'barbarism' against civility. However, in the case of the *Banner of Ulster*, they were skeptical of war solely because the war might harm the local economy. The *Banner of*

¹¹ "Leader," *Freeman's Journal*, March 28, 1854, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

Ulster's worries about the local economy tells us how readers of this particular publication might have felt upon hearing news of Britain's war with Russia.¹²

While most publications thought of war with Russia as justifiable, citing virtues of upholding justice and stymieing despotism, others did not. For example, the *Oxford Chronicle* reacted to news of the declaration of war with trepidation stating, "The people of Great Britain look war in the face as a calamity and a risk which neither they nor their rulers have exultingly tempted."¹³ Again, the anti-Russian sentiment was not universal in every publication across the British Isles. Even still, this publication felt that Britain, in their words, "being the most liberal nation," had a moral obligation to oppose authoritarianism embodied by the Tsar of Russia.

In Scotland, certain Scottish publications like the *Scotsman* did not respond with much favorable comment to the declaration of war. Instead, the *Scotsman* stated, "If our fighting abroad be not incomparably more hearty than our talking at home, our prospects in the commencing war could scarcely be estimated as better than dismal."¹⁴ For the *Scotsman*, the leaders of Britain and the lack of a clear 'objective' jeopardized Britain's ability to carry out a war successfully. There were, of course, patriotic responses from the Scottish press. The best encapsulation of Scotland's popular response came from the *Elgin Courant*, stating, "we can go forth to fight with confidence and cheerfulness strong

¹² "Our Financial Prospects," *The Banner of Ulster*, March 30, 1854, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

¹³ "Leader," *Oxford Chronicle and Berks and Bucks Gazette*, April 1, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁴ "Leader," *Scotsman*, April 5, 1854, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

injustice or our cause, and not less so in the strength of our arms.”¹⁵ As we can see from the regional Irish, English, and Scottish publications, these publications reflected the positivity many of their readers felt about the war with Russia. However, despite the majority of Britain’s reading populace showing a popular reaction to war with Russia, some levels of timidity remained. Despite espousing a positive outcome to the war, the best example of a tepid response came from the *Banner of Ulster*, which still worried about how this conflict would affect the local economy reflecting the local mindset.

While the provincial press, for the most part, was in unison in their initial response to the outbreak of war, it does not explain how provincial publications contextualized the war for local and regional audiences. Throughout the war, the provincial publications highlighted their contribution to the war effort at regional and local levels. The provincial press did this via reporting on army regiments historically associated with regions across the British Isles, soldiers’ letters from the seat of war, usually prefaced from which family the soldier belonged within the locality, and the Patriotic Fund. Soldiers’ letters to their families allowed readers to make local and personal connections with the war and a national institution like the British Army. The Patriotic fund and how it became covered by the press allowed newspaper readers to see their local or regional contribution to a national effort to support families affected by the Crimean War.

Tracking a regionally specific army regiment, their movements, and their performance in battle became a mainstay of showing regional pride. The most

¹⁵ “War,” *Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser*, March 31, 1854, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

pronounced version of the provincial press recording the movements of local or regionally recognized army regiments while acknowledging their contributions to the war came from Scotland and Scotland's highland regiments. Throughout the war's duration, Scottish publications like the *Scotsman* and *Elgin Courier* were quick to relay the news of locally and regionally recognizable regiments and their deeds in the war. Lionizing the acts of the Highlanders came in many forms, but one of the most popular forms of their efforts came in the form of poems. Following the autumn battles of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman, the *Elgin Courier* posted poems written by local readers praising the efforts of the Highlanders. One such instance is a poem titled *The Highlanders' "War Cry" at Alma* by W.S. Daniel. In several stanzas, Daniel acknowledges the gallantry of the Highlanders during this decisive battle. But, Daniel is also quick to note that these soldiers, in his mind, were part of Britain's Celtic fringe rather than belonging to the Anglo-descended population. In several verses, W.S. Daniel homes in on the Gaelic qualities of the Highlanders by referencing ancient Celtic civilizations like the Gauls and the Picts and ancient Highlander clans such as McDonald's, McLeans, and Mackay's.¹⁶ Within this poem, one can infer Daniel's understanding that the readers not only would understand the references to Highlander clans but also invoke a shared Celtic heritage. Daniel's poem shows how publications like the *Elgin Courier* chose to portray the war. By focusing on the Celtic characteristics of the Highlanders, Daniel and the *Elgin Courier* made a conscionable effort to harken back to the Celtic origins of the Highlanders, something many readers of this publication would recognize.

¹⁶ "The Highlanders' 'War Cry' at Alma," *Elgin Courier*, November 17, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive.

Contrasting the *Elgin Courier's* regional and Gaelic focus, the *Scotsman*, rather than make overt references to ancient Gaelic civilizations, instead focused on the regiment's martial prowess. Instead, the *Scotsman* compared how the highlanders performed in combat to other British army regiments. In an article detailing the battle of Balaklava in October, the *Scotsman* noted the actions of the Scots Grey regiment, "this regiment (Scots Grey), behaved with its hereditary bravery; but after driving the enemy from their guns, was met by a murderous fire from infantry concealed among the brushwood."¹⁷ While the *Scotsman* does not mention Gaelic or Celtic qualities, this report denotes Scottish bravery in the face of Russian attacks. From the point of view of the *Scotsman*, this Scottish regiment demonstrated martial bravery understood as a Scottish national trait, not just a specific highlander one.

Using the highland regiments worked as a valuable template for fostering regional identity. However, Highlander regiments, thanks to their actions in the previous wars and the role they would play in the Crimean War, came to reflect not only Scottishness but also Britishness. By the time of the Crimean War, the "Highland Regiments" were recruited from the urban centers of Glasgow, Edinburgh, or outside Scotland altogether. Only five-per-cent, according to Richard Holmes of Scotland's "Highland Regiments," were, in fact, Highlanders.¹⁸ But Holmes notes that even though Highland regiments resembled Lowland Scotland and Northern England rather than anything remotely Highland, the traditional dress of the regiments still invoked regional Highlander,

¹⁷ "Battles near Balaklava," *Scotsman*, November 15, 1854, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁸ Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*, (Harper Collins Publisher, 2001), 56.

Scottish national pride, but carried over into all of Britain. According to T.M. Devine, the Highlanders were the most beloved British Army regiment in Scotland and Britain.¹⁹ One can see the public admiration towards the Highlander Regiments in London-based or English papers. The press and public began to see the Highlanders as not only the best of Scotland but the best of Britain. Highlander celebrity and martial excellence went beyond a Scottish trait and became British.

Of course, the Scottish press was not exclusive in their coverage and acknowledgment of regional regiment. Indeed, the Scottish press did write with great enthusiasm regarding their native regiments, painting them as the best Scotland had to offer. However, English and other publications took the opportunity to place the Highlanders as the best Britain had to offer. Nevertheless, Welsh publications also took pains to present a nationalistic tone and perspective of Welsh regiments fighting in the Crimea (particularly focusing on the 23rd Royal Welch Fusiliers). Within the pages of the *Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald*, this northern Welsh publication catered to the indigenous Welsh population. Like the *Elgin Courier*, the *Caernarvon Herald* utilized locally produced poetry to espouse Welsh pride and their contributions to the war effort. One noteworthy poem, written by a member of the Welsh Patriotic Society, highlights the collective effort in war with their other national brethren (Scottish, Irish, and English); the stanza was as follows:

Forward! was the battle cry,
Ten thousand hearts responded high,
And foremost to the victory

¹⁹ John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire*, (Oxford University Press, 2016), 188-189.

Rush'd Cambria's dauntless sons.
Here's to England's strength and pride,
Scotia and Erin long allied²⁰

From a Welshman's perspective, the war was in part understood as an effort coming from all peoples of the British Isles, English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh. This poem alone shows how regional understanding blends with the national. Traditional names for Wales, Ireland, and Scotland (Cambria, Erin, and Scotia) fight in unison with the English against the Russians. Again, this time via the *Caernarvon Herald*, we see a provincial publication making a concerted effort to play up regional identity. Emphasizing this poem came from a member of the Welsh Patriotic Society on top of a poem whose contents glorified the role of Wales in the conflict, understood that regional identities still played a significant part in the minds of their local readers. However, the explicit addition of traditional names of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland also denotes the shared struggle the peoples of these regions faced in this war with Russia.

As already mentioned, local references to the war came in many forms, from poetry provided by a resident or a quick summary of the actions of a regionally based regiment. Other news could be as simple as a newspaper providing a two-line notice indicating the death of a single soldier, a son of a community member, headlines proclaiming the calling up of the local militia with the names of those associated. The provincial press across the British Isles used language notably denoting "us," "we," and "our" contributions when it came to reporting on the war.²¹ Using personable language

²⁰ "Alma and the 23rd," *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, November 18, 1854, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

²¹ Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 274.

such as this helped link the reader not only to the paper but to those around him, this imagined community, or readers, to borrow from Benedict Anderson's works at multiple levels, from forming local identities to national ones. In many cases, by reading daily reports on the war through various newspaper publications, the imagined community very much became real.

Praising the efforts of regionally associated regiments was one tactic the provincial press contextualized to war for their audiences. Another way was to publish letters from residents turned soldiers and show how the individual impacted the war. This theme will appear again in chapter five, addressing the motivations and overall impact soldiers' letters homes had on the reading public. For the provincial press, whether English, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish, publishing letters from a soldier from the conflict was a crucial factor tying their readers to the war, but this was doubly impactful when residents read the exploits of one of their own.

The provincial press's motivations for seeking out and publishing letters from soldiers were numerous. The most basic reason was to provide its readers with information on what was happening at the front and make them feel more connected with the conflict. But more specifically, it was to give the people a sense of local and regional pride. When readers of the daily press came across letters from a soldier from a specific locality contributing to Britain's fight against Russia, the reader knew that one of their own was actively contributing to the war effort.²² Evidence of the provincial press specifically highlighting soldiers from certain localities is abundant in many publications.

²² Paul Huddie, *The Crimean War and Irish Society*, (Liverpool University Press, 2015), 60.

For example, in a December edition of *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin publication), this publication explicitly identified when Irish soldiers serving in the British Army wrote either to loved ones or into the publication itself.²³

The occurrence of the provincial press heralding the contributions of locals in the war effort became a frequent occurrence throughout the war. The contents of the letters were only sometimes the most crucial part. For instance, in the *Bath Chronicle*, a local named Mr. Bennet, whose son served at the Scutari Hospital, wrote to inform everyone how his son fared on January 22, 1855, and to inform everyone of his son's duties as a hospital attendant (namely changing bandages for soldiers).²⁴ Likewise, a sergeant serving in the Sutherland Highlanders wrote to his friend in Inverness detailing his combat experience at Inkerman. In contrast, soldiers from Newcastle wrote to their acquaintances about the experiences of living in the trenches before Sebastopol.²⁵ As we shall see in chapter five, soldiers writing to publications or families handing over their letters to publications would allow the private to intermingle with the public. Letters from soldiers to newspaper publications allowed the readers of the provincial press to feel even more connected with the war by reading the exploits and experiences of residents turned soldiers.

²³ "Letters from the Crimea," *Freeman's Journal*, December 28, 1854, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁴ "Letters from the Crimea," *Bath Chronicle*, February 8, 1855, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁵ "Letters from the Crimea," *Inverness Courier*, November 23, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive; "Local Letters from the Crimea," *Newcastle Courant*, February 23, 1855, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

From the perspective of newspaper readers in Britain, the war was no longer a peripheral conflict that did not concern a resident of Bath, Cork, Belfast, or Manchester. Instead, newspaper readers of the Crimean War played out right before them by reading daily reports of local regiments or soldier letters to their local papers. Newspaper readers knew or understood that the fighting in Crimea affected somebody within their immediate reach and thus felt more connected to the war. Local newspaper readers remained acutely aware of their local publication strategy for reporting on the war. In a December edition of *Freeman's Journal*, William Conihan, in a letter to the editor, wrote the following, "the love and interest you take in doing justice to the brave and gallant conduct of our Irishmen in the Crimea, which has been denied to them either by their English commanders, or the bigoted journals of England, induce me to forward to you another copy of a letter which I received from a Killarney man."²⁶ While this example might be more inflammatory when compared to other letters of thanks, it still demonstrates not only the locals recognized the provincial presses' attempts at covering the war from a local context but also their appreciation for it. Letters from local soldiers like the press updating readers on regional regiments' efforts are two ways that showed how the provincial press covered the war. But perhaps the most local, regional form of press coverage came from the Patriotic Fund.

The Patriotic Fund formed one of the most distinctive ways citizens contributed to the war. The Patriotic Fund also helped signal to civilians local and regional contributions to Britain's war effort. The Royal Patriotic Fund started as a royal commission from

²⁶ "Letters from the Crimea," *Freeman's Journal*, December 12, 1854, 5, *British Newspaper Archive*.

Queen Victoria to help the families of soldiers affected by the war, particularly supporting the widows or orphans of soldiers killed in battle. Grass-roots and community-driven subscriptions for the Patriotic Fund found a permanent home on the front pages of newspaper publications. Across the British Isles from late 1854 onward, individuals in large and small towns contributed to the fund. Recording the town's donations soon became a daily sight on the pages of local newspapers. An example from the *Essex Standard* in November 1854 stated that the town that day subscribed (donated) £190.²⁷

While providing a safety net for families affected by the war was a significant contribution brought by the Patriotic Fund. Another overlooked aspect the fund provided was the fostering of the community along with hoisting local and regional identities as well, which newspapers became quick to pick up and report on. The first fundraising efforts put on behalf of the Patriotic Fund are of note. In November 1854 (when the fund was first announced), people across England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales flocked to their guild halls to see the appointment of the royal commissioners and to see town leadership deliver speeches on the matter of collecting funds. The language used within these speeches is essential because the speech givers and the audience recognized were amidst a national war (Britain against Russia). Still, it was up to them (the towns/regions) to help struggling families. Understanding the national needs with local and regional duties was best encapsulated in a speech by Lord Heatherton. During a Patriotic Fund Assembly in Wolverhampton in November 1854, Heatherton proclaimed, "never had been a war entered upon by this country in which so universal concurrence was exhibited

²⁷ "Patriotic Fund," *Essex Standard*, November 24, 1854, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

by the present one." Heatherton would explain the liberal values in defending the Ottomans against a despotic Russia. But Lord Heatherton also noted that it was the patriotic duty of "Englishmen" to support the victims of the war (widows and orphans). Heatherton also noted how English soldiers would give thanks, knowing that should they fall in battle, their families would still have the support of the people. Heatherton continued by calling upon the people of Wolverhampton to help support the soldiers' families.²⁸ As Heatherton's speech showed, multiple notions of identity were at play, national, which pitted Britain against Russia, regional and local, exemplified by Heatherton calling upon the residents of Wolverhampton but also as Englishmen to do their duty.

Expressions of regional identities also came through in an article from the *Newcastle Guardian* in which they stated their "dismay" upon reading those northern industrial cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow had, by mid-November 1854, already contributed significant donations to the fund. Contrasting the efforts of neighboring cities, the *Newcastle Guardian* lamented that "Newcastle has not yet had an opportunity of showing her zeal and liberality in this good and great cause."²⁹ Playing off inter-city rivalries was another tactic used by provincial publications to foster identity by pitting one town in contrast to another. Throughout the war and during many Patriotic Fund drives, newspaper publications used subscriptions to the Patriotic Fund as a measure of competition between neighboring regions to see who could contribute the

²⁸ "The Patriotic Fund," *The Wolverhampton Chronicle*, November 15, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁹ "The Patriotic Fund," *Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury*, November 11, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive.

most. It soon became customary practice within the opening pages of provincial newspapers to proclaim a positive turnout of subscriptions followed by triumphant lines stating Inverness, Preston, Waterford, or whichever town was ranking in terms of funds donated.

Reporting on the war or the Patriotic Fund helped the provincial press become a platform to express national or regional identities within the British Isles. In a mid-November edition of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, the local paper reported on a Patriotic Fund meeting in which the speaker noted the struggle against Russia was not only a war involving England but also a war involving all the people of the British Isles. During one part of the public meeting, Reverend Henry Brownrigg stated, “the best blood of England and Ireland have trickled on the heights of the Alma,” Henry continued, “The blood of our peasantry is shedding, those brave men, yes, brave as lions, and indomitable indeed as the English and Irish ever will be on the field of battle, are at present falling in the trenches and ramparts round about Sebastopol.”³⁰

Reverend Brownrigg’s words are important because they demonstrate how Ireland’s inhabitants viewed the war. Words like Brownrigg’s clear separation of English and Irish should be no surprise, given that Ireland had emerged from a bout of nationalistic surges by the mid-nineteenth century. This most recent surge came in response to the devastating famine in the 1840s, and these tendrils of nationalistic sentiments and writings, while not as hot in the 1850s, continued to persist. But historian Paul Huddie also noted that for Ireland specifically, the war years of 1854-1856 presented

³⁰ “The Patriotic Fund,” *Dublin Evening Mail*, November 17, 1854, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

a time of what he described as ‘imperial’ or ‘British’ patriotism. Huddie Irish patriotism during the Crimean did not denote a clear understanding of what it meant to be British, but rather, the still ambiguous nature of what it meant to be Irish and identify as Irish.³¹ However, I argue that the Irish provincial press did not have a vague understanding, as Huddie would suggest. The Irish provincial press understood that Irishmen still made up a large contingent of Britain’s army by the 1850s. I suggest that Ireland’s widespread support for the war was for the sake of supporting Irishmen going to fight abroad than a pang of patriotic fervor. As I have demonstrated already, local and regional identities played at the forefront of publications and people’s minds, and the Irish press was no exception to this rule.

These sentiments were equally complicated within the Scottish community; according to Richard Finlay, during the 1840s, the Scots and the Scottish press tended to frame and equate the nation of ‘Britain’ with England. The Scottish press tended to play up this idea within their articles.³² However, in both cases for Scotland and Ireland, the war allowed the press and the people to express regional and national identities. These expressions came out through speeches highlighting the contribution of the Scottish and Irish peoples to the Patriotic Fund.

While the Irish and, to a lesser extent, the Scottish press made clear indications that they understood their cultures were different from that of the English and thus did not fully adhere to the idea of Britishness which is why the term does not often appear in

³¹ Huddie, *The Crimean War and Irish Society*, 55.

³² John M. Mackenzie and T.M. Devine eds, *Scotland and the British Empire*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), 285-286.

their newspapers. The use of the term British was different in the context of England's provincial papers. Whether the publication came from a northern industrial city or a more pastoral southern setting, English papers throughout the war used the term British interchangeably to denote English. Unlike their Scottish and Irish counterparts, English papers had no issue associating Englishness with Britishness. Amongst letter writers themselves, the conveying of national identity is less clear cut. No doubt, whether they came from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, or England, letter writers understood that war with Russia was no small matter, and a war of this scale would end up affecting many, if not all, of Britain. Still, a collective British consciousness only sometimes came through from letter writers. A provincial letter writer gravitated towards local affiliations. Instead, conveying a British national identity was an unnegotiated effort by newspapers and newsmakers. Through the language used in leading articles, the newspaper toyed with the idea of Britishness and subtly passed it along to its audiences. Here we see an example of newspapers purveying the nation's spirit (at least how newspapers saw it). Britain was at war, a war against an imperial rival and one viewed as lesser than their civilization. The Crimean War provided the press, both in the provinces and the metropole, the opportunity to blend the idea of local and regional identities into a more extensive understanding of British identity.

The British provincial press covered the events and actions of the Crimean War in a way that highlighted their residents' regional and, in some cases, national contributions. As we have already discussed, the provincial press did not have the resources to cover every event. Instead, most publications could rely upon the reporting of the *Times* for that role. Instead, many provincial publications repackaged the news from abroad and placed

it within a local context. The provincial press did this by highlighting the movement of local and regional British regiments on campaign in the Crimea, selectively publishing letters of soldiers provided by residents in whichever town they resided in, and posting local and regional contributions to the Patriotic Fund. What emerged from this type of coverage was a landscape with a reporting apparatus conscious of their local and regional efforts towards the war. From this regional and local understanding, newspaper proprietors branched out to blend the regional and local identities with that of the nation. In many forms of coverage, whether poetry, traditional news reporting, or handwritten letters, unique local identities showed through the pages of newspapers. Still, provincial newspapers also contextualized these identities into the conflict and spoke of this event not only as a Manchester, Bath, Wales, Ireland, or Scotland resident but also as British.

War and Duties: The Provincial Presses' Quest to Abolish Stamp Duties

As we have seen, Britain's press, whether provincial or metropolitan became geared towards reporting on the war in every facet. However, the provincial press also dedicated columns and articles to their other most pressing issue, ending the ever-present stamp duties, which hindered newspaper growth. As discussed in chapter two, in 1851, a Parliamentary select committee concluded that newspaper stamp duties, postage duties, and advertisement taxes should be wholesale abolished within Britain.³³ The provincial press responded to the committee's findings and immediately had plentiful reactions. Within the pages of the *Hampshire Independent*, their takeaway from the report was that

³³ Parliament would do away with the advertisement tax in 1853.

advertisement taxes and taxes on paper were more detrimental to the British press than, say, the penny stamp on newspapers.³⁴

Meanwhile, the *Leeds Mercury* wholeheartedly agreed with the committee's finding stating, "No footing can be more satisfactory, so far as newspapers are concerned, than perfect freedom of transmission." The *Leeds Mercury's* position was clear. The only satisfactory outcome for Britain's press was the outright abolishment of taxation from stamps and postage.³⁵ Of course, the reaction from the provincial press was not all positive. In the pages of the *Elgin Courier*, in their view, going through with the abolishment of stamp duties on paper and newspapers would only play into the hands of the "metropolitan press." The *Elgin Courier* cited that with the restriction on postage lifted, London publications could more easily distribute and, in effect, flood the market with London news and publications rendering the provincial press redundant.³⁶ As for the *Downpatrick Recorder*, in their assessment, doing away with duties across the board would only invite dangerous publications across Britain to emerge. The fear of radicalism returning to the press played on many London and provincial publications' minds.³⁷

Discussion and debate continued to surround the issue of duties on stamps, postage, and advertising between the years 1851 to 1854. The outbreak of war in 1854 did not deter the provincial press from pressing the issue within their pages, although, as

³⁴ "Summary of News and Politics," *Hampshire Independent*, August 2, 1851, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁵ "Newspaper and Stamp Duty," *Leeds Mercury*, August 2, 1854, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁶ "Newspaper Stamp Duties," *Elgin Courier*, August 8, 1851, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁷ "Newspaper Stamp Duties," *The Downpatrick Recorder*, August 9, 1851, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

the chapter has already laid out, much of the news reporting shifted to covering the war. Nevertheless, debates continued regarding the necessity of abolishing these duties, with battle lines drawn on a regional basis. The hotbed for the pro-abolishment of duties on stamps and postage resided in Lancashire, which should come as no surprise as it was the home of the "Manchester School" of emerging liberal MPs who sought free trade and liberalization across Britain.³⁸ Northwestern England's support for not only the Manchester School MPs and their push to end the last remaining taxes on the press, unsurprisingly, were reflected by newspapers from that area. Within the *Manchester Times*, when new debates surrounding the abolishment of the stamp duties bill emerged in the House of Commons, the *Manchester Times* proclaimed, "The Newspaper Stamp Duty is doomed," stating the current government could not readily defend the glaring ambiguities and understanding and application of the law.³⁹ The *Manchester Times* continued the arguments dating back to the 1830s. Parliament's ambiguous interpretation of definitions hindered newspapers across Britain, not just them.

Some of the sternest criticism about abolishing taxes on paper found outside London came from Scotland and Northern Ireland. Many Scottish papers and publications based out of the Ulster region ranging, including *The Scotsman*, the *Elgin Courier*, the *Montrose Standard*, and the *Banner of Ulster*, vehemently opposed the idea of abolishing the stamp duties. Their arguments against this move rested on two axes. The first item concerning local publications was protecting their local markets. The

³⁸ The most noteworthy MPs who fell under the Manchester School were Richard Cobden, John Bright, and Milner Gibson. Cobden also led the committee investigating the state of printing in Britain in 1851

³⁹ "The Government and the Newspaper Stamp Duties," *The Manchester Times*, November 6, 1854, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

second item was the fear of the radical print, something a protestant Ulster publication might occur coming out of Southern Ireland. Whether it was the *Banner of Ulster* and *Belfast Commercial* or the *Scotsman*, limiting other publications' access to a local market was paramount for many publications. In their minds, the current state of publications having to pay for stamps on paper and postage was already an equitable arrangement. The only sensible change from the views of some Scottish and Irish publications was abolishing the advertisement tax, which had already occurred in 1853.

There was no lack of debate between those who favored abolishment and those who sought to keep stamp duties, but some of the most voiceful publications came from either Lancashire or Scotland. In a June article published by the *Montrose Standard*, the publication argues that the Manchester School's attempts at getting rid of the penny stamp as futile and further attempts were equivalent to the British peace party's attempts at dissuading Britain from declaring war on Russia. The *Montrose Standard* continued by stating that access to different sources of publications (those outside the locality) was already available to the people. The *Montrose Standard* argues that publications already allocated a certain number of issues for distribution outside their immediate area, and the small number of newspapers already in circulation was already sufficient.⁴⁰ However, Andrew Hobbs argues that by the 1850s, many literate and semi-literate Britons would have preferred having their hands on their own individual copy rather than having the news read to them in public reading rooms.⁴¹ Hobbs's argument that literate Britons

⁴⁰ "The Newspaper Stamp," *Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register*, June 16, 1854, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴¹ Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provincial Press in England, 1855-1900*, (Open Book Publishers, 2019), 37-38.

would much rather have a personal newspaper was also one such argument used by the *Manchester Times* in response to a summit of Scottish newspaper proprietors in November 1854. The *Manchester Times* argues that penny stamps and postage duties force publications to maintain a high price on individual copies of newspapers (by 1854 ranging from 4d-6d) to remain profitable. The *Manchester Times* argued that the people “particularly in a state of war” have a right to have free access to the news, and the penny stamp and postage duty only robbed the people of that privilege.⁴²

Thus far, from 1851 till 1854 and even amid war, the provincial press continued to advocate and pressure Parliament and constituent MPs to abolish the remaining limiters for newspaper growth. However, resistance did come from a specific region of Britain. In areas like London, certain parts of Scotland, and Ireland, publications wished to gatekeep their small monopoly on local markets and not see the abolishment of duties and taxes. However, by 1855 Parliament convened and voted on whether the penny stamp would be abolished and at stake the future growth of Britain’s provincial press.

1855 and the Abolishment of Stamp Duties

When the House of Commons convened to debate the end of the obligatory stamp duty on paper and newspapers, the reactions from publications were excitement, anticipation, and discouragement. Amongst the opposition publications, like the *Downpatrick Recorder*, their position remained as it was in 1853 and 1854. The *Downpatrick Recorder* states, “the 1d stamp is fully compensated by the unlimited transmission of newspapers throughout the post, and, although the post is not for all

⁴² “The Scottish Newspaper Press and The Penny Stamp,” *The Manchester Examiner and Times*, November 25, 1854, 5, British Newspaper Archive.

newspapers, the service rendered is in the aggregate a fair equivalent for the stamp, and tends to equalize the diffusion of information through the whole community.”⁴³ Other publications like the *Lancaster Guardian* and the *Hereford Journal*, writing on March 17 and 21, respectively, stated petitions from various West Riding newspaper proprietors were presented to the House of Commons before the opening debates voicing their concerns.⁴⁴ Within these articles, the *Lancaster Guardian* and *Hereford Journal* reported that petitions presented to Parliament favored abolishing stamp duties. Much of the arguments for the end of the obligatory stamp duty rested on the idea that provincial newspapers already had a wide area of circulation. Parliament thus required a more uniform understanding and proper application of this regulation. Within the pages of both the *Dover Telegraph* and the *Leeds Mercury*, responding to anti-abolishment arguments within Parliament, they stated:

If the present Post-Office is not larger enough, let a larger be provided...there is no pretense for opposing the halfpenny stamp, inasmuch as it would require accommodation of apparatus beyond what exists at this moment, whilst it would amount to the revenue of the penny. Surely this country is not to be deprived of an immense public convenience in order that the duties of postmasters and their clerks may be diminished.⁴⁵

Of note from the last quote is the final line, "immense public convenience," throughout the reporting on the Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill proceedings, publications, whether for or against the end of the obligatory stamp, recognized the critical role newspapers and

⁴³ “The Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill,” *Downpatrick Recorder*, March 10, 1855, 1, *British Newspaper Archive*.

⁴⁴ “Newspaper and Stamp Postage Bill,” *Lancaster Guardian*, March 17, 1855, 5, *British Newspaper Archive*. “The Newspaper Postage and Stamp Bill,” *Hereford Journal*, March 21, 1855, 4, *British Newspaper Archive*.

⁴⁵ “The Halfpenny Newspaper Stamp,” *Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser*, April 21, 1855, 6, *British Newspaper Archive*.

publications played within Britain. Nevertheless, newspapers were still businesses, and many saw abolishing duties threatened the survivability of some publications. Since the outbreak of war, many publications understood the importance and the demand for news amongst the civilian population. As we will see, Parliament also recognized this, openly stating that the transmission of information via the press exponentially increased from March 1854 onwards. Debates regarding the stamp duties bill within the House of Commons were as contentious as those in the provincial press. Renewed interest and debates surrounding stamp duties occurred in the summer of 1854 when academic institutions like Trinity College in Dublin and the various colleges at Oxford University and Cambridge University began to issue diplomas to graduating students without the stamp for the paper. The practices at universities caught the eye of not only MPs but certain publications who praised the universities for this action. Within the House of Commons, more liberal MPs jumped at the opportunity to pick away at stamp duties, and one Lord Naas brought forth a clause that stated:

Stamp Duties now payable on Matriculations, Degrees, and Certificates of Degrees, in each and every University in the United Kingdom, shall be abolished so soon as a provision shall have been made, to the satisfaction of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, in lieu of any monies heretofore voted annually by Parliament for any of the said Universities.⁴⁶

The frequency in which debates surrounding the Newspaper Stamp Duties occurred following this move by the universities suggests MPs soon saw an opening to end the stamp duty upon various printed articles, newspapers, and periodicals being their paramount concern. The first reading of a new Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill, occurred in

⁴⁶ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HC, 31 July 1854, v. 135: col. 1058-1059.
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1854-07-31/debates/fe31ee6a-40c1-46a6-a496-c1ecd13c2a89/StampDutiesBill#contribution-a5606fdf-aefd-4dbb-8f91-05c53722e9e3>

the waning months of 1854, with the second reading happening in March 1855. Among the concerns presented during both readings by those in opposition was the general loss of revenue the whole of Britain could experience should the duties on stamps and postage go away, which some estimated could be a loss of £200,000. Still, certain MPs argued that this loss of revenue could be significant, citing Britain's current commitment to the war in Russia. Other arguments made by MPs in opposition, like those made by publications that sought to protect their hold over local markets, included the current equitable standing of the 1836 Stamp Duties Bill in Britain. While the 1836 Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill was fair for smaller local publications as it usually dissuaded some publications from transmitting their news over a great distance. Other MPs argued that this stipulation limited the scope and diffusion of knowledge. One MP who took up this argument was Mr. Cowan during an April 1855 debate. Mr. Cowan stated that the continued advancement in railway development within Britain would have brought many newspapers to various regions throughout the Isles. Restricting this development was tantamount to foolishness. Mr. Cowan continued by saying, "He (unnamed MP, but possibly Richard Cobden or John Bright) thought the country owed much to the newspaper press for its contribution to the information and enjoyment of the people during the last twenty or thirty years. The press had become a great educational institute, and he was most anxious that the humble classes of society should have the means of procuring newspapers at a moderate price."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HC, 23 April 1855, v. 137: col. 1660.
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1855-04-23/debates/371c6b6c-d9c3-454f-8fd2-f29c3bb43c3f/NewspaperStampDutiesBill#contribution-9b96b9ff-8e4f-4f29-9774-bec9e97b78ba>

Arguments like the ones presented by Mr. Cowan and compromises such as leniency towards copyright infringement, something London-based publications constantly accused the provincial press of carrying out, were enough to flip publications that were opposed or hesitant to now support ending the compulsory nature of the penny stamp even as the debates on this particular bill were coming to a close, the *Times* itself one of the most adamant opponents voiced its approval to “ending the taxes on knowledge.” The Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill of 1855 passed on March 26, 1855, by a vote of 215 Ayes and 161 Noes.⁴⁸ However, minor details became ironed out during April, May, and June before Queen Victoria gave her royal assent on June 15, 1855, which allowed the law to take effect on June 30, thus marking the end of the compulsory penny stamp. Aside from making payment of a penny for stamping a newspaper an option rather than an obligation, for transportation of newspapers via post, publications were still required to pay for stamp and postage, whereas before, stamping on newspapers was needed even if the paper would never leave the immediate locality. The exact wording on postage was as follows, “All stamped newspapers, for transmission by post, must be so folded, as that the whole of this stamp shall be ‘exposed to view, and be distinctly visible on the outside.’”⁴⁹ Even though the postage duty remained, significant fiscal restrictions on newspapers effectively died in June 1855. 1855 marked the end of an arduous journey for the free press dating as far back as 1712. Through various

⁴⁸ *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, HC, 26 March 1855, v. 137: col. 1164.
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1855-03-26/debates/e932dc8d-f1f5-4283-a3a4-4fec63199f60/NewspaperStampDutiesBill#contribution-6b3a191f-8561-4b83-a092-cb6b154a7278>

⁴⁹ “Transmission of the ‘Guardian’ by Post,” *Manchester Guardian*, June 30, 1855, 7, The Guardian Digital Archive.

measures, much debate, and controversy, the taxes and wars on knowledge effectively ended in 1855, and from there, the press could operate without any restrictions.

News of the Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill gaining royal assent received overwhelming jubilation within most of the pages of the provincial press. Inside the pages of the *Monmouthshire Beacon*, the *Illustrated Times* took out a column to announce to potential new readers that “The repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Duties enables the projectors to of the *Illustrated Times* to provide the public with an Illustrated Paper that shall combine the highest attainable excellence with extreme cheapness.”⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, the *Illustrated Times*, a London-based publication hoping to rival the more famous *Illustrated London News*, in the run-up to the June 30 price reduction on an advertisement campaign across Britain. The *Illustrated Times* stated they could get a copy to potential readers of their paper at a low cost of 2d. Like the *Illustrated Times*, other provincial publications undertook new advertisement campaigns to proclaim the future price reduction and state that now people of a social standing could get their hands on their papers for a fair and cheap price. Examples of this popped up in publications like the *Illustrated Berwick Journal*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and *Norfolk News*.

Besides the concerted effort of some publications to advertise their new and cheap paper, the most instantaneous indicator that the Newspaper Stamp Duties Bill had come into effect was to view the price of newspapers on June 30, 1855. Whereas before June 30, newspaper prices ranged from 4d to 6d. Now, with the bill coming into effect, the cost across most publications rested at 1d or 2d, depending on if the papers were stamped

⁵⁰ “Illustrated Times,” *Monmouthshire Beacon*, June 16, 1855, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

or unstamped.⁵¹ However, some of the more minor publications, which only printed on average four pages, remained around 3d to 4d per issue. Apart from the reduction of price, publications were now free to change their printing habits within the *Leeds Intelligencer*, a journal that before 1855 only had a Saturday issue now announced it would be changing its output, becoming a twice-a-week edition.⁵² Richard Altick also notes changes in the frequency in which publications produced newspapers by stating that across multiple non-London metropolitan areas like Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, and Edinburgh, established publications changed their habits, and new publications emerged.⁵³ If I were to list every publication after the June passing of the stamp duties bill, the list would be far too long and convoluted. Still, to give the reader an idea, in the weeks leading up to the June 30 price reduction and on June 30 itself, no less than thirty publications issued their first newspaper to the people.⁵⁴

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the end of the obligatory newspaper stamp in 1855, to quote Andrew Hobbs, “made local papers cheaper whilst significantly cutting the provincial circulation of London papers.”⁵⁵ Parliament’s abolishment of the penny stamp allowed for middling and non-London metropolitan publications such as the *Manchester Guardian* to transport their papers more freely and easily expand their areas of reach. This fact, coupled with the provincial press as a collective, essentially out-

⁵¹ Stamped newspapers following the bill's passing only got stamped and charged for postal deliveries outside the immediate area of the newspaper's place of origin.

⁵² “Publication of The Intelligencer TWICE A WEEK,” *Leeds Intelligencer*, June 30, 1855, 8, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵³ Altick, *English Common Reader*, 356.

⁵⁴ This number was provided through the British Newspaper Archive. The number of new publications could very well be much more significant.

⁵⁵ Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 8.

quantified London-based publications in circulation. With provincial publications more freely circulating and informing the people, it further solidified the local papers standing while diminishing London's sway within the community, which was already tenuous. While London papers like the *Times* could still be relied upon to provide general information on the conflict in Russia, it could not capture the heart of Britain's local or regional identity. The *Times* could proclaim to speak on behalf of Britain. Still, it could not speak on behalf of Manchester, Glasgow, Cork, or Carnarvon. The provincial press understandably knew its audience and, through this understanding, continued to foster local and regional identities throughout the war.

V. THE BRITISH PRESS AND THE BRITISH PEOPLE

We have seen how London and provincial publications operated during the Crimean War, but examinations of how newspaper readers utilized and understood the press has only been briefly mentioned. This chapter will examine how the people, which constituted various groups from the British Army, politicians, ordinary newspaper readers, and citizens, and see how they interacted with the press and the war. Historians like Orlando Figes and Stefanie Markovits have regarded the Crimean War as a ‘people’s war.’ Access to the press, with newspapers acting as depositories of information and the readers’ ability to write in newspapers, allowed a respectable portion of Britain’s populace to engage in an event like the Crimean War. All portions of Britain came into contact with the war, with newspapers acting as the primary facilitator. Whether it was a soldier in the Crimea or a mill worker in a public reading room, the press bound these groups and many others together.

Soldiers shared their experiences in war via their letters to the publications, which exposed readers back home to the realities of war which encompassed anything from combat to mundane camp life. Newspaper readers responded in kind with frequently written letters to the editors sharing their thoughts and anxieties in the context of the war. Politicians likewise responded to the press, usually stemming from pressure from newspapers. MPs privately and publicly talked about their worries regarding the press, held debates, changed governments, and openly flaunted the idea of censoring newspapers from reporting damning information about the mishandling of the war. For nearly three years, the Crimean War impacted the people of Britain in some shape or

form. Through the press, readers, citizens, soldiers, and politicians found ways to inform, support one another, or further the nation's war effort.

Social Makeup of the British Army

Soldiers of the British expedition to Crimea reflected the dynamic social changes Britain's society underwent throughout the early to mid-nineteenth century. The Duke of Wellington's famous remark about his army during the Peninsular campaign believed the men under his command were "the very scum of the earth." Wellington's perception that his army comprised of beggars, vagabonds, and ne'er-do-wells or opportunists for plunder and alcohol held firm in the view of many in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed, the historiography, until recently, maintained the perception that the British Army was comprised of "scum of the earth."¹

Nick Mansfield has argued that the soldiers who would come to make up the British Army, which went on to fight in the Crimea, reflected the highly dynamic and ever-evolving British society. By 1854 the soldiers of Britain's army, like their Napoleonic predecessors still came from the working class and, to a smaller extent, the middling classes (serving in the capacity of NCO). Many soldiers still joined the British Army as an opportunistic escape from low wages or appalling living conditions they might have found themselves in. However, by the 1850s, working and middle-class Britons were a far cry from the 1810s and Wellington's campaigns in Spain. As explained in chapter two, across Britain, literacy gradually rose throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century and became an almost necessary skill to find work in many urban

¹ Nick Mansfield, *Soldiers as Workers: Class, Employment, Conflict and the Nineteenth-Century Military*, (Liverpool University Press, 2016), 28.

centers. Mansfield has also stated that similar literacy requirements were needed within the British Army as well. One example came from a militia regiment in Armagh, with the number of illiterate men in 1813 resting at 66 percent. But by 1873, illiteracy dropped to less than six percent amongst the soldiers of this particular militia regiment.² Using the Armagh militia regiment as a template, one can infer that similar literacy growth was occurring in all the infantry regiments within the army. Besides increasingly becoming more literate, soldiers of the British Army also grew up with newspaper publications and understood their importance. The regular soldier came from vastly different working backgrounds, ranging from artisans, tailors, cobblers, engineers (primarily to serve in artillery regiments), miners, textile mill workers, and even schoolmasters. But by the 1850s, men of the working and middling classes, for one reason or another, found themselves serving in the regiments of the British Army. The nationalities are also essential to note as they reflected how certain publications reported on the war. Mansfield notes how by the 1830s, the Irish still made up a large contingent of the British Army (42.2 percent) and Scottish (13.6), with the rest made up by the English and Welsh.³ As noted in chapter four, the large Irish contingent within the army would also explain why the Irish provincial press had a keen interest in reporting on the war to cover the exploits of their native sons.

Amongst the British Army officers, their upbringing was vastly different, and so did the relationship they experienced with the press compared to their rank-and-file counterparts. The officer corps leading the soldiers into the Crimea was “almost all

² Ibid, 31.

³ Ibid, 10; The number of Irish soldiers serving in the British Army by the time of the Crimean War hovered around 30-35 percent.

‘gentlemen,’ men of the wealthy aristocracy or landed gentry.⁴ It is perhaps ironic that the officer corps during the Napoleonic Wars was more open to accepting members of the middling class (caused mainly by manpower shortages) than compared to their successors by the 1850s. The re-establishment of an aristocratic-led officer corps within the British Army by the 1850s came via the purchasing of commissions. This practice of purchasing officer commissions largely outpriced many aspiring soldiers from reaching a leadership role. With the wealthy aristocracy and landed gentry reasserting their control over leadership positions, this, in turn, affected the ethos and politics of the officer corps. Mansfield describes officers as strictly conservative and borderline anti-intellectual.⁵ In contrast, the men of the lower ranks, drawn from the working and middling classes, held much more liberal views when compared to the officers. Attempts by the army to implement education to its officers via schools at Woolwich and Sandhurst were brushed off and treated as optional choices rather than obligatory.⁶

The situation amongst the NCOs in the army was much less clear when compared to the rank and file and the officer corps. Scholars like Richard Holmes and Nick Mansfield do not explicitly mention which social class NCOs usually came from. But judging Holmes’s and Mansfield’s description of interactions between officers, NCOs, and the rank and file, one can assume NCOs came from either a middle-class or working-class background. Within the British Army, however, NCOs occupied a different stratum, acting as middlemen or go-betweens acting as mediators between the ordinary soldiers

⁴ Mansfield, *Soldiers as Workers*, 40-41.

⁵ Mansfield, *Soldiers as Workers*, 46-47.

⁶ The situation just described was the situation within the regular foot regiments of the British Army. Aristocratic domination was much more pronounced within the Guards and Cavalry regiments within the army.

and the “gentlemanly” officer. However, like the rank-and-file soldiers, the NCO grew up in a world of literacy and absorbing the written word. Like the rank and file, the NCO suffered from being looked down upon by the officer corps. Officers typically viewed men of this rank as valuable asset for keeping a company of men in order and disciplined but not equal or up to the task of becoming an officer. This class animosity among officers, NCOs, and rank-and-file soldiers would, as we shall see, come to light via the press as NCOs and regular soldiers turned to publications to not only tell their stories but to highlight the shortcomings of the army.

The Press and the British Army

We have seen thus far the societal backgrounds the soldiers of Britain’s expedition to the Crimea came from, with rank-and-file soldiers and NCOs exclusively coming from the working and middling classes of society. In contrast, the officers, unsurprisingly, came from the aristocracy. In chapter three, I described the role of the war correspondent, more specifically, the role William Howard Russell, writing for the *Times*, played in providing a new and up-close perspective of the war. The *Illustrated London News* also, through their correspondents, provided a more visual representation of the war. In truth, the events of the Crimean War were not one correspondent’s story but a thousand correspondents’ stories. In their letters home, the soldiers found their retellings of war and combat alongside the reports of William Howard Russell and other newspaper correspondents. Soldiers’ letters to loved ones amid war were not unique to the Crimean War. Of course, soldiers sent letters home in previous wars, whether during the Napoleonic Wars or the Seven Years’ War. The frequency of private letters reaching the pages of newspapers, whether intended or unintended, sets the Crimean War apart from

wars of previous decades. Unlike the Seven Years' War or the Napoleonic Wars, the level of detail and frequency of harrowing events like Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman opened many readers to the harsh realities of combat.

The first instance of soldiers' letters making it into newspaper publications was in the summer of 1854, while the British Army camped along the coast of the Black Sea at Varna. The nature of these letters usually described the current condition of the British camp (by this moment, ravaged by Cholera). In one such letter from a private in the 79th Highlander regiment, he wrote, "I am in the best of health, which is a great thing here-for I suppose you have heard that cholera has broken out amongst us and, is p'aying the deuce, especially amongst the Guards."⁷ However, the private continues in his letter by stating that the British soldiers were eager to face the Russian enemy with rather patriotic zeal. Many of these early letters home struck a similar tone to the newspapers back home, anxious anticipation for the British armed forces to finally meet the Russians in the field and prove their superiority. The same private from the 79th noted, "our men have grown so wicked at the delay that one can scarcely hear a pleasant word going- 'war hawk' with the Russians if they get at them."⁸ While encamped at Varna, many of the soldiers' early letters reflected the sentiment of what Nick Mansfield dubbed the 'One Englishmen.' British soldiers, like British newspapers, believed they were the finest fighting contingent

⁷ "Letter from the East," *Kelso Chronicle*, September 22, 1854, 1, British Newspaper Archive.

⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

to step onto the battlefield of battle, similar to how the British press viewed British civilization as superior to that of the Russians.⁹

Unsurprisingly, the first visceral letters from the seat of war came in the wake of the first pitched land battle of the war, the battle of the Alma. As mentioned in chapter three, William Howard Russell's first account of the battle of the Alma came with much confusion due partly to Russell not actually observing the battle. Instead, Russell relied upon interviews with soldiers' days after the fighting subsided. However, soldiers' letters to loved ones that described the carnage of that battle and those descriptions seen from many angles and perspectives flooded into Britain's press. In an October issue of the *St. James Chronicle*, a corporal in the 42nd Highlanders retold his experiences at Alma, stating, "deadly fire, which killed a large number of our troops." From the point of view of an officer of the 23rd Regiment, he stated how numerous of his comrades were shot dead around him as his regiment assaulted the heights in front of the Alma River.¹⁰ Descriptions such as Russian artillery and infantry cutting down British troops and deadly cavalry and infantry charges finding their way into newspapers brought the war home to awaiting audiences. Chaotic and visceral depictions brought home the harsh realities of modern war to the reading public, who otherwise had no tangible idea of how deadly war was.

Soldiers' ability to convey their experiences in the written word indicated how far literacy had come. Soldiers understood the importance of their perspective, and so did the

⁹ Nick Mansfield, *Soldiers as Citizens: Popular Politics and the Nineteenth-Century British Military*, (Liverpool University Press, 2019), 154-155.

¹⁰ "Extracts of Letters From the Crimea," *St. James Chronicle*, October 14, 1854, 3, British Newspaper Archive.

people they wrote to. How a soldier's letter from the front found its way into the pages of a newspaper publication usually happened due to family members asking publication editors to publish said letters. As Stefanie Markovits notes, soldiers' letters show how the private sphere interacts with the public sphere. One can infer that families or friends who received letters from those serving at the front felt they did their civic duty by providing the equivalent of a newspaper report. Aside from providing a wealth of information into the carnage of warfare, soldiers' letters home as we saw in chapter four also helped inform newspaper reader at a local level with valuable information about their own.¹¹ What emerged within newspaper publications could best be described as a kaleidoscopic view of the war, along with official reports from war correspondents like William Howard Russell, official government dispatches, and perspectives from other publications. Now there was the added flavor of the personal view of soldiers serving in a military capacity.

The relationship between common soldiers and the press was, in many ways, a beneficial relationship for both. Soldiers sought to gain access to the newspapers and hear news from back home (particularly from their local papers). Soldiers themselves were also keen to provide the press with news of their exploits and know how the papers recorded their actions. One such example from Alexander MacGrigor of the 71st Highlanders wrote to his brother, "Send me the 'Aberdeen Journal' or any paper you please," indicating that soldiers relied on family members to provide newspaper issues. While local papers were most important for soldiers, MacGrigor's comments also show

¹¹ Markovits, *The Crimean War in the British Imagination*, 44-45.

that soldiers sought any newspaper during downtime.¹² Another example of this came from Captain Richards, who asks his mother to send him copies of three publications, *Clifton Chronicle*, *Merthyr Guardian*, and the *Times* citing his curiosity about how they reported on the battle of the Alma.¹³ An example of soldiers being amused to hear their letters made it into publications also comes from the letters of Richards, in which he mused, “My Chum’s name is Maxwell, and you will not believe it, but he beats me hollow at the trencher, eats fat pork by the yard, and is celebrated in the *Times*, and this camp by the name of the apathetic one. I call him the Fat boy in Pickwick. He is mentioned by the correspondent of the *Times* for his coolness.”¹⁴

The relationship between the officers and the press was much more tension-filled when compared to the rank-and-file relationship with the press. As we have seen, officers like Captain Richards, a member of the officer corps, utilized the press the same as his rank-and-file subordinates. One can infer that certain sections within the officer corps, mainly concerning the ranks of lieutenant to captain (lowest ranking officers), openly sought out what newspapers said about him and the army. While the lower-ranking officers did, in some parts, wish to see and understand what the press had to say, other officers did not. Among Britain’s upper echelon of command, the opposite was the case who looked upon the press with healthy skepticism. One noteworthy occasion came from British commander Sir Gordan Brown. One observer noted, “A shudder seemed to pass

¹² Alexander MacGrigor to his brother, June 23, 1854, *Chronicles of an Army Surgeon During the Crimean War*, Add MS 88883/3/70, Western Manuscripts, British Library, UK.

¹³ W.P. Richards to his Mother, October 7, 1854, in *The Victorian Web*, <https://victorianweb.org/history/crimea/richards/richards3.html>

¹⁴ W.P. Richards to Carry, January 12, 1855, in *The Victorian Web*, <https://victorianweb.org/history/crimea/richards/richards10.html>

through his frame at the mention of the *Times*.”¹⁵ The British commander-in-chief Lord Raglan did not even acknowledge the existence of correspondents in his camp and openly discouraged officers from interacting with the press or any member of the press.

Further discussions on Lord Raglan’s relationship with the press warrant further examination, which I will do now. As mentioned already, Raglan refused to acknowledge the presence of men like William Howard Russell. The frosty relationship between Russell, Raglan, and the upper tiers of command, revealed in Russell’s writings outward writings in leader articles and private correspondences with Delane, began as far back as the war’s outbreak when the British Army initially denied Russell traveling with a British Guards regiment. Once Russell made it to the British camp, Raglan outright refused to meet with Russell.¹⁶ It was a poor start to the relationship between the British Army’s commander-in-chief and the correspondent of Britain’s most noteworthy publication. Russell writing to John Thadeus Delane (Editor of the *Times*), informed him of Raglan’s stance on the press, “Lord Raglan has determined not to recognize the Press in any way...The promises made in London have not been carried out here.”¹⁷

It is indicative of Raglan’s military career, which explains why he treated the press the way he did. FitzRoy Somerset (Lord Raglan) entered the army during the Napoleonic Wars and served in the Peninsular Campaign and the Hundred Days’

¹⁵ The quote above is in reference to Sir Gordon Brown learning *Times* correspondent William Howard Russell was in the Varna camp during the summer of 1854; Knightley, *The First Casualty*, 7.

¹⁶ Christopher Hibbert, *The Destruction of Lord Raglan: A Tragedy of the Crimean War, 1854-1855*, (Penguin Books, 1963), 260.

¹⁷ *The Times* initially came to an agreement with Lord Clarendon to allow correspondent William Howard Russell access to the army, however, much of the upper command refused to deal with him; Hibbert, *Destruction of Lord Raglan*, 261.

Campaign culminating in the Battle of Waterloo. Raglan took many of his cues from the Duke of Wellington, who likewise looked down upon or did not understand the presence of the media in military affairs. Raglan carried these proclivities with him to the Crimea and would earn him much animosity from writers like William Howard Russell. Raglan barring the press from certain aspects of army management was one reason Russell's harsh criticisms, particularly during the winter of 54-55, became so pointed at Raglan. In one famous article the *Times* wrote concerning the army's leadership, "we echo the opinion of almost every experienced soldier or well-informed gentlemen when we say that the noblest army England ever sent from these shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement. Incompetency, lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favor, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel, and riot in the camp before Sebastopol."¹⁸

However, despite these misgivings amongst the higher strata of the British military, even some commanders of Raglan's stature understood the usefulness of the press when it suited them. The most famous example of high-ranking soldiers relying upon the press came in the wake of the Battle of Balaklava and the renowned "Charge of the Light Brigade." Much debate still swirls regarding how the charge unfolded and who gave the order. However, the commanders in question, Lord Raglan and Lord Lucan,¹⁹ used the press to defend their actions in a highly publicized war of words waged via the newspapers. Lord Raglan blamed Lord Lucan for the charge in a November edition of the

¹⁸ "Leader," *Times*, December 23, 1854, 9, Times Digital Archive.

¹⁹ Lord Lucan was the commander of the cavalry division during the battle of Balaklava.

London Gazette Extraordinary (Britain's official military and government publication).²⁰

A few months would pass before Lord Lucan's rebuttal, but Lucan utilizing the *Times* blamed Raglan and his confusing orders.²¹ Raglan and Lucan's dispute playing out through the newspapers shows how influential the papers had become to society. Military commanders also utilized the press to control their narratives and clear themselves of wrongdoing.

As shown, Raglan steered himself away from using any independent news publication, opting instead for official government outlets to report on or explain his actions. By not using the press to defend his efforts, the narratives towards army command became so pronounced that Queen Victoria was alarmed by "infamous Articles in the Press," she asked Raglan to explain the situation.²² When he wrote a response to Queen Victoria in early 1855, Raglan believed the British press actively orchestrated a grand conspiracy to bring reform in the army and within the government.²³ The press' attacks against Raglan and, as we will later see, attacks against the Aberdeen ministry were intentional, with the express goal of holding those accountable for the British Army's suffering in Crimea. The press' attacks against Raglan and Aberdeen effectively made these men near-terminal to work, let alone be associated with. Despite these attacks, memoirs from soldiers surrounding Raglan from men like Sir Somerset Calthorpe (a member of Raglan's staff) stated that Raglan's actions and demeanor remained

²⁰ "Sunday, November 12, 1854," *The London Gazette Extraordinary*, November 12, 1854, 3456, The London Gazette Public Records Office.

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21624/data.pdf>

²¹ "Lord Lucan and Lord Raglan," *The Times*, March 2, 1855, 7, Times Digital Archive.

²² Quoted in *The Destruction of Lord Raglan*, 266.

²³ Ibid, 268.

unchanged. However, in Raglan's private letters to his wife, it became clear the press' attacks were taking their toll. In one such letter, he confessed he felt deserted and the "loneliest man" because of the constant pressure and scrutiny from Britain's press.²⁴ Ironically enough, the attacks leveled against Raglan turned him somewhat into a martyr and character of sympathy. Still, this sympathy came mainly from the House of Lords, who found it imprudent to attack a gentleman's character. Criticism towards the press focused on publications such as the *Times*, often citing overzealousness in their reporting, but by the spring of 1855, and the hardships of winter began to die away, so too made the criticisms of the press towards Lord Raglan.²⁵

As shown, the upper echelons of command had a contentious relationship with the press and how the press reported on specific aspects of the war, particularly their performance, because it opened these individuals up to scrutiny. The press allowed citizens and soldiers alike to echo their displeasure. Chapters three and four have thus far outlined criticisms regarding leader articles being particularly critical of Britain's military and political leadership. Soldiers of various ranks also wrote to papers letting their concerns be known. The press allowed anybody to write in, even high-ranking members of the British military; in a January 1855 issue of the *Times*, an unnamed "Lieutenant Colonel" lambasts the current state of Britain's command structure. This Lieutenant Colonel wrote to the *Times*:

The omissions and irregularities so severely felt in the Crimea-especially the absence of a system observable in the ports, depots, and quarters are, beyond all doubt, attributable to the want of professionally educated staff officers in sufficient numbers. The most significant part of the staff of our army in the Crimea, as in previous wars, are selected the, not from the best of the few

²⁴ Ibid, 270.

²⁵ Ibid, 312-313; *The Tradition Established*, 181-182.

professionally educated men in the service, but from those possessing family influence and irrespective of professional or scientific attainments.²⁶

Whether this individual came from the same aristocratic background as other men with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel usually would have or if this individual earned the rank on merit, it is hard to say. However, in this case, this Lieutenant Colonel felt compelled to shed his thoughts on the lacking ability many British officers had possessed. One can also infer that this Lieutenant Colonel knew that his harsh criticism would inevitably reach the eyes of officers. Officers who would encounter criticism of this nature would usually respond not by rebutting in the newspaper but instead write the War Office to voice their displeasure. Again, this shows that despite not trusting the press, highly placed military officials were keenly aware of how the press felt about them and how the public felt about them.

One such instance of this came in October of 1854 when Andrew England, a staff officer overseeing the Scutari medical hospital, wrote to the War Office decrying a story seen in the *Times* describing a deplorable situation amongst the wounded. Andrew England provided a much different version in which he stated to the War Office, "further, to put you in possession of facts which will enable you at once to refute the false statements in the '*Times*' of the 9th and 12th October, which it is stated that no sufficient preparations have been made for the proper care of the wounded."²⁷ England continues by describing how the medical department did provide adequate care for the wounded British soldiers. England said of the *Times*, "myself and the nurses were in readiness to

²⁶ "The Staff of the English Army," *Times*, January 5, 1855, 5, Times Digital Archive.

²⁷ Andrew England to War Office, October 26, 1854, WO 1/370, Raglan Despatches, National Archives, UK.

alleviate the sufferings of both the sick and wounded...it is extremely mortifying that a public journal of so respectable a character of the '*Times*' should advance statements so utterly false." As we can see from England's statements, he held the *Times* in high regard based on his use of the word "respectable" when describing this newspaper. However, perhaps because of England's high regard towards the *Times* would also explain the fierce defense of his actions. England understood that many readers would read the *Times*' sensational report on the conditions at Scutari, and thus the deplorable conditions would eventually fall upon him.

In letters between officers at the front and back home to the War Office, sensationalizing reports in newspapers was the most pressing concern to them. From officers' letters to the War Office, it is not the fact that the press got their stories wholly incorrect. It is instead the fact that they embellished their stories to make the situation worse than it was. From the siege of camp at Sebastopol in October 1854, Lord Raglan's Aide-de-Camp, by the name of A. Smith, wrote to the War Office explaining how newspaper statements were "an inaccurate and high colored version of an occurrence which was painful enough in reality to everyone concerned."²⁸ Raglan's correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle (Secretary of War in 1854) also reflected Raglan's private war with the press in which, like many of his staff officers, complained of the press 'coloring' the situation to such an extent that it made the war seem a total disaster.

²⁸ This statement was in reference to a cholera outbreak within the British camp in September of 1854; Raglan's staff to War Office, October 31, 1854, WO 1/370, Raglan Despatches, National Archives, UK.

As we have seen, many high-ranking commanders viewed the press as a nuisance; in his memoirs, British general Sir Somerset Calthorpe noted how “reporters of the English journals have made themselves very unpopular. They appear to try and find fault wherever they can and throw as much blame and contempt on English authorities.”²⁹ There was also the contention amongst commanders that the press reports on the situation at the front were falling into the hands of the enemy. In an exchange of letters between the Secretary of War Fox-Maule Ramsey and General Simpson, Simpson firmly stated, “I must not omit to mention that the *Times* newspaper reaches Sebastopol before we get it in our Camp; so what with the electric wires and the *Times*, our enemy has many advantages over us.”³⁰ Whether the information the Russians acquired via the British press directly led to the death of British soldiers is impossible to determine. Still, according to Russell’s reports, British commanders were wary that the Russians would usually bolster their defenses at Sebastopol.

By the war’s end, relations between the army commanders and the press became so contentious that the new commander-in-chief of the army, Sir William Codrington, in early 1856, barred correspondents from using the telegraphic offices. Codrington also significantly reduced press access to the military, and the information correspondents were allowed to transmit would also become subject to scrutiny from the army. The only reason why this action did not meet more objection from the *Times* was the fact that the

²⁹ Somerset Calthorpe, *Letters from head-quarters: or, the realities of the war in the Crimea*. 2d edition, (London: J. Murray, 1857), 39.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112119937222>

³⁰ General Simpson to Lord Panmure, July 21, 1855, in The Panmure Papers vol. 1, Ch. VII, <http://cwrs.russianwar.co.uk/cwrs-crimtexts-panmure-cont07.html>

war was in its dying phases. By the war's end, the *Times* began shifting its focus to covering the peace proceedings in Paris.³¹

Utilization of the press was not exclusive to the rank and file. All members of the army, even members who typically looked down upon the press, understood the influence and power Britain's press had and utilized it to meet their own needs. Whether it was to shine a light on the inadequacies within the officer corps, to share their own experiences with the wider British reading audience, or to protect their name and control the narrative, soldiers' motivations to use the press were plentiful. The press played a vital role from the army's perspective, even if some would hesitate to agree.

The Press and the People

Like their contemporaries in the army, the everyday British person understood the vital role the press had played in their lives and the press's role in the war. Of course, the people of Britain were a part of an ever-increasingly diverse and sophisticated social setting that increasingly placed value on reading and writing. The events surrounding the war, whether it was the well-documented pitched battles, actions on the high seas, the siege of Sebastopol, or the troubling reports of Britain's wounded soldiers. For one reason or another, newspaper readers felt either inspired or compelled to enter the public sphere and voice their thoughts, concerns, or opinions. However, British readers also performed civic duties via clothing drives to help the British soldiers in their most desperate hour and through donations to the previously mentioned Patriotic Fund. Lara Kriegel noted that the Crimean War placed greater emphasis on masculine heroism by

³¹ *The Tradition Established, 189-190.*

turning everyday rank-and-file soldiers into the lions of Britain and feminine heroes like Florence Nightingale and her nurses into self-sacrificing paragons of compassion.³² I also contend that the war placed greater emphasis on civic duty and activity. Newspaper readers not only facilitated the transmission of soldiers' letters into the press, but they also openly engaged with their fellow person in letters to the editor while participating in fundraising and clothing drives. By reading the trials and tribulations of soldiers via official reports or soldiers writing home to loved ones or the public, the newspaper reader and average person of Britain responded with an unprecedented wave of civic responses of all kinds, the likes of which not seen since the Napoleonic Wars. However, unlike the Napoleonic, the Crimean War saw for the first time ordinarily private citizens participating in the public arena, the editorial columns of newspapers.

But it also must be stated that the average person who interacted with the newspaper was still a member of Britain's middling class. To be sure, frequent users and readers of newspapers associated Britain's press apparatus as a middle-class institution by the mid-nineteenth century. The press' perceived association with the middle class did not stop working-class or upper-class Britons from reading or reacting to the news. On the contrary, during the war, engagement with the news, whether active or passive, increased. As presented in chapter two, reading rooms and coffee houses dotted across Britain and Ireland acted as repositories of information for the average newspaper enjoyer. The vast majority of Britain's reading audience interacted with newspapers in public spaces like reading rooms than in private settings with a personal copy in hand. Only after the abolishment of stamp duties in 1855 did owning a personal copy of a

³² Kriegel, *The Crimean War and Its Afterlife*, 159.

newspaper become a viable option. To a certain extent, the newspaper publications sought to appeal to everyone. However, the middle-class peoples of Britain were far more likely to be actively involved with newspapers, as we shall discuss throughout this section. Newspaper proprietors viewed working-class readers as an accessory. Aled Jones notes that newspaper proprietors tailored parts of their papers to certain classes of Britons. For example, the more than likely passive working-class readers contented themselves with shorter literature or reporting, which is why working-class engagement increased with soldiers writing letters home.³³ The middle-class reader, however, would be more likely to interact and respond to lengthy leader articles found in every publication. In contrast, working-class readers might not have the time or inclination to do so.

Since Britain's declaration of war in March 1854, the people of Britain began to write their views about the war. The nature of "letters to the editor" was various. In the early part of the war, some letters to the editor read more as inquiries about different topics ranging from the limited availability of Russian goods and whether British citizens could, in fact, have access to Russian goods while the war was still raging.³⁴ Other letters read more as educational musing from other readers. One such example comes from an author named "Baltic," who informs the readers of the *Times* why the use of gunboats in the Baltic Sea would not be a prudent move claiming "our gunboats will not have a single port to go to."³⁵ Other writers in newspaper publications acted in the capacity of would-be military strategists suggesting the Anglo-French expedition should focus its efforts on

³³ Jones, *Power of the Press*, 181-182.

³⁴ "Trade with Russia," *Times*, April 14, 1854, 10, Times Digital Archive.

³⁵ "To the Editor of *The Times*," *Times*, August 22, 1854, 8, Times Digital Archive.

Sebastopol. However, interestingly enough, this suggestion appeared in the August 3 edition of the *Times* more than a month before the allies' embarkation to Crimea.

The insight provided by the British press's coverage of the war is also important to note. Britain's reading populace throughout the Crimean War had many perspectives to experience the war through. From civilian correspondents like William Howard Russell and soldiers' letters with acute military knowledge to official government dispatches, the reading experience was visceral and rich. During the Crimean War, everyday British newspaper readers would more likely than not be well informed or understand the importance of the occasion. With this knowledge, newspaper readers could now more confidently project their thoughts on the conflict and thus project their views, concerns, or opinions to a vast reading audience. The newspaper readers who would come to write in publications came from diverse social backgrounds and spanned the width and breadth of Britain's social classes. Surgeons, lawyers, attendants, and even well-known politicians wrote and utilized newspapers' editorial columns. One example of how different people of vastly different social standings wrote and mingled within the columns of newspapers came from *Reynold's Newspaper* (a London publication. Within the editorial section, whose topic of the discussion dealt with the wounded soldiers on campaign, the people who wrote show the diversity of classes who wrote in. Letter writers in the *Times* included G.J. Guthrie (President of the College of Surgeons), "A third-class attendant at the British Museum," Seymour Clarke (the General manager of

the Great Northern Railway at London's King's Cross St. Pancras station), and an unnamed nurse present at the military hospital at Scutari.³⁶

Editorials also acted as vehicles to promote the home front's contribution to the war and as focal points of dialogue between readers. Within chapters three and four, some of the discussion topics found within the editorial sections of newspapers have already appeared. Topics already seen ranged from the weather in Crimea or how the Patriotic Fund promoted local, regional, and national identities and played a critical role in supporting British society. One of the most widely discussed topics in the editorial columns surrounded how the British people could help clothe the soldiers besieging the city of Sebastopol. Shortly after the battle of Inkerman in November, just as British troops were beginning to settle in for the siege of Sebastopol, a freak storm waylaid the supply fleet sinking many ships. The storm took with it vital winter clothing for the soldiers just as the first frosts settled over the Crimean Peninsula.³⁷ Soldiers sent to the Crimean Peninsula dressed for summer campaigns faced the prospect of having no winter clothing just as the now-infamous Russian winter set in.

News of this disaster from reports from William Howard Russell and the soldiers galvanized the people into public response, using newspapers as the primary propellant to organize relief efforts. Throughout many of Britain's publications, citizens used the press to not only organize vital relief for the soldiers but to voice their displeasure at the government and military for not having contingency plans. In one amusing "letter to the

³⁶ "Relief of the Wounded," *Reynolds's Newspaper*, October 22, 1854, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁷ Figes, *The Crimean War*, 278-279.

editor," an individual named LHW argued that sheepskins, not peacoats were more suitable winter wear. He stated, "Sir-, Having observed in your paper that large supplies of winter clothing are being sent out to our army in the Crimea and that some 20,000 to 30,000 peacoats are being got ready." LHW continued, "some years ago I spent a winter in Russia, and I observed that sheepskin coats were the usual winter dress."³⁸ Within the same editorial column, another man referred to as "One who has wintered in the Crimea" stated, "I can affirm by my own experience in the Crimea, to the intensity of the cold as stated by the writer of the letter...if the common Tartar boots of the Crimea could be obtained in sufficient quantities, they would be found the greatest luxury the troops could possibly exist."³⁹ These two men writing on the same day in the *Times* believed, via their personal experiences in the Crimea from years past felt, that they possessed some level of authority or at least helpful insight into what the army needed at that very moment.

Discussions on topics like sheepskins versus peacoats on the service seem trivial. Still, it speaks to the weight of the British people's expectations of their government to provide for their soldiers. In the winter of 54-55, the British people, members, and subjects of the greatest global power at the time believed Britain could achieve anything. The belief and expectations harkened back to the reaction to the printing press during the Great Exhibition of 1851. To many readers, Britain was the most technologically advanced and industrialized nation at the time. Nevertheless, the government and military's failure to provide for their soldiers in the minds of the press and the people brought national shame and embarrassment. In the mind of the British people, the

³⁸ "Sheepskins Versus Peacoats," *Times*, November 25, 1854, 7, Times Digital Archive.

³⁹ "To the Editor of *The Times*," *Times*, November 25, 1854, 8, Times Digital Archive.

inadequate handling of the war came out in letters to the editor but in leader columns in the publications.⁴⁰

“Letters to the Editor” form but one, albeit vital component for connecting people together. Again, as outlined by scholars like Andrew Hobbs, and Simon Potter, the press connected and networked the various regions of Britain, but it also networked Britain with the broader world, whether it was in a European context, transatlantic, or an imperial context.⁴¹ The various sources of information Britons now had access to, which ranged from their local publication, neighboring provincial publications, London publications, or European publications, had many benefits. The most obvious benefit was that Britain’s reading audience was better informed, allowing debates on various topics as they pertained to the war, as shown by discussions on winter clothing or Crimea’s fickle climate.

Britain’s unparalleled freedom of the press further promoted debate of this nature and criticism of the war’s conduct, especially when compared to the French press’s censorship. The freedom experienced by the British press allowed citizens to voice their objections much more fervently without the fear of severe backlash except being faced with an opposing opinion.⁴² Still, in terms of facing government reprisals for such speech, the British citizen did not have to fear as much. Within the context of the Crimean War, coupled with factors of shared responsibility for supporting the army, civic vigilance

⁴⁰ Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics During the Crimean War*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967), 7-8, 10.

⁴¹ Simon J. Potter, “Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalization and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (July 2007), 625.

⁴² *Ibid*, 627-628.

towards the way the government and military had thus far conducted the war, and the added benefit of an unregulated press, the British press, from their perspective and the perspective of many of its readers believed they played a crucial role in the war, not only covering the war but also how the war was being fought. A leader article from the *Times* surmises this sentiment perfectly:

So when we are told, as we were some time since, with oracular pomp, that “the British constitution is on trial,” and “we have now to see whether a great war can be carried on effectively in the face of a free public opinion, an unfettered press, and absolute publicity,” we can now reply triumphantly that not only can such a war be carried on under these circumstances, but that such nations as England and France could not carry on such a war under other circumstances.⁴³

The press allowed for greater public discourse on the events of the war. It allowed newspaper readers to enter the public sphere and voice their thoughts more readily and, perhaps, more confidently. The war and the press also strengthened relationships, notably between the British and the French. Through shared struggle and war, the once bitterest enemies now lionized each other in their shared goal of thwarting Russia. The press also brought Britons closer than many realize. Average newspaper readers and soldiers mingled in public through their letters. The failings of Britain’s government and military command also galvanized the British people to act as more harsh critics of those in positions of authority. The press also inspired the British people towards more civic engagement and to provide relief for the heroes of Britain, that being the rank-and-file soldiers of the British army.

⁴³ Leader, *Times*, November 5, 1855, 6, Times Digital Archive.

Politicians' views of the press from the seventeenth century until the outbreak of the Crimean War have fallen into two overlapping camps. In one camp, politicians understood the press as a vital tool for patronage to promote their ideas and policies. The other camp of politicians viewed the press as a dangerous agitator and mouthpiece for the middle and working classes.⁴⁴ Tensions amongst the political elite towards the power of the press became most evident in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. The Napoleonic Wars brought with it high stamp duty rates and restrictive interpretations of what publications wrote, being considered libel and seditious, which acted as a punitive form of censorship and stymied the growth of newspapers. However, as noted previously, restrictions like stamp duties and a narrow understanding of definitions only increased the underground or 'unstamped press.'⁴⁵ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, politicians also attempted to control the press via sponsorship or patronage, either outright bankrolling a publication in return for publishing one politician's or another's policies and political views. However, this option was only viable for smaller publications. In contrast, publications like the *Times* by the 1830s or 1840s could comfortably operate from readership subscriptions alone and advertisement. In essence, sizeable urban newspaper publications by the Crimean War divorced themselves financially from politicians.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society: 1695-1855*, (London: Longman, 2000), 9-10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 70.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 82.

The interactions between the press and Britain's leading politicians during the Crimean War's outbreak could be best described as frosty under the best circumstances and outright disappointing at worst. The ministry of George Hamilton Gordon (Earl of Aberdeen) was a coalition government comprised of Peelites and Whigs. According to Olive Anderson, it was a collection of extraordinarily talented politicians in peacetime but severely lacked in a time of conflict when it came to conducting war.⁴⁷ However, despite this impressive collection of politicians within Aberdeen's ministry, they quarreled constantly, further complicating Britain's prosecution of the Crimean War. Still, oddly enough, publications like the *Times* supported the prime minister throughout most of 1853, only to shift their sentiments in the early months of 1854.⁴⁸

Aberdeen and his ministry were the unfortunate victims of the nation's expectations. Long were the days of Wellington, Castlereagh, or Pitt the Younger leading a war against the likes of Napoleon. From the outbreak of the war, the press, despite entering the war espousing patriotic tones, believed their cause was just and worthy, but Britain's press felt the ministry leading the nation was lacking. In the early months, politicians could realistically encounter headlines reading "WANTED-A WAR MINISTRY." Headlines of that nature would soon be followed by columns like the following "if war alone is to be the business of Parliament, let us, in Heaven's name, have a war Ministry; whether they be reformers or anti-reformers; is of small importance

⁴⁷ Anderson, *A Liberal State at War*, 33, 36-37.

⁴⁸ *The Tradition Established*, 114-115; *The Times* initially supported peace attempts by Aberdeen, but shifted to a pro-war, anti-Aberdeen stance following Russia's attack on the Turkish fleet at Sinope.

when reform itself is by common consent ignored.”⁴⁹ Within a June issue of the *Illustrated London News*, a leader article suggested that the nation, let alone the war effort, would benefit from Aberdeen’s resignation from his premiership.⁵⁰ Aberdeen’s relations with the press further deteriorated as the year 1854 dragged on with further attacks against him by the press. Plenty of publications openly inquired about why Aberdeen failed to take a more proactive course against Russia, with an August issue of the *Times* blatantly calling the prime minister a “friend” of Tsar Nicholas I as an explanation for the slow development of the war in the summer of 1854.⁵¹

Government officials like Lord John Russell and the Duke of Newcastle attempted to stem the tide of press criticism, citing the populace’s disunity. Some MPs theorized that Russia could use the friction generated in Britain’s press to its advantage. Still, these machinations gained little traction. Olive Anderson points out, along with Hannah Barker, that despite musings from Parliament on the topic of censoring the press that appeared from time to time during the war, at the end of the day, the public outcry stemming from any measure of censorship would cause more trouble. Politicians like John Russell understood best that by the 1850s, the British people came to view the press’s ability to print news on any topic as an inherent right. Correspondences between John Russell and Lord Brougham showed they understood the now inherent right the press possessed, which the government could not realistically move against.⁵² When John

⁴⁹ “WANTED-A WAR MINISTRY,” *Dover Chronicle*, April 22, 1854, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁰ “Leader,” *Illustrated London News*, June 24, 1854, 1-2, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

⁵¹ “Leader,” *Times*, August 11, 1854, 6, Times Digital Archive.

⁵² Anderson, *A Liberal State at War*, 70-71; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 222.

Russell brought up the topic of whether newspapers should identify who was writing leading articles, he stated, “It would be repugnant to the feelings of all who value the liberty of the press, as an attack upon that liberty, myself among that number.”⁵³ John Russell even lamented Parliament’s inherent powerlessness over the press compared to a decade before. He wrote to Brougham, “Now I have not explained what I mean by the House of Commons asserting its power. I mean that where the House of Commons has an opinion, it should disregard the newspapers. A few years ago, it had the courage to do so, but now that courage appears to be gone.”⁵⁴ To John Russell’s mind, the best way politicians should navigate criticism from the press was to ignore publications altogether, but this did not always come to fruition.

To combat the seeming freehandedness of the press, the best-case scenario most politicians could hope for was to correspond with the editors of the papers and appeal to their sense of patriotism as means to control what information got out. Editors like John Delane of the *Times* frequently corresponded with MPs like William Molesworth, Lord Granville, Charles Greville, and Robert Lowe. MPs like those previously listed not only provided information to editors like Delane at certain times. However, in other instances, MPs appealed to his sense of patriotism to prevent him and his paper from writing overtly inflammatory stories. But editors like Delane usually opted to continue to print the highly detailed reports provided by his correspondents believing they provided a greater service to the people.

⁵³ John Russell to Lord Brougham, August 21, 1855, PRO 30/22/12F, Folios 72-73, Lord John Russell Papers, National Archives, UK.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The harsh critique leveled by the press towards the government eventually caused Aberdeen's Ministry, by January 1855, to resign in the face of a struggling war effort and the press, spearheaded by the *Times*, calling for accountability amongst the leaders of the nation. Like Raglan, Aberdeen could be considered a victim of circumstance and a prisoner of the moment. Undoubtedly, Aberdeen's coalition government and cabinet, wracked with indecision on conducting the war, did not help his situation. Still, Aberdeen faced the ever-growing goliath that was the press which, as an institution and its readers, expected results that the Aberdeen Ministry could not deliver. Instead, Aberdeen's ministry only faced one scandal after another, particularly regarding the British army's deplorable situation at Sebastopol.⁵⁵ As already stated, it should be no surprise that Aberdeen, along with most of his cabinet, resigned at the start of 1855. The Earl of Clarendon even noted that the press, by this point, had whipped the masses into such a state that the Aberdeen Ministry's survival was impossible.⁵⁶ Viscount Palmerston's Ministry soon replaced Aberdeen's. Palmerston had a checkered past with the press, which would require compromise and reproach to form an uneasy alliance between the new ministry and the press needed to see the war's end.

The new Prime Minister Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston (from now on referred to as Lord Palmerston), came into office in early 1855. However, unlike his predecessor, Palmerston enjoyed a majority of backing from the press, despite some misgivings from certain publications wishing to see the Earl of Derby as prime minister.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Anderson, *A Liberal State at War*, 52.

⁵⁶ Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 222.

⁵⁷ "Ministerial Crisis," *Downpatrick Recorder*, February 3, 1855, 2, British Newspaper Archive.

Most publications that wrote on the change in leadership voiced a hopeful tone about Palmerston's ability which many stated could not be any worse than the last ministry. Within the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, in their opinion, Palmerston was the best man for the job stating, "It is well, we think, that the nation is not called upon to run the risk of their feeble rule and that her Majesty has found a Premier of a more hopeful stamp in the person of Lord Palmerston."⁵⁸ The *Illustrated London News* voiced their approval saying, "The pernicious interregnum of Ministerial authority is at an end, and Lord Palmerston occupies the place which public voice had long set apart for him long before."⁵⁹

The vital publication that Palmerston needed backing from was the *Times*. Despite the ever-increasing presence of Britain's provincial press, the *Times* still wielded much influence in the minds of MPs. This fact was especially true for Palmerston, who clashed with the *Times* in decades past, leveled harsh criticism against Palmerston for his career as foreign secretary.⁶⁰ Yet, despite the tumultuous relationships of the past, Palmerston understood the need to have the backing of Britain's most prominent newspaper to help carry on his policy, mainly to inform the people of his war goals. The working relationship between Palmerston and the *Times* depended on constant communication with the *Times*' editor John Thadeus Delane.⁶¹ The *Times* also had a vested interest in backing Palmerston, namely the publication's propensity to find itself on the winning

⁵⁸ "Wanted A Strong Ministry," *Dumfries and Galloway Standard*, February 7, 1855, 4, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁹ "The New Ministry," *Illustrated London News*, February 10, 1855, 6, Illustrated London News Historical Archive.

⁶⁰ Laurence Fenton, *Palmerston and The Times: Foreign Policy, the Press and Public Opinion in Mid-Victorian Britain*, (I.B.Tauris, 2013), 30-31.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 135.

side of an issue. In the past, the publication perfected the art of changing its stance on policy and politicians. The perfect example was the paper's shift from seeking peace with Russia to calling for war in the autumn of 1853. The *Times* placed itself in opposition to Aberdeen instead of backing Palmerston for the premiership. Ironically enough, the *Times*' backing of Palmerston sowed the seeds of its eventual usurpation regarding its dominance over the British press. The *Times* backed Palmerston's policy of repealing the stamp duty in 1855, which the *Times* heralded as a great victory. However, it also allowed other publications like *The Daily Telegraph* to surpass the *Times* in sales by the 1860s eventually.⁶²

Politicians' relationship with the press was markedly different compared to readers. Unlike citizens, newspaper readers, and soldiers who bound themselves to the press and fed the press their sentiments, which the press espoused, the political apparatus of Britain did not have that luxury. Instead, Britain's politicians found themselves mostly on the defensive and constantly responding to the sentiments of the people. The outcry via letters to the editor and soldier's writing into publications during the most trying months of winter 1854-1855 helped turn public opinion against the individuals in power, whether in politics or the military.

However, that is not to say every British citizen was on the side of the press during the war if letters from concerned citizen to Lord Russell is any indicator. By mid-1855, Lord Russell became embroiled in political controversy regarding seeking a peace settlement with Russia. Indeed, once the press got wind of the talks immediately shifted

⁶² Ibid, 137.

its attacks against Russell and his “treacherous deception.” Eventually, pressure from the press forced Russell’s resignation. Still, many citizens, at least those who wrote to Russell, believed the press had done his character, and many viewed the newspapers overstepped in this regard. Of course, those who rallied to Russell’s support might have been benefactors to Russell’s patronage and merely compelled to show their support. Regardless of motivations, public support towards Russell does show that the press and their actions, at times, did not always appeal to the masses and instead turned some away.

As this chapter demonstrated, Britain’s various peoples and classes had a varied relationship with the press throughout the Crimean War. Soldiers of the rank-and-file classification and even some low-ranking officers along with NCOs had a much more cordial and working relationship with the press, unsurprisingly because many of the men who would take up arms in this conflict grew up during a time of unprecedented growth of newspapers. Soldiers, in many ways, acted as extra correspondents for publications by either themselves or their families, providing letters of their experiences from which millions of other people would read. Letters from soldiers ranged from telling the everyday life of living in a siege camp to providing gripping perspectives of pitched battles with the Russians and the somber reflections of losing friends or the retelling of sufferings brought on by a harsh winter.

However, not all relationships within the British army towards the press were amicable; amongst the higher-ranking officers, the press became viewed with much mistrust. The view from the British high command was that the press often oversensationalized a story or outright overspread information from which all in Britain and even the Russians could now see. Raglan, the commander-in-chief of Britain’s forces in

Crimea, even took steps not to recognize publications and their writers. Still, privately he voiced his frustrations and concerns regarding how the press's 'venomous' words were now shaping Britain's public opinion. The mistrust of British commanders became so apparent that by 1856 despite the conflict drawing to a close, the new commander-and-chief, Sir William Codrington, issued a general order barring soldiers from interacting with members of the British press.

Like the British rank and file within the army, the British people came to rely heavily upon the press for information coming out of the Crimea. Citizens anxious to hear what was transpiring during the campaigns eagerly bought issues of publications wherever they could get their hands on them. Newspaper readers likewise wrote in publications and posted their letters within the editorial sections. The war caused individuals who, under different circumstances, might not have interacted with the press now enter a public space to voice their thoughts on Britain's war effort. The discussion amongst the citizenry ranged from how severe a Russian winter was within Crimea to whether the war was going in their favor or against them; citizens also utilized the press to organize relief fund payments and clothing drives. However, most importantly, it allowed for more significant interaction among the people. Thanks to the expansiveness of the press and the ease of access, individuals who might not have known of each other's existence now interact with or read other people's thoughts thanks to the press.

Amongst the British political leadership, their relationship with the press was much more complicated and dependent upon the individual relationship with the press and their editors. By the 1850s, the power of the press became such a force that many MPs in Britain had to respect at least the power publications wielded over the people.

Lord Russell commented on this fact and mentioned that any discussion of censoring the press and their writers were a nonstarter issue because the British people would not accept it. Russell even continued by stating that Parliament's power of forming their own opinion had by the 1850s become subsumed by the press. In Russell's view, it became a reactionary government body rather than a proactive one. The nuanced relationship between the MPs and the press became further exemplified by the contrasting relationships of Prime Ministers Aberdeen and his successor Palmerston. Aberdeen became the focal point of much animosity amongst the press because he and his handling of the war did not meet their expectations. On the other side, Palmerston had a much healthier relationship with the press, notably the *Times*, which allowed Palmerston to keep that particular publication at bay. At the same time, he was able to prosecute the war to its conclusion successfully.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Crimean War was significant for many geopolitical and military effects. For Britain, the Crimean War possesses additional significance. The war, which raged from March 1854 to March 1856 when the participating powers signed the treaty of Paris, displayed the best and worst Britain had to offer. The war demonstrated the virtue of the British rank-and-file soldiers, many stemming from Britain's working classes who became the lionized heroes and winners of three significant battles, sufferers of Russia's winter, and helped capture Sebastopol. The working class, in this instance, allied with the middle classes as the newspapers, newsmakers, and reading audiences lauded their efforts and where they could support the rank-and-file soldiers and their working-class families with clothing or donations to the Patriotic Fund. Moments and battles like those of Alma, Inkerman, Balaklava, and Sebastopol and how they became known amongst the peoples of Britain would not have been possible without the presence of and development of Britain's nineteenth-century press.

The British press, which, as this thesis has shown, was more than just London; instead, it encompassed an extraordinarily diverse landscape of publications. Through large and small publications, newspaper readers became much more informed on the events occurring thousands of miles away than at any point in history. Through the press, readers either passively or actively engaged with the war via very different means. Some readers contented themselves with being up-to-date on the latest reports from Crimea. Indeed, newspaper readers both felt inspired to voice their opinion on the matter or engage in civic duty via clothing drives or supporting families of soldiers who fell in battle.

The British press also brought the Crimean War home to the populace unprecedentedly compared to how wars were reported on and covered decades prior. Still, the press played an even more significant part during this period. The press, particularly the provincial press, solidified identities at local and regional levels while promoting a national understanding and image of the nation. Locality and regional identities came to encompass newspaper readers' essential identity, which formed and guided their interests and actions. In many ways, along with political and class affiliations, local and regional identities was at the forefront of many newspaper readers' mind, and the provincial press understood and reported on the war with local identity in mind. The provincial press went to great lengths as soon as the war broke out in March of 1854 to cover the war for the local reader and with a regional audience in mind. Across England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, non-London publications placed the events surrounding the war into the local and regional contexts. By directly referencing how the war affected the locality and how the locality affected the war effort, mentions of local contributions to the Patriotic Fund and poetry were but a few ways the provincial press brought their readers closer together and helped readers comprehend the war better.

Of course, the war also allotted the press, both London and non-London publications, a better opportunity to define what it meant to be British, not just Northern English, a lowland Scot, Welsh, Protestant, or Catholic Irish. To be sure, finding and forming British themes was a concerted effort by some newspaper proprietors. The provincial presses focusing on recognizable national institutions like the British Army or relief efforts like the Patriotic Fund and the monarchy not only helped newspaper readers that their local attachment to the war. Instead, identity went further beyond the city or

town's boundary. Some newspaper readers understood that their local and regional attachments fed into a national one, and through newspapers, multiple levels of identity played out over the pages. Of course, local identities were not the primary identifier for all. Southeast England, for example, would likely follow London's lead than Manchester or Newcastle, with definable roles in Britain's economy. However, in most cases, local and regional identities came first national identity came second.

The Crimean War also allowed for the expansion of the British press across the board. The abolishment of stamp duties in the middle of 1855 allowed for further growth of any growing industry. Through development, newspaper readers could not only access a personal paper but access new publications from which to be better informed on issues, whether it was about the Crimean War or not. The Crimean War was not only significant from a geopolitical standpoint, but it also affected all nations involved in different ways. As Britain and its already sophisticated print-industrial complex grew even more, local/regional identities became further defined, all the while publications, their proprietors, journalist, and some readers debated and negotiated on what it meant to be British. The British press, in myriad ways, impacted all sectors of Britain's social classes, from newspaper readers to politicians, citizens, and soldiers. Governments faced greater pressure due to public outcry. Readers and citizens entered the public sphere to help their fellow man by either voicing their opinion or organizing relief efforts on behalf of the soldiers fighting abroad. Amongst the British army, soldiers of the rank and file acted as impromptu correspondents, enriching the readers' reading experience back home. As this thesis has shown, the Crimean War affected many, if not all, of Britain's populace during this three-year conflict among the great powers of Europe.

However, the impact of the Crimean War still lingers today in Britain. Local and regional pride and attachments are alive and well through institutions like organized sports such as the Premier League. In literature, Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" still hits at the stoic and dutiful pride of Britain's Army. Even the definitions of Britishness have changed since the Crimean War. Whereas before, Britishness could encompass mostly English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, it now has transformed to include many more people of different ethnic backgrounds. Constant changes in Britain's social makeup show that Britishness is not an entrenched idea or understanding. Instead, it denotes that the idea of Britishness is constantly moving and under negotiation from a plentitude of people. Britishness may change by the whim of the contexts surrounding it. In the case of the Crimean War, newspapers and a war with an imperial rival allowed the people of Britain an opportunity to not only affirm their local pride and attachments but negotiate and discuss what Britain and Britishness meant to them.

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