Arming the People against Revolution

Royalist Popular Militias in Restoration Europe

Armando o povo contra a revolução

Milícias populares monarquistas na Europa da Restauração

Simon SARLIN[1] http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4625-6453
[1]Institut des Sciences Sociales du Politique
Université Paris Nanterre
200, Avenue de la République, Nanterre, 92.000, France
simon.sarlin@gmail.com

Abstract During the Restoration era, a number of popular militias were created by monarchical regimes, in France, Spain, Portugal and various Italian states. These various experiences have not received the same attention from historians as the civic militias implemented by the Revolution and then by the liberal monarchies. Inspired by the latter but also by older precedents, these royalist popular militias were to demonstrate the ability of conservative regimes to mobilize the people and fight liberalism with its own weapons. Their importance was therefore both symbolic, as a demonstration of the loyalty and support of the popular masses, and practical, providing more extensive, cheaper and sometimes more reliable forces than regular armies to guarantee order and control the contesting oppositions. Their recruitment and manpower thus provide instruments for measuring active popular support for traditional monarchies.

Keywords royalism, irregular militias, Restoration monarchies

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Resumo Durante a era da Restauração, um certo número de milícias populares foi criado por regimes monárquicos na França, na Espanha, em Portugal e em vários Estados italianos. Essas diversas experiências não receberam dos historiadores a mesma atenção que as milícias cívicas implementadas pela Revolução e depois pelas monarquias liberais. Inspiradas por essas últimas, mas também por antecessores mais antigos, essas milícias populares monarquistas serviram para demonstrar a capacidade dos regimes conservadores em mobilizar a população e combater o liberalismo com suas próprias armas. Sua importância foi, assim, tanto simbólica, como demonstração da lealdade e do apoio das massas populares, quanto prática, assegurando forças mais amplas, mais baratas e algumas vezes mais confiáveis do que os exércitos regulares para garantir a ordem e controlar as oposições contestadoras. Seu recrutamento e seus efetivos fornecem, portanto, instrumentos para medir o apoio popular ativo às monarquias tradicionais.
Palavras-chave monarquismo, milícias irregulares, monarquias da Restauração

During the Restoration era, several monarchical regimes created popular militias: the Volontaires Royaux set up in France in 1815 by the Bourbon regime as a reaction to Napoleon's return from exile, in addition to the Garde Nationale maintained by the restored monarch; the Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas created in Spain in 1823 as part of efforts to quell the constitutional regime, which remained in existence until the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833; the Corpo de Voluntários Realistas in Portugal under Dom Miguel's absolutist reaction (1828-34); the Centurioni and then the Volontari Pontifici in the Papal States, and the Volontari Estensi in the Duchy of Modena, both established in the wake of the revolutionary movements of 1831; the Guardie Civiche and, later, the Comunali and Urbane in the Kingdom of Naples, between the revolutions of 1820 and 1848. Characterized by uncompensated armed service based on voluntary recruitment, all of these militias shared the explicit mission of defending the monarchies that created them against their revolutionary

opponents. Some constituted an active military force that reinforced a regular army (France and Portugal), others had a more limited scope as reserve forces kept on standby in case of revolutionary threat (Modena), but most were sedentary forces charged with maintaining order locally. The militias had varying lifespans: the French Volontaires Royaux were dissolved after only a few weeks, after the defeat of King Louis' armies, while others lasted for years or even decades. Beyond these differences, they all shared a common purpose, and reflected conservative rulers' desire to find new forms of popular mobilization that could serve as instruments for maintaining order and monarchy.

The royalist militias have received far less attention from historians than the revolutionary and liberal civic militias. Restoration monarchies have long been viewed as retrograde regimes obsessed with a desire to return to the past and to quash liberal movements. In this interpretation, the royalist popular militias merely amount to repressive instruments in the hands of monarchs who, in a kind of absolutist mockery of the revolutionary civic guard, created them by leveraging the popular masses' fanaticism. In addition, the militias' failures are often cited as proof of these regimes' fundamental weakness. Not only did they fail to prevent the collapse of the governments that created them, but they could also become hot potatoes in the hands of their rulers, who then chose to reduce or dismiss them (as occurred in Spain and the Papal States). However, reducing these militias to imperfect instruments of a desperate attempt at political repression is to ignore their significance for the history of royalism. It means ignoring the fact that these militias were indeed massive mobilizations, involving tens or hundreds of thousands of men. By their very existence, they were a practical and symbolic manifestation of royalism's capacity to elicit massive popular support — much more, indeed, than their liberal opponents at that time.

In the last two or three decades, the new historiography of the Restoration regimes has reconsidered monarchical governments' modes of political action and mobilization, as well as the sociology of royalist movements. There is a growing interest in royalist popular militias, especially in Spain (Suárez Verdeguer 1956; Pérez Garzón 1978a;

Rio Aldaz 1992; Rubio Ruiz 1993; Braojos Garrido 1999; Gallego 1990; Lorenzana Fernández 1998; Sorando Muzás 1997; Rújula 1998; Sánchez i Carcelén 2015; París Martín 2017). Little, however, has been written about the history of the Voluntarios Realistas in Portugal (Monteiro Cardoso, 2007, p.277-284), and almost nothing about the royal militias in France, Modena, or Naples. The principal study of the Pontifical Centurioni is an article by Alan J. Reinerman, who addresses the question of popular mobilization in the service of absolutism from the perspective of a "failure of the popular counter-revolution". He raises an interesting question about these militias: "Why did this reservoir of popular support not give conservative rulers the upper hand over their revolutionary opponents?" (Reinerman, 1991, p.21). The study of popular militias can tell us much about Restoration monarchies, their relationship with conflict and popular mobilization, their use of political violence, and the divisions that these issues could provoke within the conservative elite. This article compares popular militias in Restoration Europe by considering them from four different perspectives: processes of creation, models of reference, sociological makeup and the issue of commitment, and their effect on political stability.

Processes of creation: conflicts, rulers' initiatives, and popular mobilizations

Royalist volunteer militias were raised in times of crisis and disruption. They were answers to disruptive events, and their creation aimed to strengthen royal power and to help it to regain control over a critical situation, as reinforcement for the regular forces that rulers considered insufficient or unreliable.

Some voluntary militias were created to carry out military action in support of the regular army against an immediate threat. This was the case in France in March 1815, when King Louis XVIII called on his royalist supporters to sign up to confront Napoleon on his return from exile on the island of Elba; he ordered the formation of battalions of Volontaires Royaux "to march with the army under the orders of S. A.

R. Mgr. the Duke of Berry".[1] The Duke, appointed commander-in-chief of an unreliable force of 20,000 men from line troops and the Paris garrison, may have contemplated putting the Volontaires on the front line, along with the Garde Nationale and the Swiss mercenaries, judging that these troops were "sure to shoot against those of Buonaparte".[2] The king's flight in April, however, undermined this military support and, after the capitulation of Paris, most volunteer battalions dispersed spontaneously. Only in the southeast did several thousand volunteers participate in the fighting, under the command of the Duke of Angoulême.

In Portugal, similarly, the battalions of Voluntários Realistas were created in late May 1828, in response to a tense situation caused by the liberal revolt in the north of the country. The royal government's aim was to direct the energies of Dom Miguel's supporters into a force of over 21,000 volunteers, which under the command of the Duke of Cadaval would reinforce the regular troops that the king himself would lead against the rebels.[3] Lacking confidence in the regular troops' loyalty, Dom Miguel decided to "divide the regiments of line, placing each battalion with two or three corps of militias or battalions of royalists, to prevent their desertion and to oblige them to fight for his cause, the latter being the only ones whom he trusted".[4] The measure was immediately extended to battalions stationed in other cities such as Évora, Santarém, Coevilhas, Setubal, Campo Maior, Extremoz, and Bosba, and then during the summer to units in all of the kingdom's provinces.[5] In September, in recognition of "the potential benefit to this realm that might be gained from (their) formation, and good organization",

1 *Le moniteur universel*, 1815, vol. 54, p.287.

2 ORLÉANS (d'), Louis-Philippe. *Mon journal: événements de 1815*. Paris: Michel Lévy, vol. 1, 1849. p.88-89.

3 PORTUGAL. *Colecção oficial de legislação portuguesa*. Lisbon: Imprensa nacional, 1843. p.67.

4 SANTAREM. Manuel Francisco de Barros e Sousa, visconde de. *Correspondência, coligida, coordenada e com anotações de Rocha Martins, publicada pelo 3º visconde de Santarem*. Lisboa: A. Lamas, Motta, 1918. vol. 5, p.267.

5 Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisbon (hereafter AHM), DIV/3/41, c. 1, n. 1.

the Voluntarios Realistas received the status of permanent militia.[6] In Naples, the reactivation of the Guardie Civiche, transformed into the Guardie Comunali in 1827, was linked to the evacuation of the Austrian troops present in the kingdom since 1821, both a political success for King Francis I and a threat to internal order.

In other countries and contexts, volunteer militias were created in response to crises, and reinforced other conservative measures centered on securing political and territorial control. The creation of the Spanish Voluntarios Realistas in June 1823 was part of a battery of measures adopted by the Provisional Government to hasten the restoration of absolutist power, after the French invasion that had ended the Trienio Liberal constitutional experiment. In creating this force, the king called on his supporters to contribute to "the just cause of reestablishing him on his throne and completely abolishing the so-called constitutional system that has caused so much evil to the entire nation and its individuals".[7] A year later, "once the revolution had been defeated, its dangers averted, and the reasons for alarm and restlessness — caused by the armed presence of the constitutional army — had been strangled and fended off", the Voluntarios Realistas were given permanent status, with the mission of "preserving tranquility, preserving order and interior security for the people, and preventing them from inciting fresh disorder".[8] A very similar configuration can be found in central Italy a few years later, in the aftermath of the revolutionary movements of 1831 and the Franco-Austrian military intervention. The Centurioni were created by the Papal States at the initiative of Cardinal Tommaso Bernetti, who had been appointed secretary of state in February 1831, in the tense context of the revolt of the Legations. In line with the intransigents (*zelanti*),

6 PORTUGAL. *Colecção oficial de legislação portuguesa*. Lisbon: Imprensa nacional, 1843. p.26-30.

7 Decree, Jun 10, 1823. SPAIN. *Colección legislativa de España:* continuación de la colección de decretos. Madrid: Imprenta del Ministerio de gracia y justicia, 1829. p.31.

8 *Reglamento para los Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas, decretado por S.M. en 26 de Febrero de 1824*. Palma de Mallorca: F. Guasp, 1824.

this prelate was convinced that only a firm reactionary policy could save the Holy See and, after the restoration, he launched a program of repression, with the Centurioni at its head, under his direct authority. A similar project was presented to the Duke of Modena by his adviser, the Neapolitan Prince of Canosa, another apostle of the popular counter-revolution (Maturi, 1944). Battalions of Volontari Estensi were thus established in 1832 as auxiliaries tasked with "maintaining order in the countryside by seconding the active troops in case of need".[9]

Rulers of regimes with weak and disputed bases might also see a popular militia as a means to regain control of territories threatened by revolution, and to carry out their program of repressing the liberal movement. Tapping reservoirs of popular support gave them access to a cheaper and more reliable resource than their regular armies. However, the creation of volunteer royalist militias should not be seen as solely the conservative ruling elites' strategy. They were also often responses to pre-existing popular mobilizations and local initiatives that had defended these absolutist governments. After 1789, the defense of royalism had demonstrated its ability to mobilize the masses. The uprising of the French Vendée, the *insorgenze* and the *Santafede* revolt in Italy, or the Spanish guerrillas against Napoleon had demonstrated to the partisans of the traditional monarchy the possibility of relying on the popular energies to counter the Revolution. In the climate of socio-political conflict that persisted after 1815, and in a period in which liberal revolutions triggered recurring bouts of civil war, opposition to liberalism gave rise in many places to new massive armed resistance, with spontaneous armed groups emerging locally in defense of royal power and traditional order. These popular mobilizations often proved effective, and could play a significant role in the collapse of liberal regimes and the return to monarchy. In Spain, popular uprisings and the emergence of armed bands carrying out guerrilla actions in the name of royalism (often commanded by former chiefs of bands that had fought in the war for independence) led in 1822 to a climate of civil war in vast regions of

9 SOSSAI, Francesco. *Modena descritta da Francesco Sossai*. Tip. Camerale, 1841. p.162.

Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia, Navarre, and Vizcaya or Galicia (Rújula, 1998, p.71-84; Arnabat i Mata, 2009; Barahona, 1989, p.58-70). It was French military intervention that put an end to the constitutional experiment, and not the action of these armed bands; nonetheless, in the spring of 1823, the "military promenade" of the French expeditionary troops was often organized and accompanied locally by the insurgents. In Portugal, popular mobilization against liberalism in 1826 and 1827, which took the form of *guerrilhas* mainly in the north of the country, played a decisive role in Dom Miguel's victory and subsequent accession to the throne (Lousada; Monteiro, 1982).

In central Italy, in February 1831, when the insurrection of Bologna spread to the Legations and threatened to reach other parts of the Papal States, the Roman government attempted to organize its own counter-resistance by calling on the "children and subjects" of the Holy Father to flock "to the prompt and generous defense of Religion, the Fatherland and the Throne".[10] In his memoirs, General Pepe recalled how, as Austrian and Pontifical troops advanced towards the Marches, "hordes of peasants fanaticized by the priests" had assaulted and disarmed the liberals in Terni or Ascoli and many other cities.[11] At the time of the Napoleonic Empire's crisis, French royalists set up a network of clandestine regional organizations, led by representatives of the nobility and charged with preparing a popular uprising in the west and south of the country.[12] The expected uprising did not occur, except in Bordeaux (at the approach of Wellington's troops), but the map of the volunteer battalions in March 1815 remains a testament to their connections to these underground networks.

In areas where political conflict had given rise to armed rebellion and civil war, the creation of royalist militias often amounted to merely

10 VESI, Antonio. *Rivoluzione di Romagna del 1831*. Firenze: A spese dell'editore, 1851. p.27-28.

11 PEPE, Guglielmo. *Memorie del generale Guglielmo Pepe intorno alla sua vita e ai recenti casi d'Italia scritte da lui medesimo*. Paris: Baudry, 1847. p.244.

12 BEAUCHAMP, Alphonse de. *Histoire des campagnes de 1814 et de 1815*. Paris: Normant, 1817. vol. 2, p.46-53

the institutionalization of existing armed groups, and the recognition of the role played by local elites. By institutionalizing militias, rulers aimed to provide a standardized framework for the armed groups that had emerged spontaneously, but which lacked overall coordination and clear objectives, and to spread to the whole country forms of popular mobilization that had "taken" only in some local contexts. However, for the governing elites, the activities of local armed groups also raised the issue of control. In times of transition, clashes between armed groups sometimes gave rise to cycles of violence, or even episodes of royalist terror, in which armed groups committed excesses or carried out political vendettas. In Spain, armed groups opposed the authorities, and especially French troops, when the regime that they defended attempted to moderate the royalists in their persecution of "*negros*" or liberals, or granted the latter protection (see, for Madrid, Paris Martín, 2017, p.91-93). Institutionalizing the militias also gave royal governments the means to reclaim control, through military discipline, of armed groups and local elites who had seized positions of power for themselves on behalf of royalism. Royalist popular militias were meant to demonstrate that conservative regimes were capable of mobilizing popular support *and* restoring order. Their importance was therefore both practical, providing a force for maintaining public order, and symbolic, as a demonstration of the popular masses' loyalty, support, and obedience to royal power.

Models: liberal civic militias and old regime precedents

In contexts of crisis and contestation, faced with the challenges of an Old Regime in crisis and the rise of liberalism, conservative leaders found themselves compelled to find new solutions. The idea of mobilizing the popular energies through irregular militias to maintain order and to defend the state was certainly not new in 1815. Based on the model of the *Garde Nationale* created by revolutionary France in 1789, all of the countries occupied by the French armies had organized citizen militias.

After the collapse of the Napoleonic system, most reactionary monarchies hastened to abolish them, as did Ferdinand VII's Spain — which rejected both the Milicias Nacionales of King José's regime and the militias conceived by the Cadiz Constitution of 1812 — and most Italian states. In these countries, the reconstitution of civic militias became one of the main objectives of the liberal movement, and new guards were set up by the constitutional regimes that emerged in 1820 in Spain and in Naples, in 1831 in central Italy, and in Portugal in 1823 (which had not had any previously). In turn, after the collapse of the constitutional regimes, the abolition of these forces was one of the first measures implemented for the expurgation of liberalism, and this often preceded the establishment of new royalist militias.

However, not all restored monarchies were so hostile to the militias inherited from the revolutionary era. In France and the Kingdom of Naples, some had helped to maintain order during the transition to the monarchy, and in some places, militias had actively contributed to the Napoleonic regime's collapse. In these cases, the new regimes attempted to appropriate an institution in which they saw, above all, a force for the preservation of the social order, the only force upon which the monarchy could truly rely. Despite their revolutionary origins, civic militias were instruments for the consolidation of monarchical order in both these countries, for their rulers mistrusted their regular armies.

One of the first acts of Louis XVIII's government in April 1814 was thus to confirm the Garde Nationale under the same name, a sedentary militia in each locality that retained the same characteristics of obligatory and unremunerated service, with the white cockade of the Bourbons simply replacing the tricolor. The king appointed his own brother, the Count of Artois, who had donned the uniform of the Garde Nationale when he entered Paris, to head the militia. In March 1815, after Napoleon's landing, the royal government entrusted the Gardes with the protection of fortified towns, and charged them with the recruitment of the volunteer units that were to be employed as mobile columns in the departments. Even if these militias had barely engaged in fighting to defend the Bourbons against Napoleon, they were reinstated after the

second restoration, because they still remained the only force that the regime had at its disposal to regain control over the country. The choice to maintain the Gardes Nationales was not, however, only a matter of necessity. It was also the tool of a royalist and counter-revolutionary program carried out by the Count of Artois, the main representative of the ultra-royalist party. The king's brother, eager to impose his authority on a more centralized militia to make it the spearhead of reaction, set up at the end of 1815 a network of inspectors placed under his sole authority, and appointed notables belonging to the ultraroyalist elite to local commands (Carrot, 2001, chap.5; Bianchi; Dupuy, 2006; Dupuy, 2010).

In Naples, King Ferdinand issued a decree in March 1816 by which the Guardia di Sicurezza Interna created for the city by Murat was preserved as "a special testimony to his sovereign satisfaction for the distinct services it has rendered on the occasion of his happy return to the kingdom, and to consolidate with a solemn and definitive act this useful establishment already almost generally adopted in all the other states of Europe".[13] After the revolution of 1820, the Guardie Nazionali instituted by the liberal government was severely purged and replaced by a Guardie Civiche composed of people who had not previously belonged to the liberal militia or to secret societies; they would wear the Bourbons' red cockade. In 1827, the Guardie Civiche's abolition reflected both the distrust of a militia suspected of harboring a number of unreliable (liberal) elements, and the desire to create a new force based on voluntary service: members of the new Guardie Comunali were to serve voluntarily, in return for a monthly allowance financed by the municipalities through a tax on property-owners. However, this last provision was short-lived; after numerous complaints from provincial intendants who experienced difficulties collecting the tax in the communes, the militia was reformed again and, in November, unpaid compulsory service was reinstated for the Guardie Urbane. As in France, the existence of a popular militia also raised complex political passions.

13 Regno di Napoli. *Collezione delle leggi e decreti reali del Regno di Napoli*. Naples: nella Stamperia Reale, n.d. p.200-201.

A police commissioner in Terra di Lavoro province reported in March 1827 that the dissolution of the Guardie Civiche divided the public opinion. While "the rulers of political change rejoiced, perhaps believing that (those militias) could not be replaced by another force", supporters of the royal power "were somehow unhappy, because they found themselves thus disarmed or exposed to the reprisals of those whom they had arrested in the name of the royal authority", while "the opinion" in general had approved the measure "in which it saw the suppression of a force composed mainly of revolutionaries and scoundrels".[14]

The liberal guards, however, were not the only models for citizen militias, and they themselves had taken inspiration from older monarchical institutions. In early-modern Europe, militias composed of civilians, recruited through voluntary engagement or by drawing lots — *milices provinciales* in France, *cerne* in Italy, *migueletes*/*miquelets* in the Crown of Aragon — had constituted a generally unremunerated service in defense of the territory and, in theory, only occasionally and temporarily in response to emergency situations, had served as auxiliary forces for professional armies. At the very end of the Old Regime, some of France's neighbors, fearing revolutionary contagion, attempted to use or reactivate these civilian militias as instruments of social control with a clear anti-revolutionary stance. In Spain, during the so-called War against the Convention (1793-95), the Milicias Urbanas were reactivated in Madrid, Aragon, Navarre, and Catalonia to guarantee public order in the absence of the army mobilized on the Pyrenean front (Pérez Garzón, 1978a, chap.1; Aymes, 1991). A similar but shorter-lived attempt can be observed in the Kingdom of Piedmont in April 1793 when King Victor Amadeus III reconstituted the Guardie Urbane under a new name, Corpo di Milizia Urbana, to ensure public order in Turin and to prevent a "Jacobin" uprising (Gasparinetti, 1987). At the same time, the republican government of Venice, faced with the prospect of imminent military collapse, had reacted by decreeing the resurrection of the old

14 Archivio di Stato di Napoli (hereafter ASNa), Ministaero della Polizia Generale, fasc. 4566, "Guardie Urbane" (1827).

militias (*cernide*) and appealing to the "well-known conservative spirit of the population of the countryside, affectionate to the ancient order of things", in whose hands they put "a very secure weapon to oppose any novelty that could be caused in future" (Barbarich, 1910, p.98). All of these experiments were fragile and did not survive the military defeats inflicted by the revolutionary armies. Even briefer was the reconstitution by Archduke Ferdinand of the Milizia Cittadina di Milano in May 1796, at a time when Bonaparte was threatening to invade Lombardy, or the 1798 reconstitution of the Milizia Urbana raised in the name of the Bourbons of Naples to ensure control of the capital during the Neapolitan military intervention in Rome.[15]

The decision to base royalist militia recruitment on the principle of volunteerism in part reflected a desire to break with the liberal model and to return to old-regime traditions. In 1824, the Spanish monarchy preferred the "constant nature of volunteers" because it reflected "the prestige of fidelity and constant attachment to the monarchical and religious traditions", and because it responded to the desire "that these circumstances of love and decision, imprinted in the hearts of all its good subjects, in no way be made lesser by a forced service or draft". Obviously, however, this choice was also a matter of control, and this was reflected in the fact that the royalist militias differed from the liberal guards in two ways. First, any form of allegiance to another power than the king — to the nation or the constitution — disappeared in favor of a direct and unique connection with the sovereign, whom the royalist militias were tasked to defend. In addition, any trace of democratic organization like the election of officers or the absence of social requirements for recruitment disappeared. In the February 1824 regulations for the Voluntarios Realistas, the royal preamble insisted on the necessity for this militia to rely on "the foundations of monarchical order and obedience," in opposition to the previous Milicias Nacionales, whose "admissions without fair conditions to serve in them, and the democratic order

15 COLLETTA, Pietro. *Storia del reame di Napoli dal 1734 al 1825: 1*. Capolago: Stampa del Fibreno, 1834. p.307-308

of their elections" had embodied the will to "confound the classes" and to neutralize the will of the partisans of order, so as to "disseminate and consolidate the ascendancy of the Revolution".[16]

Society's response: recruitment and social composition

Society's response to the voluntary militia can be measured by the ease with which men were recruited into their ranks, and this response of course varied across countries, regions, and contexts. Some mobilizations have been historically interpreted as failures, as in France in 1815, despite all the efforts of the monarchy and its agents. After Napoleon's landing, recruitment offices were opened in Paris and in the main towns of the departments. By late March, volunteer battalions had been raised in two-thirds of the provinces, but the mobilization assumed significant proportions only in Paris and in the Midi. Taking into account all the organized battalions, the Southeast provided more than 10,000 volunteers in about three weeks, but that figure should be doubled or even tripled to take into account the number of those who made some act of adherence to the Volontaires Royaux (Triomphe, 2017, p.71-77). In the West, the surprising lack of popular mobilization in the spring of 1815 is largely due to the authorities' fear of losing control and triggering the resurgence of civil discord, which led them to discourage the royalist notables who wanted to raise volunteer battalions; the uprising would occur later, in May, in response to the restoration of Napoleonic power (Lignereux, 2015, p.59-98).

In other countries, the creation of volunteer forces amounted to massive mobilizations. In Spain, a network of voluntary battalions was quickly established, and a French diplomat reckoned in 1828 that it enrolled nearly 200,000 men (Rújula, 1998, p.121). In the Pontifical States, 50,000 recruits had joined the Centurioni by 1832, and 75,000 by 1833 —

16 *Reglamento para los Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas, decretado por S.M. en 26 de Febrero de 1824*. Palma de Mallorca: F. Guasp, 1824. p.4-5.

an impressive response when we consider that they were drawn from territories with a population of well under a million (Reinerman, 1991). In Portugal, Voluntários units were also quickly organized throughout the country, although with less impressive numbers for a population three times larger; there were 38 battalions in August 1829, and their numbers had increased to 51 two years later, for an overall force of 12,000 to 18,000 men.[17] The distribution across provinces showed clear inequalities: while Extremadura (including the capital) and Alentejo raised large numbers, with respectively thirteen and nine battalions, the Algarve mustered only three. In some areas, the battalions of Voluntários did not reach large numbers, and their organization and arming proceeded slowly, prompting criticism. In 1839, the Modenese militia counted two regiments for the provinces of Modena and Reggio (including respectively ten and two battalions, plus two battalions of Cacciatori) and a battalion for the Duchy of Massa and Lunigiana.[18]

Local differences notwithstanding, the fact remains that royalist volunteer militias demonstrated their ability to mobilize the masses, especially if we take into account the difficulties that the civic militia were encountering at that time. In France, where the obligation to serve in the Garde Nationale fell on "any Frenchman of twenty to sixty years, paying head tax or direct contributions" (article 3 of the July 1816 ordinance), the theoretical contingent was never achieved due to delayed and inefficient local organization: in 1817, units existed in only half of the departments, and by the end of the decade they had only a nominal existence in most departments, either because they had gradually diminished or had not even been raised (Carrot, 2001, p.241-242). In Paris, their 1820 strength barely exceeded half the projected number, set at 32,000 men. This expectation was reduced by half by an 1825 ordinance and then to 12,000 in March 1827, shortly before Charles X dissolved the Garde. In the kingdom of Naples, provincial intendants reported difficulties in organizing of the Guardie Urbane in the villages; a June 1828

17 AHM, DIV/3/41, c. 2, n. 5 / c. 7, n. 4.

18 *Almanacco della R. Corte e degli stati estensi*. Modena: Eredi Soliani, 1839. p.288-306.

decree granted the possibility, "where the need to fill the ranks required it", of exceeding the age limit (24 to 50 years), or of adapting the number of militias "to local conditions" in "small localities" where "the character of the inhabitants, the topographical location or any other circumstance" made it difficult to reach the numbers fixed by law.[19]

Much of a militia's organization, recruitment, and outfitting was left to local authorities. In Spain, anyone meeting the recruitment conditions could file an application with the municipal council (*ayuntamiento*), which was bound to publicly announce "to the people the just and praiseworthy object that encourages the formation of these companies of Voluntarios Realistas by designating a term for requesting admission to them". The local authorities would then elect a committee to examine applications.[20] In Portugal, the *c*âmaras *dos distritos* (district chambers) were entrusted with forming Voluntários battalions, and then had to send a report to the Colonel-General outlining the recruitment potential of their district and proposing a list of persons best suited to take positions of command.[21] Allowing local initiative responded as much to a desire to test local elites' loyalty, as to logistical and financial considerations. Constantly preoccupied with the need to reduce the costs of these militias to the state treasury, governments often chose to charge part of the militias' operational costs to local governments. In Portugal, the state had to "provide the corresponding armaments, accessories, and ammunition" to the battalions, but left all other expenses to the municipalities or to the volunteers themselves. In Spain, the pueblos had to pay for the weapons and supplies provided by the army, and to assist volunteers "in need of help" in obtaining the complete uniform required for each battalion; in exchange, they received "full latitude to decree contributions aiming at the achievement of a goal of common

19 *Codice per lo Regno delle Due Sicilie*. Naples: Stamperia Reale, 1850. p.159.

20 *Reglamento para los Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas,* decretado por S.M. en 26 de Febrero de 1824. Palma de Mallorca: F. Guasp, 1824. p.12.

21 PORTUGAL. *Colecção oficial de legislação portuguesa*. Lisbon: Imprensa nacional, 1843. p.26-27.

interest".[22] This economic burden limited the formation of battalions in the poorest districts. Faced with the apathy of many ayuntamientos, the royal government had to issue numerous circulars to remind the local authorities of their duties, under the supervision of the intendants, and threatened in 1827 to suspend them in case of non-compliance. "Although some local councils, animated by their good zeal, corresponded with punctuality, and with the promptness by which they were commissioned, and proposed the measures that seemed convenient for the indicated object", reported the Intendant of Aragon in December 1828, "there are others that persist in their criminal apathy, or have failed to answer, or dispense themselves under the pretext that they had no solution to propose" (quoted by Rújula, 1998, p.117).

Standards in the volunteer militias were generally low. No military experience was required, which often posed a problem for commanders due to the shortage of military instructors relative to the needs of volunteer battalions, as evidenced by the repeated requests from local officers that can be found in the archives. Criteria of age, good moral standards, and political conduct appeared in all the regulations. In Portugal, the Corpos de Voluntários Realistas had to "admit as soldiers only persons of good civil and political religious behavior and from the age of eighteen to forty-five". The Spanish regulations of 1823 excluded former members of the constitutional militia, and accepted as volunteers "any inhabitant of the pueblos between the ages of twenty and fifty years having displayed good conduct, honesty, known love to our Sovereign and determined adherence to the just cause of reestablishing him in his throne". Some regulations established exclusions related to wealth. The Portuguese volunteers had to buy their own uniforms, which implicitly excluded the very poor. In Spain, the new regulations of 1824 introduced an "exemption" for "day laborers and all those who cannot support themselves and their families," allegedly because the king wished to relieve them of "a service that they cannot provide except

22 *Reglamento para los Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas, decretado por S.M. en 26 de Febrero de 1824*. Palma de Mallorca: F. Guasp, 1824 articles 41, 42 and 45.

to the detriment of their family and obligations, or the abandonment of their work". Conditions were stricter for the officers. Those in the Portuguese Voluntários had to be chosen from among "the principal persons residing in the districts", men who possessed "the means to fulfill their mission with decency, dignity and independence". In Spain, positions of command were reserved for those "having properties of a certain consideration or amount in the town or district", or to representatives of the hereditary nobility. These conditions made it difficult to fill the ranks of officers in some places, for lack of suitable candidates.[23] Nevertheless, this choice clearly indicates the desire of monarchical governments to gain the support of groups of notables attached to social order, which sometimes prevailed over political leanings. In Lérida, half of the officers appointed in 1825 in the Voluntarios Realistas had belonged to the former Milícia Nacional, a sign that the regime felt itself bound to compromise with members of the local oligarchy, due to their experience and social weight, and their common interest in the defense of social order (Sánchez i Carcelén, 2015).

It is difficult to gain an overall impression of the social composition of volunteer militias, due to both the lack of available data in the sources and the diversity of local situations. The figures available for a few places, however, are enough to throw into question a common misconception that reduces royalism to a mere alliance between the aristocratic elite and the lowest layers of rural or urban society. In Madrid, between 1823 and 1833, the Voluntarios recruited 20% of their ranks among wage laborers and 34% were artisans, while property-owners and the liberal professions accounted for only a tiny minority (respectively 2.2% and 3.6%) (Pérez Garzón, 1978b). In Zaragoza, the share of property-owners fell from 30% to 5% between 1823 and 1828, and that of employees declined from 10% to 5%, while the proportion of small craftsmen more than doubled from 15% to 40%, and the share of hired laborers remained stable at nearly 30% (Rújula, 1998, p.109).

23 For instance AHM, DIV/3/41, c. 2, n. 10 (Evora, 1829) and 22 (Lomego, 1829); c. 9, n. 11 (Guarda, 1832); c. 12, n. 38 (Elvas, 1834).

Over time, the Voluntarios' urban forces thus underwent a process of proletarianization, as the middle classes most interested in demonstrating their loyalty to the regime at the beginning of this period gave way to the urban working classes. Regardless, their composition does not correspond to the image of a "populace" conveyed by the detractors of their time, since the Voluntarios Realistas were mainly recruited from the manual labor and day labor force that carried the weight of the urban productive economy (París Martín, 2015). The working classes also supplied the bulk of the Guardie Urbane in the Kingdom of Naples. In the province of Principato Ultra, the three categories of artisans, small farmers, and workers accounted in 1828 for 51% of the Guardie Urbane (respectively 10%, 31% and 10%). The same proportion was found in the neighbouring provinces of Principato Citra (54%) and Molise (52%), while it reached 78% in the Abruzzo Ultra.[24]

The Voluntários Urbanos of Lisbon provide a very different picture in 1834. There, the craft sector accounted only for 10% of the force, as did the middle classes (students, liberal professions, owners, merchants, middle-ranking civil servants), and more than half of the volunteers were recruited from among a large sector of employees (11% of whom were servants of the Royal House).[25] Such figures indicate the strength of patron-client relationships among the administration and the most powerful royalist families. In the countryside, the wealthiest royalist landowners surely contributed to enlistment numbers in the militia through the same kind of relationship with the peasantry. In the small Spanish town of Lérida, the predominance of the peasant class (*labradores proprietarios*), which accounted for nearly half of all volunteers, reflected both the socioeconomic structure of this rural area and the local landowning elite's influence (Sánchez i Carcelén, 2015, p.143). This factor does not seem to have played out the same way in the Roman provinces, where the landowners, whether aristocratic or bourgeois,

24 ASNa, Ministero della Polizia Generale, fasc. 4567

25 *Lista das doze companhias dos voluntarios realistas urbanos*. Lisbon: Na Imprensa Liberal, na Rua do Outeiro ao Loreto, 1834.

tended to be indifferent or unfriendly to the papal regime, and appear to have been little involved in promoting or leading the Centurioni, and often even discouraged their tenants and laborers from joining (Reinerman, 1991, p.6-7). The undeniable role of relations of economic dependence and of clientelism in the constitution of royalist militias cannot thus be simply described as the manipulation of the popular masses by royalist notables, as liberal historiography has long done. Relationships of economic dependence and clientelism only succeeded in recruiting when there was fertile ground for popular mobilization.

To understand what could tempt individuals to join a militia voluntarily, we should consider the conditions of service offered to them. Service in the militia was unpaid — and that was their main attraction for monarchies constantly seeking ways to save money. There were some exceptional cases, when battalions were called to serve outside their district, but the required service was largely sedentary within the enrollment district's limits. Service could, however, offer privileges, such as the right to carry arms, free access to public documents (hunting licenses, passports, security letters) and to certain public shows. It also conferred many exemptions; volunteers were exempted from regular military service, from certain taxes or from military requisitions on their properties, and they were granted access to military jurisdiction and privileges for the duration of their service. Of equal importance, membership in a militia conferred some social visibility: militias were integrated into public ceremonies, parading in uniform in processions and at festive events. In this sense, while joining the militia could serve as a public demonstration of a volunteer's support for the monarchical system, it was also a way to reap the symbolic and material benefits of loyalty, or to avoid the persecution that targeted liberals.

The search for material or symbolic advantages, or even forms of opportunism, could therefore form part of a volunteer's motivations. Indeed, liberal detractors of royalist militias often described them as mercenary forces bought by the monarchy from among the lower classes of rural or urban society, lured by the promise of material advantage

and symbolic revenge against the progressive bourgeoisie. Almost as often, however, liberals denounced these militias as lairs of the ignorant masses, fanaticized by royalist notables and the clergy. Politicization was another motivation for engagement. In the statements of service for individuals proposed for the position of officer, beyond conventional declarations of adhesion to the monarchy, proofs of past engagement in active defense of the royal cause were also listed. In regions where civil war was raging, many officers had previously distinguished themselves in royalist guerrillas or in repressing liberal revolts. In Braga, a province of Minho, Antonio de Aranjo e Vascos, captain of the third company, had been involved "in all the fights against the rebels," and his counterpart in the fifth, Manoel Alveres Teixeira Torres, was "among the first present when the general (in command) had authorized the people to take up arms against the rebels".[26] In the lists of officers of the Portuguese battalions, we also find references to people who emigrated in 1826 to follow Dom Miguel. Individual careers are much more difficult to reconstruct for soldiers, but there are other signs of politicization. Police reports attest to volunteers' frequent involvement in political altercations, or their aggressive rhetoric against the liberals, or even against governments seen as overly lax toward liberals, which suggest a spontaneous and often uncontrollable popular politicization (París Martín, 2017, p.97-103). Since the end of the eighteenth century, the royalist cause had amply demonstrated its ability to arouse the active support of large segments of the population. However, popular royalism masked a broad diversity of tendencies under the unifying ideals of guardianship of tradition through defense of the Church and the absolute monarchy and a marked hostility to liberalism. In the countryside, royal power was often seen as a bulwark against wealthy liberal landowners' greed. Entering the volunteer militia could thus reflect a form of politicization or be a means for the rural masses to have some influence over local affairs in the name of royalism.

26 AHM, DIV/3/41, c. 1 (1828), n. 40, report from Coronel Antonio de Vascos Leite Pereira.

Order and conflict: controlling militias and debates within the ruling elite

Although the principal mission of a royalist militia was to maintain order and to preserve the public peace, there was also an overtly political dimension to their territorial control. This was explicitly stated, for example, in the Portuguese regulations of September 1828. The Voluntários were expected "to support and defend the cause of religion and the throne", in addition to ensuring and maintaining public order. In addition to the "criminals, notorious thieves, assassins, contrabandists and counterfeiters" whom they were to pursue in their districts, they were also expected to censor anyone "who disseminated writings, news or subversive ideas, and who conspired against the royalist system and the ancient institutions of the monarchy"; these were among "the most dangerous criminals".[27] The Spanish regulations of 1824 outlined the same objectives for volunteers: "The great objective of the establishment of the Voluntarios Realistas, and one that you should always keep in mind when receiving the weapons that I put in your hands, and for which I assume your loyalty, is to fight the revolutionaries and conspirators, and to destroy the revolution and conspiracies of any nature and in any form". Volunteers had therefore to assist the authorities in their actions "against public enemies of any kind," and among them "revolutionaries and conspirators against the State" were to be considered "in the first line of criminals or public criminals". In case of revolutionary agitation, local authorities could call on the support of neighboring district forces.[28] In the hands of absolutists, the volunteers were a tool for warding off the threat of revolution. For Cardinal Bernetti, the Centurioni's stated mission was to help the pontifical authorities keep the liberals under surveillance and to prevent a new revolutionary outbreak. He did not expect to take violent repressive action against the

27 PORTUGAL. *Colecção oficial de legislação portuguesa*. Lisbon: Imprensa nacional, 1843. p.28.

28 *Reglamento para los Cuerpos de Voluntarios Realistas,* decretado por S.M. en 26 de Febrero de 1824. Palma de Mallorca: F. Guasp, 1824. p.66-67.

Pope's opponents, for in his eyes "the mere existence of this large and devoted force will intimidate the liberals". To make this threat even more formidable in the minds of his opponents, Bernetti did everything to shroud the Centurioni's organization in mystery. The volunteers did not wear uniforms or insignia, so their identities were not known to the local authorities. The cardinal considered such secrecy essential for "this mysterious force (whose intention is) to fight the equally mysterious plots of the revolutionaries, above all by inspiring greater fear of the militia and of papal authority" (Reinerman, 1991, p.24-25).

This mission of political surveillance of absolutism's opponents was for conservative rulers the best (and cheapest) way to deploy forces of control and repression throughout the country. The royalist militias were in fact local instruments of political repression and of intimidation against liberals. For those in favor of an active counter-revolution, it was vital to spare no means for the monarchical cause. As the Prince of Canosa put it, when faced with the liberals' war against monarchies, "those men attached to the altar and to legitimacy" had a duty to "equip themselves with the means to engage in a war of countermines (*guerra di contromine*)".[29] Conflict lay at the heart of their vision of political action. For the Viscount of Santarem, "the considerable number of royalist volunteers in Spain, and their good disposition, imposed on the revolutionaries, both Spanish and foreigners, a fear manifested by the invectives and continual calumnies with which the latter attacked them", and this was the measure of the assurance that the "good royalists" should place in the volunteer militia.[30] The Neapolitan liberals regarded the Guardie Urbane with hatred and contempt, for it was largely made up of the rural lower-middle classes ready to support the repressive policies

29 CAPECE MINUTOLO, Antonio. *Epistola ovvero riflessioni critiche sulla moderna storia del reame*. Capolago: s.n., 1834. p.171.

30 SANTAREM. Manuel Francisco de Barros e Sousa, visconde de. *Correspondência, coligida, coordenada e com anotações de Rocha Martins, publicada pelo 3º visconde de Santarem*. Lisboa: A. Lamas, Motta, 1918. vol. 3, p.268.

of the absolute monarchy, and they hastened to decree its abolition after the revolution of 1848.[31]

However, the project of mobilizing reservoirs of popular support to serve counter-revolutionary objectives, so fundamental to the creation of voluntary militias, did not meet with unanimous enthusiasm from the conservative ruling elite. Promoters of an armed popular counter-revolution were not always successful in garnering support for their plans. In France, the Count of Artois failed to impose his personal authority on the Garde Nationale through a centralized organization. The creation of a network of inspectors in the departments, placed directly under the prince's orders and responsible for ensuring the recruitment of officers regarded as politically beyond reproach, was obviously meant to transform the Garde into a force at the service of the Ultras' reactionary project. The Modérés (Moderates), however, were not to be duped, and as early as 1814, they criticized what they considered a "useless, dangerous and expensive" organization. Only Artois's political weight allowed him to implement this project, but from the outset, this situation sowed the seeds for a conflict between other leaders and parts of the administration that intersected with the broader conflict between Modérés and Ultras. The appointment in May 1816 of Viscount Lainé, a Moderate, at the head of the ministry of the interior, marked the beginning of a covert war against the ambitions of the king's brother, relayed in the departments by the prefects. In July, shortly before the dissolution of the reactionary "Chambre Introuvable", an ordinance put the Garde back under the control of the prefects and mayors, voiding the inspector general's position of any substance. The general inspection was suppressed by an 1818 ordinance, which also reduced Prince Colonel General to a merely honorific title, and conferred all authority over the guards to the Minister of the Interior. This measure, according to the prefectural reports, caused "a sensation in castles and salons" and was everywhere "received with sorrow by the ultra-royalists" because it

31 MANNA, Giovanni. *Le province meridionali del regno d'Italia*. Naples: G. Nobile, 1862. p.29-30.

"deprived this faction of powerful backing". However, it also alienated the institution from the sympathies of the Ultras who were now wary of an organization that they no longer controlled, and which found its most ardent defenders in the liberal party and press. Enthroned in 1824, the Count of Artois made a point of not inviting the Garde to his coronation and anointment ceremony, and quickly found an excuse to dissolve it three years later (Carrot, 2001, p.236-242). Before he counseled the Duke of Modena, the Prince of Canosa had faced the same opposition in Naples. Twice, when he was minister of police for King Ferdinand, he had proposed to arm and support the Calderari, a secret society formed early in the century in opposition to the Carboneria, the better to repress and intimidate the liberals. In 1816, Luigi dei Medici, with the support of the Austrian diplomacy, was successful in convincing the king to remove Canosa from office and to banish him, while some of his followers were arrested and tried. Recalled as the head of the Neapolitan police in 1821, with carte blanche to carry out the repression against the liberal movement, the prince was forced to resign after a few months, due to widespread complaints from diplomats about his 'agents' many abuses.

Wherever they were established, popular militias aroused mistrust and even open hostility from moderate conservative elites. They saw in these armed popular forces the potential for popular counter-revolution, or at best a powerful instrument in the hands of the most reactionary factions; both endangered the monarchical order, founded in their eyes on the regime's capacity to preserve the socio-political equilibrium. In France, the moderate conservatives feared that the Ultras' bellicose strategy would undermine the monarchy, and prove as perilous as the revolutionary opposition. By encouraging popular violence in the name of the sovereign, the Ultras threatened the fragile peace upon which the monarchical restoration had been built and, even worse, threatened to trigger the social war dreaded even more than revolution itself. These fears were echoed in the calls for moderation from Austrian diplomats. As far as Metternich was concerned, by sponsoring the popular militias, monarchical governments were encouraging the division of their

subjects into two armed camps, a development likely to lead to civil war. Even if the conservative camp emerged victorious from this clash, the use of a fanatical and undisciplined force could also lead to a bloodbath comparable to the excesses of the Neapolitan Sanfedisti in 1799, which would tarnish the reputation not only of the governments that employed them, but also of the conservative camp as a whole. A class-based civil war could pit the propertied classes of all Europe against the monarchies and their Austrian protector.[32] The debate on popular militias thus reflected the fundamental division between moderates and reactionaries that divided the conservative camp during the Restoration era.

The many complaints emanating from local authorities about the volunteers provided fuel for the critics of popular militias and their volunteers. They were often accused of abuses of power in their surveillance of supposed liberals and repression of subversive activities, especially when this involved notables; the judge of Vila Real accused the captain of the Voluntários of conducting arbitrary arrests and searches, "even in the houses of some nobles, causing the indignation of both the nobility and the commoners" (quoted by Monteiro Cardoso, 2007, p.283). In the main cities, the arrest of foreigners gave rise to protests from diplomats. In January 1829, the British government complained of "the state of anarchy" in Lisbon, which "was not safe for the Foreigners"; after "Englishmen were attacked in the streets by the Royalist volunteers", it announced that it would send vessels to transport its nationals wishing to leave the country.[33] More generally, volunteers were also held responsible for the tense atmosphere that sometimes spilled into open violence between liberals and reactionaries. Their speech and attitude, marked by radical hostility against the "negros", led to frequent disputes and brawls in the cafés of Madrid and other cities (París Martín, 2017, p.97-105).

32 Reports from Metternich to Lützow, Mar 18, Apr 19, May 3, 1833. REINERMAN, 1991, p.30.

33 Report from the Viscount of Asseca to the Viscount of Santarem, London, 5 January 1829. SANTAREM. Manuel Francisco de Barros e Sousa, visconde de. *Correspondência, coligida, coordenada e com anotações de Rocha Martins, publicada pelo 3º visconde de Santarem*. Lisboa: A. Lamas, Motta, 1918. vol. 2, p.240.

In some areas, popular militias became an instrument of terror against the liberal opposition, deploying diffuse and sometimes indiscriminate violence against them. With their very loose organization, the pontifical volunteers were often accused of maintaining a reign of terror. "The fanaticism of the centurions has become truly dangerous", reported an Austrian officer from Faenza: "Authorized to carry any sort of concealed weapon, they assemble in groups of three or four as soon as the sun sets, patrol the streets, and assault in the most unjust and arbitrary way anyone they consider to be a liberal, beating and maltreating them in a truly scandalous way, so that no one dares leave his home any longer" (quoted by Reinerman, 1991, p.26). The provincial delegates and the governors, without officially approving of or encouraging this degree of violence, turned a blind eye to the volunteers' abuses. The political climate of Romagna was thus marked by the struggle between "two opposing sects": the *cani* (dogs), partisans of freedom, against the *gatti* (cats), who supported the papal government, according to an old denomination that had divided the Carbonari and the Sanfedisti during the revolutionary events of 1821. *Andare a cane* (to go hunting for dogs) was the figurative expression used by the Volontari to refer to their persecution of liberals.[34] Their detractors also accused the volunteers of carrying out criminal actions on the pretext of fighting liberalism, such as extortion, confiscation, and other abuses at the expense of the rich. Such abuses certainly occurred in some places (for Portugal, see Monteiro Cardoso, 2007, p.283-284); however, they were deliberately exaggerated by their liberal critics to discredit the popular militias and their ultraconservative supporters in the eyes of the middle and upper classes. By playing on class hostility and the fear of social revolution, the liberals encouraged these classes to see the volunteers' low social origins as a threat to the existing social order.

Under these circumstances, the question of control over these militias soon became a bone of contention between factions of the ruling elite,

34 VESI, Antonio. *Rivoluzione di Romagna del 1831*. Firenze: A spese dell'editore, 1851. p.210-211.

and between moderate governments and the volunteers. In Portugal, with the 1828 regulations, the moderate-led government managed to ensure that the military authorities maintained tight control over the recruitment and disciplining of the volunteer battalions. The enlistment period, set at fourteen years, was also an obvious limit to the recruitment of the popular masses. Moderate rulers thus preferred to restrict the growth of the popular militia for fear of it becoming an instrument in the hands of the Exaltados (radicals). They may also have taken note of the situation in Spain, where the question of control over the volunteer militias had led to political confrontation. While the 1823 decree left ample autonomy to the battalions, the 1824 regulations aimed to strengthen military authority and to restrict recruitment by excluding people without resources. A diffuse discontent in the ranks of the Voluntarios played an evident role in the Ultra revolt of 1827 (*Revuelta de los Agraviados* or Revolt of the Wronged) in Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon, Navarre, and Andalusia, where volunteers were often put on the front lines. In their manifesto, these "pure royalists" accused the government of betraying the nation and accused Ferdinand of weakness, putting the throne and religion in danger. They turned openly to the king's brother, Don Carlos, as champion of the counter-revolutionary program. This option attracted a large number of volunteers who declared themselves Carlists and joined the Ultras' secret societies (Moral Ruiz, 1975). From this moment, the government saw the Voluntarios as a threat to order more than as a bulwark against the revolution. Disbanding the battalions immediately was politically too risky, so the government opted for a more gradual approach. The budget for the battalions was gradually reduced while military control was strengthened. In 1832, after the death of José Maria Carvajal, the office of general inspector disappeared and its powers were transferred to the capitanes generales. After Ferdinand VII's death, the former Voluntarios would play a leading role in the early stages of the civil war and the Carlist movement.

A similar evolution can be observed in the Pontifical States. Under pressure from the Austrian diplomacy and the moderate faction of the Curia, Cardinal Bernetti was forced to consent to a plan for the

Centurioni's reorganization in June 1833, which limited their numbers, established a network of inspectors, and removed secrecy by requiring uniforms. This reorganization, however, did not stem the complaints, and Bernetti's position was eventually weakened until he resigned in January 1836. His successor, Cardinal Lambruschini, was a moderate prelate who relied more on Austria's diplomatic and military support than on popular support. Despite the reluctance of Pope Gregory XVI, who saw in the volunteers the "strongest prop of the throne," the new secretary of state patiently implemented a progressive weakening of the militia. The volunteers were gradually disarmed and placed under the orders of military governors, and purged of their most extremist elements. Lambruschini did not, however, manage to convince Gregory to transform them into a simple reserve force. Before succeeding Gregory on St Peter's throne, Pius IX had been Bishop of Imola in the Marches, where he had dealt firsthand with tensions caused by the volunteers' violence, and was ready to implement a more moderate program of reforms. In July 1847, the Volontari militia was dissolved and replaced by the new Guardie Civiche, from which the working classes were excluded; the new force had a highly centralized organization under the control of the ecclesiastical and military authorities.

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Royalist popular militias were associated with the defense of absolutism and did not survive the defeat of the regimes that gave birth to them (when, as in the Papal States or in Spain, they were not disbanded or marginalized by their own governments). If they played only a minor role in the events that led to the collapse of these regimes, their history demonstrates the capacity of these monarchies to mobilize broad popular support, as well as the limits and impasses in their policies, which were indeed among the very reasons for their collapse. The control of and conflicts over the popular counter-revolution were in themselves issues of controversy and conflict within the conservative camp. The dilemma of combining order with conflict, at the cost of a certain

degree of political violence, divided the conservative elite and may well have paralyzed these regimes' efforts to parry the revolution's blows. If they failed to guarantee the stability of the absolutist regimes that created them, the royalist militias exerted a notable and lasting influence on royalism, helping to structure the royalist movement during the Restoration period and long after, keeping alive the ideal of a popular counter-revolution.

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