

British Colonial Violence in Perak, Sierra Leone and the Sudan

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Michelle Gordon, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis explores three cases of British colonial violence which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century: the Perak War (1875-1876); the Hut Tax Revolt in Sierra Leone (1898-9) and the Anglo-Egyptian War of Reconquest in the Sudan (1896-99). The decision-making processes that led to atrocities being committed are explored, including the importance of communication between London and the periphery and the significance of individual colonial administrators in outbreaks of violence. The ways in which racial prejudices, the advocacy of a British ‘civilising mission’ and British racial ‘superiority’ informed colonial administrators’ decisions on the ground are considered. The thesis examines methods of extreme violence that were routinely utilised throughout the British Empire and include: the use of ‘divide and rule’ tactics; looting; a disregard for international standards of warfare; the use of collective reprisals on civilians and scorched earth policies; starvation tactics on the enemy as well as the wider population. Furthermore, the relevance of British colonial violence within a wider context of European warfare and the genocidal violence of the first half of the twentieth century is examined. There has been a neglect of British colonial atrocities within the historiography of colonial violence and this study demonstrates the ways in which a consideration of instances of British colonial violence can tell us much about the dynamics of extreme violence. The thesis is divided into five sections; first it considers the place of colonial violence within the historiography of the British Empire and genocide studies; the three case studies follow and the final chapter provides an analysis of the thesis’ findings and discusses its relevance for our understanding of both European and colonial violence, thereby placing colonial violence within a wider framework of extreme European violence.

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For J and R

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Chapter 1. The Place of British Colonial Violence within the History of the British Empire	27
Map of the Malay Peninsula	50
Chapter 2. A ‘Little War’ in Perak: British Intervention, 1875-6	51
Map of Sierra Leone	95
Chapter 3. British Suppression of the Hut Tax War in Sierra Leone, 1898-9	96
Map of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan	143
Chapter 4. The British Reconquest of the Sudan, 1896-99	144
Chapter 5. Conclusion: The Dynamics of British Colonial Violence	195
Bibliography	236

Introduction

*We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion.*¹

This study considers incidents of colonial violence and examines the nature of colonial warfare in the British Empire, focusing specifically on the second half of the nineteenth century, therefore within the period of ‘new imperialism’. This thesis comprises of three case studies: the Perak War in Malaya (1875-6); the Hut Tax War in Sierra Leone (1898-9); the Anglo-Egyptian War of Reconquest in the Sudan (1896-99). In each instance, the British used a variety of methods to enforce and maintain their power in these regions. These methods included: the use of ‘divide and rule’ tactics; looting; a disregard for international standards of warfare; the use of collective reprisals on civilians and scorched earth policies; starvation tactics on the enemy as well as the wider population. Throughout, I will investigate issues that contributed to outbreaks of extreme violence, including Britain’s superiority complex, which led to an intricate web of contradictory policies and justifications for imperial oppression. There will be an exploration of the increasing influence of ‘scientific racism’ and the racial prejudices which accompanied the British imperial project and how these developments influenced the manner in which the ‘men on the spot’ dealt with indigenous populations. I will consider the role of these men in shaping events on the ground and the nature of the violence once hostilities broke out.² This includes a consideration of communications between London and the periphery, which, I argue, are of importance in terms of understanding the decision-making processes that led to the use of more extreme tactics of violence. The part played by Britain’s military men in advocating and participating in extreme methods of violence is central to this thesis. I will also address the influence of politicians in the imperial metropole related to the use of extreme violence across the Empire to suppress indigenous opposition.

Unfortunately, it has been too often the case that standard research to date on the British Empire persists in viewing its ‘positive’ elements without much mention of

¹ Hannah Arendt, preface to the first edition, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1976 [1951]), ix.

² On the role of the ‘man on the spot’ in colonial expansion see: Roger D. Long, *The Man on the Spot: Essays on British Empire History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995).

those who suffered.³ There has been, until recently, a marked reluctance amongst imperial historians to engage in discussions regarding the more negative aspects of empire, including the role of extreme violence and genocide. There are of course exceptions and V. G. Kiernan's work is significant in this regard.⁴ The increasing willingness of historians to discuss colonial violence in the context of the British Empire marks the beginning of a much welcome shift in the historiography, but it remains the case that studies of empire and violence based on archival research are lacking. The attention that has been paid to British colonial campaigns is generally limited to traditional and, at times, 'parochial' military history.⁵ Examples of British colonial violence have often been studied in isolation, rather than within a consideration of the wider implications of the role of violence in the British Empire and studies tend to neglect the wider context and how these may be part of a broader pattern of both British and European colonial violence; examples include the suppression of the Indian 'Mutiny';⁶ the Morant Bay Rebellion;⁷ the Boer War;⁸ and the Amritsar Massacre.⁹ Scholars of counterinsurgency are examining the violence of the British Empire focusing on the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936-9, and the end of empire in Malaya

³ Also commented on by Mark Levene, 'Empires, Native Peoples, and Genocide', in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn, 2010 [2008]), 200, n9.

⁴ See: V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: Black Man, Yellow Man, and White Man in the Age of Empire* (London: The Cresset Library, 1988 [1969]); idem, *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960* (London: Fontana and Leicester University Press, 1982); idem, *Imperialism and Its Contradictions*, edited by Harvey J. Kaye (London: Routledge, 1995). See also: Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: Europeans and the Rest of the World, From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Phoenix Press, 2002 [2001]); Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001). On colonial warfare: Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa 1830-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); J. A. de Moor and H. L. Wesseling (eds), *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

⁵ See, Kim A. Wagner, 'Seeing Like a Soldier: The Amritsar Massacre and the Politics of Military History', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 23-37.

⁶ The use of the term 'mutiny' is certainly questionable, however, considering its prevalent use in the historiography, the term will be used throughout this study. See: Kim A. Wagner, "'Treading upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, 218:1 (2013), 159, n2: As Wagner notes, the use of the term denotes the British *representation* of the Indian Uprising of 1857. See also: idem, 'The Marginal Mutiny: The New Historiography of the Indian Uprising of 1857', *History Compass*, 9:10 (2011), 760-66. One exception is: Jill C. Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁷ R. W. Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁸ See for example: Paula Krebs, *Gender, Race and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2010 [1979]).

⁹ For a 'whitewash' approach see: Nick Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011) and Kim A. Wagner's criticisms: Review of Nick Lloyd, *The Amritsar Massacre: The Untold Story of One Fateful Day*, (review no. 1224): <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1224>. Accessed: 30 June 2016.

and Kenya.¹⁰ Indeed, recent research on the violent processes of decolonisation has proved particularly fruitful – based on archival research – and demonstrates that British decolonisation did not reflect a ‘graceful exit’, as the prevailing view suggests but that extreme violence was continually resorted to as Britain clung to power.¹¹ Scholars are increasingly utilising a range of concepts to explore the relationship between European colonialism and violence, including: ‘small wars’/colonial wars, ‘total war’, colonial genocide, extreme violence and atrocities for example. In recent years, genocide scholars have been exploring the relationship between genocide and colonialism and incidents of genocidal violence that are under consideration include Rhodesia, Ireland and Zululand.¹² In particular, a great deal of attention has been paid to the genocidal destruction of the Aborigines in Australia and the literature is extensive.¹³ It is nevertheless the case that historians of the British Empire have failed to incorporate these events into ‘British History’ and, even when historians do acknowledge Australia in Britain’s past, the question of genocide tends to be ignored.¹⁴

¹⁰ For example, Donald Featherstone, *Colonial Small Wars 1837-1901* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1973). The counterinsurgency literature will be discussed in chapter 1.

¹¹ Important studies on the violent processes of British decolonisation include: David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005); Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain’s Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Robert Holland (ed.), *Emergencies and Disorder in the European Empires After 1945* (London: Routledge, 1994); Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame 1945-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

¹² On British colonialism in Ireland see: Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 48-51, 53-57; Robbie McVeigh, ‘“The Balance of Cruelty”: Ireland, Britain and the Logic of Genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10:4 (2008), 541-61; Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 169-212. On genocidal violence in Zululand see: Michael Lieven, ‘“Butchering the Brutes All Over the Place”: Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879’, *History*, 18 (1999), 614-32; for Rhodesia see: Levene, *Rise of the West*, 252-56.

¹³ Of course the use of the term ‘Aborigines’ erroneously suggests that the indigenous populations perceived themselves to be a single entity: see A. Dirk Moses, ‘Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History’, in Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 19. On ‘indigenous’ identities see: Philip D. Morgan, ‘Encounters between British and “Indigenous” Peoples, c. 1500-c. 1800’, in Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (eds), *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 45-49. Key examples that broke the ‘great Australian silence’ (W. H. E. Stanner) include: Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland* (Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1975); Charles Dunford Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society* (Sydney: Penguin, 1983); Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (London: University of Queensland Press, 1982); Colin Tatz, *With Intent to Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide* (London: Verso, 2003); Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain? The Question of Genocide in Australia’s History* (Ringwood: Viking, 2001).

¹⁴ See Richard Gott, ‘Shoot Them to Be Sure’, in Stephen Howe (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 108.

As well as exploring violence within military campaigns, scholars have also been highlighting inherent everyday violence within the colonies, emphasising aspects of British rule such as the failings and contradictions within the colonial legal systems, demonstrating the huge gulf between the principle and practice of British law in colonial rule and therefore emphasising the inherent hypocrisy within the running of the British Empire.¹⁵ Hence, scholars are increasingly addressing the integral role of colonial violence in the Empire and its conquests across the globe; this thesis will discuss the importance of such violence in enforcing and maintaining Britain's authority amongst the native populations. Alongside this academic interest, the last few years have witnessed a resurgence in popular interest regarding the British Empire, which tends to adhere to the longstanding view that the Empire was fundamentally 'a good thing' and was beneficial to both the colonisers and the colonised.¹⁶ Hence, attempts within Britain to delve into its colonial past have remained largely superficial and the aim is furthering British pride, more than any genuine endeavour to encourage open and honest discussion to increase our understanding of all sides of empire.¹⁷ One must hope that new research and interest into Britain's dark colonial history will be encouraged by recent proof that key records were destroyed in the decolonisation process.¹⁸

It is astounding that it has taken so long for scholars to seriously address issues of extreme violence and empire as there is already a legacy of critique in this regard, which is over half a century old. When Hannah Arendt discussed the idea of 'boomerang effects', she was not alone in suggesting links between European colonialism and the advent of fascism and genocide on European soil.¹⁹ Prior to World

¹⁵ See for example: Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Amanda Nettlebeck and Robert Foster, 'Colonial Judiciaries, Aboriginal Protection and South Australia's Policy of Punishing "with Exemplary Severity"', *Australian Historical Studies*, 41:3 (2010), 319-36.

¹⁶ See for example: Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2002) and the accompanying TV series; Jon Wilson, 'Niall Ferguson's Imperial Passion', *History Workshop Journal*, 56 (2003), 175-83.

¹⁷ For one example of superficial attempts to understand the Empire's relationship to violence see: Andrew Marr, 'Empire', *Start the Week*, BBC Radio 4, 10 October 2011, with Richard Gott and Jeremy Paxman *inter alia*.

¹⁸ See: Ian Cobain and Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Sins of Colonialists Lay Concealed for Decades in Secret Archive', *The Guardian*, 18 April 2012.

¹⁹ Arendt, *Origins*, 206, 223. For further discussion see: A. Dirk Moses, 'Hannah Arendt, Imperialisms, and the Holocaust', in Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 72-92; Dan Stone, 'Defending the Plural: Hannah Arendt and Genocide Studies', *New Formations*, 71 (2011), 46-57; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), ch. 2. With regards to a 'boomerang effect' and counterinsurgency see: Sibylle Scheipers, 'Counterinsurgency or Irregular Warfare? Historiography and the Study of "Small Wars"', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:5-6 (2014), 880. Jean-Paul Sartre also

War II and the events of the Holocaust, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg and Vladimir Lenin had already presented the idea that the violence of European imperialism would have repercussions closer to home.²⁰ In the post-war period anti-colonial critics including Aimé Césaire, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre made it clear that for them the connections between the violent destruction of colonialism and Nazi policies were more than obvious.²¹ However, as Dan Stone states, these theorists ‘all made the connection but took it for granted rather than seeing it as the problem they needed to investigate’;²² Arendt subsequently began this task, and her ideas – which were never fully developed – are now being examined and developed further by historians and genocide scholars who are exploring the ways in which the violent practices of imperialism ‘came home’.²³ This connection is perhaps not surprising considering the fact that Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term ‘genocide’ in 1944, very much included colonial violence in his concept of genocide, his definition of which bears a distinct similarity to British colonial policies throughout the Empire at various points.²⁴

Importantly, genocide scholars are placing colonial violence within a wider framework of genocide and mass killing, which also links colonial violence with twentieth-century European warfare.²⁵ This body of work provides us with an approach that considers examples of colonial violence – including those that did not amount to genocide – within a wider framework of extreme violence.²⁶ Rather than taking the term ‘genocide’ to be a legal definition, historians are able to use a more ‘flexible’ approach,

discussed ‘the moment of the boomerang’ in reference to decolonisation: Sartre, preface to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 2001 [1965]), 7. Pascal Grosse, ‘From Colonialism to National Socialism to Postcolonialism: Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism*’, *Postcolonial Studies*, 9:1 (2006), 35-52.

²⁰ See A. Dirk Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 34.

²¹ For example W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa has Played in World History* (New York: Viking, 1947), 23. Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000 [1955]); W. E. B. Du Bois, ‘The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto’, *Jewish Life* (1952), 14-15.

²² Stone, ‘Defending the Plural’, 52.

²³ See, Richard H. King and Dan Stone (eds), *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History: Imperialism, Nation, Race, and Genocide* (New York: Berghahn, 2008).

²⁴ Moses also discusses the similarities: ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide’, 14. See, Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

²⁵ See: Cathie Carmichael, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁶ See Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, ‘The Study of Mass Murder and Genocide’, in Gellately and Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10.

viewing extreme violence as part of a historical process, which may or may not become genocidal.²⁷ The aim of this thesis is not to prove that genocide occurred in each instance, as this was clearly not the case. However, it is clear that there *are* links between incidents of colonial violence and genocide, and whilst the events under examination here did not result in outright genocide they can be seen as part of a wider framework of extreme violence. The present study examines the differences and similarities in the utilisation of violence in each case and explores the dynamics of British colonial violence in order to determine the levels of violence that occurred and examine the factors in a colonial context that affected the potential use of extreme violence. Imperial historians are reluctant to discuss the work of genocide scholars, however, their work clearly presents just one approach to the ways in which we can explain colonial violence. This thesis considers a range of key concepts and, by focusing on specific cases of colonial violence, it will seek to identify key factors that enable us to understand why extreme violence was utilised and which factors on the ground made excessive colonial violence more likely. A range of scholars, including Dirk Moses, are examining such racial violence ‘as part of the same flow of events that led to the eruption of violence in Europe in 1914 and again a quarter of a century later’.²⁸ This study argues that British colonial violence was part of an important legacy of European violence which ‘came home’ in the twentieth century and hence it will illuminate issues which are also important for furthering our understanding of the extreme and, at times, genocidal violence which later took place in twentieth-century Europe.

Much debate regarding the relationship between genocide and colonial violence is a result of a consideration of Imperial Germany’s actions of extreme violence in the colonies and possible connections to the Holocaust.²⁹ Clearly, it was logical that

²⁷ See, Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 215-7; Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 [2005]), 95. For the United Nation’s definition see, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 9 December 1948: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/357?OpenDocument>. Accessed 5 July 2017. For discussion of the troubled meaning of ‘genocide’ see for example: Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume I: The Meaning of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008 [2005]); Ann Curthoys and John Docker, ‘Defining Genocide’, in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 [2008]), 9-41; Gellately and Kiernan, ‘The Study of Mass Murder’, 19.

²⁸ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust’, in Moses and Dan Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2007), 178.

²⁹ Notably, Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39:2 (2005), 197-219; Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘Kolonialer Genozid? Vom Nutzen und Nachteil einer historischen Kategorie für

scholars initially focused their attention on German colonialism as a tool for understanding the genocidal violence that ensued across Europe, focusing on Nazi destruction and the Holocaust in particular; it is however a natural and necessary progression that European colonialism be considered in order to help us understand the European traditions of violence which provide the background to the genocidal violence of the twentieth century.³⁰ As Stone has stated: ‘Nazi genocidal policies were, at least at first, a continuation of policies undertaken by the European imperial powers.’³¹ However, historians are demonstrating the ways in which German colonial violence was consistent with the brutalities of other European empires.³² A key figure in the ‘continuity thesis’ debate is Jürgen Zimmerer who has highlighted the connections between German colonial policies in Africa – particularly those targeting the Herero and Nama – with Nazi policies in ‘the East’. This approach has received criticism, notably from Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, who argue that neither ‘the scope, nature, [nor] objectives of the violence unleashed in German Southwest Africa constituted genuinely “new” or exceptional levels of violence previously unknown to European colonialism’.³³ Whilst this statement is correct, they also argue that: ‘National Socialism and the German war of annihilation constituted a *break* with European traditions of colonialism rather than a continuation’.³⁴ However, it will be argued that European colonial violence was much more extreme than Gerwarth and Malinowski seem to think, and twentieth-century European violence therefore represents a *continuation* of traditions of colonial violence. Their criticisms fundamentally highlight the need for more empirically based, synchronic comparisons of colonial violence;³⁵ the present research can be seen as part of this endeavour.

It is clear that British and German colonial violence did not always result in genocide, but that extreme violence was routinely utilised. Further comparisons are needed in order to understand these events within the traditions of European colonial

eine Globalgeschichte’, in *Von Windhoek nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis zwischen Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009), 196-221.

³⁰ See: Ido de Haan, ‘Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide: The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust’, *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 125:2–3 (2010), 301-27.

³¹ Dan Stone, ‘Britannia Waives the Rules: British Imperialism and Holocaust Memory’, in Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2006), 174.

³² For a comparative approach see, Thoralf Klein und Frank Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege: Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006).

³³ Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, ‘Hannah Arendt’s Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz’, *Central European History*, 42 (2009), 284.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 285: emphasis in original.

³⁵ Stone, *Histories*, 235.

violence. This research has further significance for work that appears to take the approach of a new colonial *Sonderweg*³⁶ and arguments regarding the extent to which German colonial violence can be understood as ‘exceptional’.³⁷ Chapter 5 explores these debates and addresses the role of British military doctrine in the use of extreme violence in colonial warfare and challenges the idea that Britain is somehow more disposed to ‘peaceableness’.³⁸ By addressing such issues of ‘exceptionalism’ we are faced with additional implications regarding our understanding of twentieth-century European history and are presented with the question: ‘Why are the countries with the longer and (over the course of centuries) most violent colonial traditions *not* identical with those countries that unleashed the greatest degree of racist destruction within Europe after 1918?’³⁹ It is clear that Britain was concerned with issues similar to those preoccupying its continental counterparts regarding the health of the nation, perceived decline and ‘degeneration’, as well as an increased militarism at the *fin de siècle*.⁴⁰ As Stone points out, for Victorians, British ‘superiority’ had been self-evident regarding the successes of industrialisation and the strength of the British Empire, however, for Edwardians fears of decline were emerging, as I discuss below.⁴¹ Population policies and social reform were increasingly viewed as issues of national security and national efficiency was equated with military efficiency.⁴² The relative stability of British politics and parliamentary democracy throughout this period served to ultimately keep extremist elements at bay; however, it is all too easy to disregard these elements of British society during this time and view the events – and Britain’s apparent stability – as somehow ‘inevitable’.⁴³ Pascal Grosse argues that the effects of colonialism within Europe can be viewed ‘in a way that defies applying immediate lines of continuity’;⁴⁴ the effects of Britain’s violent colonialism can be identified in the escalation of intra-

³⁶ Ibid., 237.

³⁷ See for example: Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

³⁸ See ibid. Jon Lawrence, ‘Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 557-89.

³⁹ Donald Bloxham et al., ‘Europe in the World: Systems and Cultures of Violence’, in Bloxham and Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence*, 21-22; see also: Gerwarth and Malinowski, ‘Hannah Arendt’s Ghosts’, 289.

⁴⁰ On the transmission of this militarism and justifications for empire see: Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 51-52.

⁴¹ See: Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 116.

⁴² See: Anne Summers, ‘Militarism in Britain before the Great War’, *History Workshop Journal*, 2:1 (1976), 112.

⁴³ See Stone, *Breeding Superman*, 2-4.

⁴⁴ Grosse, ‘From Colonialism to National Socialism’, 46.

European violence and the military campaigns of World War I. Chapter 5 addresses these issues in more detail.

Considerations of colonial warfare in a British context demonstrate the imbalance in relations between the ‘coloniser’ and the ‘colonised’ in the Empire because of Britain’s vastly larger number of troops and supplies, in the face of which the native populations could not hold out long and certainly not without suffering innocent casualties. This imbalance was underpinned by the imperial ideology which presented the indigenous population as ‘barbaric’ and thus not subject to the ‘standards’ of European warfare.⁴⁵ However, examples of colonial violence demonstrate both the use of such dichotomies to justify colonial policies and how meaningless such categories are. Scholars have documented the development of racial thought both in the metropole and on the periphery, demonstrating the centrality of racial stereotypes and the view of the ‘natives’ as ‘savage’, ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’, as opposed to the ‘civilised’ and ‘advanced’ Europeans. The alleged inherent ‘superiority’ of Europeans was provided as justification for the imperial project and the fulfilment of a ‘moral duty’ within which the native populations were seen as irresponsible and incapable of looking after themselves.⁴⁶

An approach that dichotomises behaviour as ‘civilised’ or ‘barbaric’ is still in evidence in the continuing Eurocentrism that tends to ignore European colonialism and the violent legacy of western ‘civilisation’ in the non-European world.⁴⁷ As Stone highlights in relation to the Holocaust, ‘popular narratives’ of the genocide also rely on this dichotomy as ‘a belief in the separation between civilisation and barbarism’.⁴⁸ As I have highlighted, this dichotomy was utilised by Europeans to justify the colonial violence and suppression of non-Europeans.⁴⁹ The idea that ‘civilisation’ could not be simultaneously barbaric was advocated within a colonial context in order to justify colonial rule maintained by force and to differentiate the ‘civilised’ colonisers from the ‘savages’ they sought to colonise.⁵⁰ The use of such binary opposites is a common

⁴⁵ See: Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy: Empire and the Ideology of Selective Extermination’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 58:2 (2012), 159-80.

⁴⁶ See Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999),

⁴⁷ Eurocentrism is a criticism levied at Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 2002 [1944]); A. Dirk Moses, ‘Genocide and Modernity’, in Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide*, 165.

⁴⁸ Dan Stone, ‘Modernity and Violence: Theoretical Reflections on the *Einsatzgruppen*’ in Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*, 2.

⁴⁹ Moses, ‘Genocide and Modernity’, 179.

⁵⁰ See Kiernan, *Imperialism and Its Contradictions*, 159.

feature in the justification of violent and genocidal policies and the processes of dehumanisation that accompanied them and will be relevant throughout the present work, particularly in relation to the ways in which this line of thinking informed the actions of the men on the spot and British troops.⁵¹

Racial categorisation was part of a wider trend of European racism which marked the second half of the nineteenth century. Race thinking was deeply affected by the developments in ‘scientific’ racism and anthropology in the second half of the nineteenth century, which were given credence through practices such as anthropometry. Important influences include the ‘extinction discourse’,⁵² which questioned the extent to which native populations were capable of being ‘civilised’ and advocated that the ‘extinction of primitive races’⁵³ was an inevitability that European colonialism only served to speed up.⁵⁴ Charles Darwin is an important figure regarding ‘extinction discourse’ and he claimed that: ‘[w]hen civilised nations come into contact with barbarism the struggle is short’.⁵⁵ Clearly this line of thinking was convenient for advocates of European imperialism and as Patrick Brantlinger has highlighted, the ‘fantasy of auto-genocide or racial suicide is an extreme version of blaming the victim, which throughout the last three centuries has helped to rationalise or occlude the genocidal aspects of European conquest and colonisation.’⁵⁶

Regarding ‘racial’ concerns within Europe, ‘degeneration’ theory was key, although as Daniel Pick has shown there was ‘no one stable referent to which [it] applied’, but it was

⁵¹ See Alex Hinton, ‘Savages, Subjects, and Sovereigns: Conjunctions of Modernity, Genocide, and Colonialism’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 440-60.

⁵² See: Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). On British anthropology see: Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Talal Asad (ed.), *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Ithaca Press, 1973); George W. Stocking Jr., *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology 1888-1951* (London: Athlone Press, 1995). For Britain and racism see: Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Paul B. Rich, *Prospero’s Return? Historical Essays on Race, Culture and British Society* (London: Hansib, 1994).

⁵³ Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, 1. See also, Tony Barta, ‘Mr. Darwin’s Shooters: On Natural Selection and the Naturalising of Genocide’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39:2 (2005), 116-37.

⁵⁶ Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, 2. For a discussion of liberalism, violence and evil, as well as examples of nineteenth-century engagement with the concepts of ‘civilisation’ and ‘barbarism’, see: Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe (eds), *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c.1830-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). On liberalism and empire see also: Richard Seymour, *The Liberal Defence of Murder* (London: Verso, 2012 [2008]). On ‘The New Liberal Imperialism’ see, Richard Drayton, ‘Where Does the World Historian Write From? Moral Objectivity, Moral Conscience and the Past and Present of Imperialism’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46:3 (2011), 671-85.

instead a fantastic kaleidoscope of concerns and objects ... from cretinism to alcoholism to syphilis, from peasantry to urban working class, bourgeoisie to aristocracy, madness to theft, individual to crowd, anarchism to feminism, population decline to population increase.⁵⁷

Moreover, social Darwinism and other related theories at this time were essential in justifying imperialism, although ‘the spectre of internal degradation continually haunted it’.⁵⁸ Along with a belief in progress, as Mike Hawkins highlights, there was ‘a widespread fear of moral and physical degeneration, and a sense of decadence and the imminent demise of Western civilisation’.⁵⁹ Hence, Western European powers simultaneously espoused their superiority over ‘savages’ devoid of ‘civilisation’ in the colonies and voiced concerns regarding the ‘degeneracy’ and potential demise of its own population. European concerns of ‘degeneration’ did not just affect considerations regarding the metropole, but were also highly relevant for European colonialism. These concerns highlighted the ‘civilised’ versus ‘barbaric’ dichotomy and challenged Europe’s perception of itself. In particular, there was a fear that European civilisers would themselves become “native” – either that or they would perish altogether’.⁶⁰ Hence, racial theories were also linked to fears regarding the health of the imperial metropole. British eugenics also supported stereotypes of indigenous populations including an alleged propensity for war and apparent desensitisation for example, as well as encouraging ‘the English gentleman’s sense of his racial superiority’;⁶¹ this way of thinking proved integral to justifications for colonial expansion and the extreme violence that accompanied it. Significantly, there was an increased fear that Britain’s ability to defend her Empire was under threat. Increasing concerns regarding the emerging naval power of Germany, Britain’s new ‘prime national enemy’, also led to panic and Britain remained the only European country without a standing army.⁶² Fears regarding a national decline came to a head with the costly and controversial Boer

⁵⁷ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-c. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵⁹ Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.

⁶⁰ Pagden, *Peoples and Empires*, 151.

⁶¹ H. N. Hutchinson, J. W. Gregory and R. Hydeken, *The Living Races of Mankind* cited in Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18.

⁶² Jörn Leonhard, ‘Nations in Arms and Imperial Defence – Continental Models, the British Empire and its Military before 1914’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 296; James Sheehan, ‘What it Means to be a State: States and Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 1 (2003), 14.

War.⁶³ Concerns and prejudices present within Europe regarding ‘inferior Europeans’ also provided ‘ready-made categories’ of stereotypes for the indigenous populations of the colonies to fit into.⁶⁴ These fears were heightened by the great unease caused in response to the rise of nationalism, anti-feminism, socialism and mass politics. Within England, the developments and debates regarding these theories, when taken to the extreme, can be identified as part of the ‘extremes of Englishness’, which contributed to an ‘indigenous proto-fascism’ in the country.⁶⁵ ‘Scientific’ racism was used to create a system of racial hierarchies and it was used to further explain the respective civility and primitivity of European males and the ‘savages’ and explore their ‘civilising’ potential. Science was central to the colonial project and was used to legitimise its inherent racism, the ‘language of progress’ as well as *fin de siècle* fears of racial ‘degeneration’.⁶⁶

Developments in European racism came at a time of much change and continual pressure for British imperialism in which sporadic resistance to British rule appeared time and again. These pressures were further exacerbated by the ‘Scramble for Africa’, the related period of ‘new imperialism’ and challenges to Britain’s hegemony across the globe. As Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler highlight, the ‘new’ imperialism was no less coercive or brutal than the old form; rather, Europeans emphasised that their brutality would now be based on:

...attempts to build structures capable of reproducing and extending themselves; stable government replacing the violent, conflictual tyrannies of indigenous polities, orderly commerce and wage labour replacing the chaos of slaving and raiding....⁶⁷

With these renewed pressures, the British had little tolerance for indigenous opposition and greatly feared any indication of weakness. The present research aims to ascertain the extent to which these incidents of colonial violence were ‘part and parcel of a much wider landscape of *fin de siècle* extreme violence perpetrated by European imperialists

⁶³ Summers, ‘Militarism in Britain’, 111.

⁶⁴ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 28.

⁶⁵ Stone, *Breeding Superman*, 3. For links between these concerns and the rise of ‘a domestic form of fascism’ in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century see: Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012 [2003]), 159-60.

⁶⁶ See: Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski, ‘Encounters of Empire: Methodological Approaches’, in Barth and Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870-1930* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 10.

⁶⁷ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Introduction: Tensions of Empire: Colonial Control and Visions of Rule’, *American Ethnologist*, 16:4 (1989), 618.

as they met increasingly tenacious native resistance'.⁶⁸ This study will be conducted within the context of these debates and a consideration of racial prejudices will be essential.

This thesis explores the case studies in the context of what they can tell us about the wider history of the British Empire and its relationship with violence. However, it is important to emphasise that these events will also be considered in their own right. It is essential that individual examples of British colonial violence be addressed and acknowledged by historians; given the ubiquity of violence across the Empire, smaller instances of violence or British campaigns in 'small wars' are often forgotten or ignored.⁶⁹ Colonial warfare devastated indigenous communities as a result of the tactics utilised on both sides. This thesis explores the form that colonial warfare took and the role of conditions on the ground; Charles Callwell's work on 'small wars' will be essential to these considerations. This study takes a comparative approach, which enables an exploration of the similarities between each case, thus allowing us to establish important factors that were inherent within colonial contexts and which made extreme violence more probable; the extent to which we can identify a pattern of violence within the British Empire will also be explored. This thesis sets out to examine the role of both colonial administrators and politicians in the metropole in extreme colonial violence and addresses the part that politicians in London played in seeking to either encourage or discourage such methods. I argue that Britain's military men ultimately had a wide range of violent methods at their disposal and will explore the factors on the ground that determined the extent of the violence that was used. These campaigns were critiqued and represented in a variety of ways at home and on the periphery through newspaper reports and parliamentary debates. Whether such debates affected the use of extreme violence will be considered. The relationship between the violent actions of the British troops and racial prejudice is central to this thesis. The case studies will also be assessed as part of a wider context of a catalogue of British suppression; I argue that the violent demise of the Empire was consistent with earlier practices of suppression and the flouting of European standards of warfare in a colonial context. Chapter 5 argues that rather than viewing the British Empire as 'exceptional', this colonial violence fits within a framework of *European* colonial violence.

⁶⁸ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 3.

⁶⁹ Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]). For a consideration of small wars and their relevance to contemporary conflicts see: A. Hamish Ion and E. J. Errington, *Great Powers and Little Wars: The Limits of Power* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1993).

A comparative approach will prove useful despite the apparent differences between the three cases: all three countries were at different stages in the British colonisation process; the campaign for the reconquest of the Sudan was a more 'traditional' war in the sense that the Mahdists represented clearly-defined enemies, as opposed to the guerrilla warfare undertaken in the Hut Tax Revolt in Sierra Leone, for example. However, it is the similarities in the British military campaigns and the behaviour patterns regarding the administration prior to, during, and after the outbreaks of violence which prove telling and enable us to explore British patterns of reaction to perceived challenges to its authority. Furthermore, a comparative study highlights the extent to which the brutal and excessive violence, which was carried out during British colonial campaigns, was an accepted part of colonial warfare, even if official declarations endeavoured to suggest otherwise; through practices such as scorched earth and collective punishment we see the blurring of lines between civilians and combatants as targets in colonial warfare.

On the surface, the three case studies appear to be quite different in scope and scale. Nevertheless, British troops utilised extreme violence in all three campaigns and this thesis examines the extent of this extreme violence in each case. Moreover, this study addresses the factors that led to outbreaks of violence in the first place. I argue that the fundamental imbalance in relations between the coloniser and the colonised created inherently violent situations. As the men on the spot sought to increase British influence on a local level, issues that caused tensions between the colonial administrations and indigenous leaders include the abolition of slavery and the implementation of tax systems. British approaches to these issues demonstrate a failure to understand (or even consider) local customs and traditions and the disastrous effects that the implementation of these policies could have. Furthermore, Britain used the issue of slavery to 'prove' preconceived notions of the 'natives' and their alleged 'propensity' towards 'barbarism'. The approach and attitudes of colonial administrators on the ground were informed by the advocacy of the imperial project as a 'civilising mission' and the belief that colonialism was a 'moral duty'. Indeed, more than a moral duty, the imperial project of the British Empire was viewed as God-given. Thus Christianity was also utilised as a justification for the suppression of 'inferior'

peoples.⁷⁰ British imperialism proved a fatal combination for the indigenous populations who fell under its rule and the history of the British Empire remains one of exploitation, disease, starvation, forced resettlement, political suppression, racism and land-hunger.

The sheer size and complexity of the British Empire makes identifying the relationship between violence on the periphery and actions in the imperial metropole fairly problematic. In fact, it is difficult to speak of the ‘British Empire’ as one whole entity at all.⁷¹ The colonial system in itself and the degrees of governance that Britain exercised were confusing and often overlapped. Policies in London and in the colonies could differ enormously and were often highly contradictory; official policy was often at odds with the real conditions on the periphery. By conducting case studies, this research tackles these issues and will therefore bring meaning to what is a large and complex subject area; by focusing on specific cases of colonial violence in detail, key factors can be identified that help us to understand why such violence occurred and place it within a broader framework of British colonial violence and warfare.

The three case studies have been chosen in consideration of their timing, occurring as they did in the second half of the nineteenth century; by this point the willingness to use extreme force within the British Empire had been repeatedly demonstrated in the context of both settler and ‘administrative colonialism’⁷² – rather than explore the ‘usual suspect’ of settler violence this study considers the extreme violence of British military campaigns in establishing and maintaining colonial administrations.⁷³ Examples of extreme British violence include the destruction of the indigenous population of Tasmania; suppression of the Indian ‘Mutiny’; and violence in Ireland.⁷⁴ The context of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 is particularly significant and has

⁷⁰ Stone, *Breeding Superman*, 112: Regarding the role of religion in the Indian Mutiny see: Crispin Bates and Marina Carter, ‘Religion and Retribution in the Indian Rebellion of 1857’, *Leidschrift: Historisch Tijdschrift*, 24:1 (2009), 51-68.

⁷¹ Peter Burroughs, ‘Imperial Institutions and the Government of the Empire’, in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 171; see also: Thomas R. Metcalf, ‘All Colonialisms May Be Different, But in the End All Are the Same’, *Ab Imperio*, 3 (2012), 43.

⁷² McVeigh rightly emphasises the relevance of the two regarding genocidal violence: “‘The Balance of Cruelty’”, 555.

⁷³ Kim A. Wagner, ‘A Scattering of Death: Violence and the Colonial Rule of Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency’, *History Workshop Journal* (forthcoming 2018), 2. My thanks to the author for allowing me to view this work.

⁷⁴ Although strangely, treating the history of Ireland and Britain as ‘colonial’ has been disputed and the colonial paradigm challenged: for more see McVeigh, “‘The Balance of Cruelty’”, 541-61; Bender, *1857 Indian Uprising*, 14-17. For works on genocidal violence in Ireland see n13. For debates regarding genocide in Tasmania see: Ann Curthoys, ‘Genocide in Tasmania: The History of an Idea’, in Moses

been described as an ‘ideological turning-point’ in Britain’s approach to the Empire.⁷⁵ By focusing on colonial violence in this period we may challenge the viewpoint of ‘prevalent myths regarding the long peace from 1815 to 1914’ in Europe and as Eric Weitz argues, ‘war has been shown to be endemic to the nineteenth century, especially when one moves out of a Eurocentric stance’.⁷⁶ Indeed, as Sheldon Anderson rightly states, ‘From the perspective of a Pole, a disenfranchised European, or an Indian, the century was not a “long peace” but a “long war”’.⁷⁷ This misconception is baffling in the face of evidence regarding the scale and severity of colonial warfare throughout the nineteenth century and highlights the need for more attention on these colonial conflicts.⁷⁸

While the historiographies of the three cases studies differ in volume and approach, it remains the case that there has been little attempt to place these examples of colonial violence within a wider framework of violence in the British Empire. Considerations of other colonial violence will also be essential to this work, thus providing the context within which these events occurred. Brutal tactics were routinely utilised across the British Empire and scholars are exploring transnational learning across European empires, as well as the use of ‘knowledge’ regarding mentalities and tactics of violence within empires;⁷⁹ the British Empire was central to this system of emulation. The case studies focus on just three of many British colonial conflicts that occurred throughout the nineteenth century and which have, at times, been overlooked by historians. Further examination is required within the context of colonial violence and the British Empire, which I argue, provided one of the ‘training grounds’ for European violence in the twentieth century.⁸⁰

(ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 229-52; Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

⁷⁵ John M. Mackenzie, ‘Empire and Metropolitan Cultures’, in Porter (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire*, 280.

⁷⁶ Eric D. Weitz, ‘The Modernity of Genocides: War, Race, and Revolution in the Twentieth Century’, in Gellately and Kiernan (eds), *Specter of Genocide*, 55.

⁷⁷ Sheldon Anderson, ‘Metternich, Bismarck, and the Myth of the “Long Peace,” 1815-1914’, *Peace & Change*, 32:3 (2007), 301.

⁷⁸ See also Ian Kershaw, ‘War and Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe’, *Contemporary European History*, 14:1 (2005), 109. Robert Gerwarth states that ‘ultra-violence’ was ‘largely absent in Europe between the end of the Thirty Years War and 1914’, acknowledging, however, that it was practised by Europeans in the colonies: Gerwarth, ‘The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War’, *Past and Present*, 200:1 (2008), 197.

⁷⁹ As highlighted in James McMillan, ‘War’, in Bloxham and Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence*, 40.

⁸⁰ Bloxham et al., ‘Europe in the World’, 19.

The objectives of my research, as stated above, are to be achieved through the investigation of British parliamentary papers and government policies, parliamentary debates, local colonial rule (and how it could contradict official government policies), newspaper propaganda and justifications for imperialism, as well as the advocacy of race theories and prejudices. Owing to the lack of research in this subject area, primary sources will be essential to this study. Within my research, sources from regimental archives are vitally important, but need to be considered with care. This study certainly does not take a 'regimental approach', which seeks to preserve and defend the memory of individual regiments, 'ignoring ignoble episodes'.⁸¹ Rather, this thesis focuses on what British colonial officers and troops (as well as indigenous troops working with them) 'did' on the ground in these wars – based on primary sources.⁸²

Contemporary accounts of the conflicts are highly telling with respect to racial prejudice and colonial military practices. Official 'colonial' sources such as parliamentary papers provide clear examples of the colonial mindset and the ways in which the colonists' actions and decisions were informed by their prejudices regarding the indigenous population and how they perceived their own 'civilising' mission. Key to this research are the communications between the metropole and the periphery and the nature of this communication is particularly relevant; the delays that were inherent within the system as a result of the technology of the time meant that the men on the ground often acted on their own initiative in the face of potential unrest, or exploited this time delay, as the case may be, to enforce their own objectives in the region. Official documents are typically shrouded in vague 'colonial' language and often tell us little about the nature and outcomes of violence in the British Empire.⁸³ As Cooper and Stoler remind us, 'colonial archives ... are cultural artifacts, built on institutional structures that erased certain kinds of knowledge, secreted some, and valorised others' and one cannot simply 'do colonial history'.⁸⁴ Hence, archives are not simply 'sites of

⁸¹ Huw Bennett, 'Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21:3 (2010), 460. See, Thomas R. Mockaitis, 'The Minimum Force Debate: Contemporary Sensibilities Meet Imperial Practice', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 765; on 'The Use and Abuse of Military History' see: Michael Howard, *The Causes of Wars And Other Essays*, 2nd edn (London: Temple Smith, 1983), 188–97. See also: Wagner, 'Scattering of Death', 1–14. I will also not seek to express 'moral condemnation' in reference to those involved in these campaigns: Wagner, 'Seeing Like a Soldier', 30.

⁸² Bennett, 'Minimum Force', 469.

⁸³ On the 'unwritten' in the colonial archive see: Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3.

⁸⁴ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in Cooper and Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 17–18: emphasis in original.

knowledge retrieval'⁸⁵ and the primary evidence used throughout this study will be considered with care.

An alternative 'colonial' source, which is integral to this study and which is more revealing regarding the realities of colonial violence and its effects is the private correspondence of participating British colonial troops; their accounts are central to providing the details of the conflicts, which have been obscured behind the shrouded language of official documents. While subjective documents, private papers are nevertheless revealing in relation to the extreme violence that was carried out against the indigenous populations and the ways in which the British participants of this violence perceived their own actions, as well as those of their comrades and superiors. Furthermore, soldiers' accounts reveal how they framed their understanding of these brutal events within the racial language of empire and used this language and way of thinking as a means to justify their own participation in the violence. As these sources demonstrate, the viewpoint of the 'natives' as 'inferior' is key, as is their perception of their own role as 'superior', and also as 'liberators' of the indigenous peoples; these viewpoints were central to British troops' willingness to undertake extreme methods of violence against the 'enemy', which often included the wider population. The private papers of individual soldiers are also highly revealing in relation to the conditions and realities of colonial campaigns in the nineteenth century and the difficult circumstances in which colonial troops often found themselves; this study explores the extent to which these difficulties also played a role in the escalation of violence. The private papers that are used here include those that have been utilised by a range of historians to others that have been hitherto absent from the historical record. Those sources which have been utilised elsewhere – particularly the soldiers' accounts of the Battle of Omdurman in the Sudan reconquest campaign – will be 'reread' in reference to the extreme violence utilised by the British in their colonial endeavours and within a consideration of the wider context of patterns of violence.

The majority of the primary sources utilised in this study are therefore 'colonial' in nature and fundamentally adhered to the principles of the British imperial project; this includes newspaper articles, which will also be essential to this study, although in some cases these sources also offered criticism of Britain's colonial policies and methods of violence. Importantly, these criticisms were still framed within the

⁸⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 87. See also: Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fiction, and the Writing of History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005).

‘civilised’ versus ‘barbaric’ dichotomy, as were philanthropic considerations regarding the suffering of the ‘colonised’, often viewing indigenous populations as helpless and childlike.⁸⁶ While this study primarily focuses on the actions, motivations and mentalities of British colonialism and its protagonists, it also considers the perspectives of the indigenous populations whenever the available sources allow. As a result of a lack of sources from the perspective of the ‘colonised’, an in-depth discussion of the experiences of the indigenous populations cannot be provided, nevertheless the agency of the indigenous peoples is present as colonial officials in London and on the periphery, as well as the military, reacted to the actions of those they sought to conquer; while the sources used may, for the most part, be ‘colonial’, we can detect the sound of ‘indigenous voices’ throughout.⁸⁷ Furthermore, while the primary sources concern themselves little with the suffering of the indigenous populations as a result of the actions of British colonial troops – whether through scorched earth, blockades or bombardment – the consequences are implicit throughout, and the present study seeks to draw on this information, wherever possible. Each case study addresses the challenges regarding the available sources and provides an assessment of the historiographies of the conflicts. Clearly, as Stoler describes, ‘archives are not simply accounts of actions or records of what people thought happened’;⁸⁸ issues that will be discussed include the partisan nature of colonial sources and the ways in which they often obscure more than they reveal.

Secondary sources will also be highly important to this study and the historical context is essential; in this regard this investigation relies on the findings of a variety of subject areas, most notably: the histories of the individual regions; imperial history; studies of violence and genocide. Studies of other British colonial violence will prove instructive throughout the present work, providing the historical context in which extreme colonial violence became an accepted part of colonial military campaigns, as well as providing direct links through the presence of significant individuals in different colonial conflicts.⁸⁹ Furthermore, a note on nomenclature: I tend to use the names of places and names as used most frequently within the colonial documents. This may not

⁸⁶ See Jahoda, *Images of Savages*, 141-51.

⁸⁷ See: Steven Serels, ‘Feasting on Famines: Food Insecurity and the Making of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1883-1956’ (unpublished PhD thesis, McGill University, 2012), 32-33.

⁸⁸ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 4.

⁸⁹ See for example: Gustav H. K. Deveneaux, ‘Sierra Leone and South Africa’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 57:4 (1987), 572-75.

be ideal from the point of view of representing the indigenous peoples, but serves to provide greater consistency when citing direct from the sources.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: chapter 1 addresses the place of colonial violence within the historiography of the British Empire, further exploring some of the historiographical issues indicated above, including the emphasis in Britain on the extreme violence of others at the expense of investigating the country's own violent past. This chapter also expands on issues raised heretofore regarding the use of categories including 'small wars' and 'total war', as well as discussing the importance of genocide studies to understandings of colonial violence. The three case studies follow and an analysis of my findings is provided in chapter 5, discussing how my research further enhances our understanding of European violence, the nature of colonial warfare throughout the British Empire, and Britain's relationship with extreme violence. Issues of particular importance include the context of the case studies and what they tell us about the nature of the British Empire more broadly and how this extreme violence 'fits' in terms of perceptions of British 'benevolence' and the alleged 'exceptional' violence of other empires, most notably, that of Wilhelminian Germany. Such endeavours to explain colonial violence within a wider framework of extreme European violence remain important and their significance is not limited to furthering our historical understanding, but also remain essential today, as others have concluded: 'the colonial mentalities of discrimination and violence' have not disappeared and 'Empire is therefore not over, but remains a territory of the mind and a source of violence in contemporary Europe'.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Bloxham et al., 'Europe in the World', 22-23.

Chapter 1

The Place of British Colonial Violence within the History of the British Empire

This chapter considers the ways in which historians of empire and genocide scholars have explored the role of violence in the British Empire, suggesting the relevance of the present study for the historiography of imperial history and studies of violence and genocide, as well as British history more broadly. I will address key debates related to Britain's history of colonial violence including those attached to discussions regarding a 'British way in counterinsurgency', the violent processes of decolonisation and relevant developments in genocide studies. The key concepts and definitions for this study will be introduced, notably 'colonial warfare' and 'extreme violence'. Imperial historians have highlighted a resurgence of interest in the history of empire and Tony Ballantyne asserts that the interdisciplinary approach that has developed in the last few years stands in marked contrast to 'a once moribund field that seemed near obsolescence in the late 1970s and early 1980s', and which, he continues 'has re-emerged as an important and rejuvenated academic field and even a topic of public concern.'¹ Stephen Howe highlights that previously there had been an implication that to study empires 'meant being in favour or nostalgic for them.'² There have been a number of stages in the development of British imperial history, one of which is the proclamation of a 'new imperial history'.³ New approaches to the British Empire include: literary, gender, cultural and postcolonial studies, as well as anthropology, questions of imperial 'networks' and 'knowledge' to name a few.⁴ Previously neglected aspects of the British Empire are therefore being explored and the importance of race, gender, sexuality and class to our understandings of empire emphasised.

Antoinette Burton comments that this 'imperial turn' 'is not a turn toward empire so much as a *critical return* to the connections between metropole and colony,

¹ Tony Ballantyne, 'Introduction: Debating Empire', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 3:1 (2002): <https://muse.jhu.edu>. Accessed 8 June 2016. Sarah Stockwell (ed.), preface, *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), xi.

² Stephen Howe, 'Introduction: New Imperial Histories', in Howe (ed.), *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴ See for example: Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (London: Polity, 2002); Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (London: University of California Press, 2002).

race and nation'.⁵ Rather controversially, however, David Cannadine chose to underplay the role of race and its importance to the imperial project and his work has been criticised for his blatant disregard of the vast amount of research which has already proven the importance of race in the British Empire.⁶ Studies of race and racism and its links with the British Empire have contributed greatly to our understanding of how racism was inherent within the colonial system and its relevance for the metropole, as well as the periphery. Examples include Bill Schwarz's consideration of the 're-racialisation' of the metropole in the period 1956-68; Schwarz argues that the decolonisation process led to colonial fantasies of a lost 'racial utopia'⁷ and he concludes that not only was race integral to the empire, but that 'if the colonies worked through race then, by extension, so did the metropole'.⁸ Hence, scholars are exploring the ways in which the metropole and the periphery were intimately connected.⁹

The resurgence in attention to the British Empire has also been reflected in more popular interest, as demonstrated by the number of books and television programmes on the subject.¹⁰ This popular interest in the British Empire tends to adhere to the longstanding view that the Empire was fundamentally 'a good thing' and was beneficial to both the colonisers and the colonised.¹¹ Advocates of empire, such as Niall Ferguson,

⁵ Antoinette Burton, *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 2; emphasis in original. See also: James Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic during the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

⁶ For criticism of David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2001) see: Dan Stone, 'Britannia Waives the Rules: British Imperialism and Holocaust Memory', in Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2006), 181; Richard Gott, 'White Wash', *The Guardian*, 5 May 2001 and for further analysis see *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 3:1 (2002), special issue: From Orientalism to Ornamentalism: Empire and Difference in History; Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, 'Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire', in Hall and Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 14.

⁷ Bill Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Cf. John M. Mackenzie, 'Empire and Metropolitan Cultures', Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 270-93; Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005). See also: Antoinette Burton, Review of Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*, *Victorian Studies*, 47:4 (2005), 626-28 and Porter's response to critics in 'Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36:1 (2008), 101-17; Schwarz, *White Man's World*, 14-17, 31. Regarding the impact of decolonisation and representations of colonial wars see: Wendy Webster, "'There'll Always Be an England": Representations of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948-1968', *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), 557-84.

¹⁰ See Hall and Rose, 'Introduction', 5.

¹¹ For example: Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2002).

seek to strengthen justifications for Britain's continued role on the world stage, as well as support for other 'imperial' nations. Indeed, as Dan Stone highlights, the culmination of recent research resulted 'in one academic's call for the US directly to colonise areas of the world that need to be brought under control, in the same way that Britain once did.'¹² Clearly attempts within Britain to address its colonial past are often superficial and the aim is furthering British pride, and highlighting the 'positive' role of the Empire. Significantly, Richard Drayton advocates a 'post-patriotic approach' to the study of the British Empire. Drayton argues that historians need to take responsibility for popular perceptions of the Empire and place violence at the centre of study.¹³

Focusing on the more 'positive' aspects of Empire means that, until recently, there has been a marked reluctance amongst imperial historians to engage in discussion of the more negative aspects of empire and in particular, the genocidal policies implemented within it. A key example is the *Oxford History of the British Empire*; whilst this is an impressive collection, there is no genuine attempt to address the role of extreme violence and genocide within the British Empire; these issues are only briefly acknowledged, if at all.¹⁴ There are of course exceptions as noted above, including V. G. Kiernan.¹⁵ More recently, Mike Davis has explored the disastrous effects of Britain's *laissez-faire* economic policies in the 'Third World', which led to 'Victorian Holocausts'.¹⁶ Popular anecdotes to Ferguson's approach of 'empire rehabilitation' include John Newsinger's 'people's history of the British Empire' which provides an overview of the most well-known incidents of colonial violence which were carried out upon Britain's colonial subjects.¹⁷ Richard Gott's study of British violence discusses examples previously covered by Newsinger, as well as other episodes of extreme

¹² Stone, 'Britannia Waives the Rules', 181; see also: Raymond Evans, "'Crime Without a Name": Colonialism and the Case for "Indigenocide"', in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn, 2010 [2008]), 135.

¹³ Richard Drayton, 'Where Does the World Historian Write From? Moral Objectivity, Moral Conscience and the Past and Present of Imperialism', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46:3 (2011), 671-85. See also, Christopher A. Bayly, 'Moral Judgment: Empire, Nation and History', *European Review*, 14:3 (2006), 385-91.

¹⁴ Also noted by Stone, 'Britannia Waives the Rules', 182; Richard Gott, 'Shoot Them to Be Sure', in Howe (ed.), *New Imperial Histories Reader*, 106.

¹⁵ See Harvey J. Kaye, 'Introduction: Imperialism and Its Legacies', in V. G. Kiernan, *Imperialism and its Contradictions*, edited by Kaye (London: Routledge, 1995), 1-22. For criticism of imperial nostalgia see: Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', *Representations*, 26:1 (1989), special issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, 107-22.

¹⁶ Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001).

¹⁷ John Newsinger, *The Blood Never Dried: A People's History of the British Empire* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2010 [2006]).

violence and atrocity. Both studies highlight the need for historians to undertake further archival research to examine violence and empire in more depth.¹⁸ These studies challenge the perceived ‘exceptionalism’ of the British Empire and highlight the violence that ensued as British imperial ambitions spread across the globe, making clear the integral role that violence played in maintaining the Empire, as well as the general ignorance of such events in British society today.

The ongoing reluctance of some imperial historians to engage with the issues at hand regarding the relationship between the British Empire and violence has been illuminated by a recent roundtable on John Darwin’s *The Empire Project*.¹⁹ It remains the case that standard histories of the Empire often neglect to deal with this issue in a meaningful way. The extent of the violence that was inherent across the British Empire is often underplayed and its history sanitised, as Duncan Bell shows.²⁰ Bell challenges Darwin’s approach, arguing that he neglects the ‘brutal violence and insidious racism at the core of the Victorian empire’; in particular, Darwin fails to bring to light the ‘broken and abused bodies—almost invariably black or brown—on which the empire was erected’.²¹ Bell makes the fundamental point that the ‘world-system’ that Darwin explores was impossible without violence.²² Furthermore, Bell laments Darwin’s failure to engage more with the issues of race and social Darwinism.²³ These issues are clearly essential to understanding colonial violence and are central to the present study. In his response, Darwin acknowledges the role that violence played, but he deems this violence to be self-evident and unworthy of further exploration, stating that emphasising the centrality of violence to the Empire ‘is not to add much to the sum of knowledge’.²⁴ However, contrary to Darwin’s claims, British colonial violence is not negated by the fact that other European countries committed violence or that they have reached a

¹⁸ See: Richard Gott, *Britain’s Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011); John Newsinger, *The Blood Never Dried: A People’s History of the British Empire* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2010 [2006]); Ian Herson, *Britain’s Forgotten Wars: Colonial Campaigns of the 19th Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003).

¹⁹ John Darwin, ‘A Roundtable on John Darwin’s *The Empire Project*: Reply’, *Journal of British Studies*, 54:4 (2015), 993-97.

²⁰ See, Duncan Bell’s ‘Comment: Desolation Goes before Us’ in ‘A Roundtable on John Darwin’s *The Empire Project*’, *Journal of British Studies*, 54:4 (2015), 987-93; Kim A. Wagner, ‘A Scattering of Death: Violence and the Colonial Rule of Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency’, *History Workshop Journal* (forthcoming 2018), 1.

²¹ Bell, ‘Desolation’, 990.

²² *Ibid.*, 991.

²³ *Ibid.*, 989. As does Bill Schwarz, ‘An Unsentimental Education. John Darwin’s Empire’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43:1 (2015), 125-44.

²⁴ Darwin, ‘Reply’, 994.

higher death toll.²⁵ The aim is certainly not to claim that the British ‘invented’ empire and its corresponding violence, but to locate, as Darwin himself states, ‘the scale, operation, and meaning of British imperial violence’.²⁶ The present study looks beyond the ‘few striking examples’ and assesses the role of extreme violence, not as the result of individual ‘excesses’, but as part of the ‘logic’ of the British Empire.²⁷

There are scholars who are placing colonial violence at the centre of historical enquiries, most notably regarding the processes of decolonisation and associated debates regarding counterinsurgency and ‘minimum force’ and it is to these debates that we will now turn. In recent years, studies of decolonisation in particular have highlighted the willingness of politicians in London and Britain’s military men to condone and conduct campaigns of extreme violence in the name of the Empire. While Arendt stated in 1951, ‘That the British liquidated rule voluntarily is still one of the most momentous events of twentieth-century history’,²⁸ new studies – based on archival research – show that this was not the case; independence was not always simply handed over willingly and peacefully and the lengths that were gone to in order to keep areas of empire under British influence have been highlighted.²⁹ A key example is the British suppression of the Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s in which Kenya became a police state and tens of thousands of Kenyans were put into detention camps, mainly without trial and mostly without any evidence.³⁰ While revisionist histories on the topic of decolonisation were appearing particularly from the 1990s, the works of two historians published in 2005 are notable within this trend.³¹ David Anderson’s study recognised the legal contradictions in the colonies, highlighting that 1090 Kikuyu people went to the gallows in state executions, at the same time that British politicians were considering the abolition of hanging.³² Such contradictions are part of a long British

²⁵ Ibid., 994.

²⁶ Ibid., 995.

²⁷ See for example, Jon Lawrence, ‘Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 574; Jordanna Bailkin, ‘The Boot and the Spleen: When Was Murder Possible in British India?’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48:2 (2006), 490.

²⁸ Hannah Arendt, preface to the first edition, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1976 [1951]), xvii.

²⁹ Hall and Rose, ‘Introduction’, 3.

³⁰ Tom Lloyd, ‘States of Exception? Sovereignty and Counter-Insurgency in British India, Ireland and Kenya circa 1810—1960’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009), 192.

³¹ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005). For an overview of the historiography of counterinsurgency and decolonisation see: Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘British Counter-Insurgency: A Historiographical Reflection’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23: 4–5 (2002), 781–98.

³² Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 7.

colonial legacy of legal anomalies and hypocrisy: colonial ‘exceptionalism’ regarding the law, particularly in reference to martial law, was utilised to enforce colonial domination in Ireland, India and Jamaica for example.³³ Anderson observes, regarding the brutal suppression of the Mau Mau, that the realities were not in keeping with the myth: ‘the British tend to think they made a better job of it than anyone else’.³⁴

Caroline Elkins’ study focuses on the brutalities of the infamous ‘Pipeline’ of detention/‘screening’ camps and the policy of ‘villagisation’, which she describes as ‘Britain’s gulag’.³⁵ Elkins’ study also highlights the ways in which British actions — including the use of forced labour in these camps — were in direct contravention of international law. Huw Bennett has also contributed to this body of work and shows that the Mau Mau were viewed as ‘illegitimate opponents’ and not subject to international law; hence fitting with Britain’s more general approach to law and order against ‘uncivilised’ opposition across the Empire.³⁶ Interestingly, Elkins frames her argument within a consideration of both Stalinist violence and Nazi genocidal violence, although she was not the first to argue the similarities between Britain’s camps and the gulags of the Soviet Union. Marshall Clough previously described the camps as ‘Kenyan gulags’ in his study of *Mau Mau Memoirs* and makes a similar connection with Nazi concentration camps.³⁷ However, Elkins goes furthest in framing her argument within the context of genocide studies,³⁸ although the connections she makes between the events in Kenya and other genocides are not thoroughly explored.³⁹ Nonetheless, Elkins’ work makes clear the ‘potential’ for genocide during the Kenya Emergency, suggesting a wider relationship between colonial violence and genocide in the British Empire.⁴⁰ In reviewing Anderson’s and Elkins’ work, Bernard Porter has argued that

³³ Lloyd, ‘States of Exception?’; Charles Townshend, ‘Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800-1940’, *The Historical Journal*, 25:1 (1982), 167-95.

³⁴ Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 5.

³⁵ Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag*.

³⁶ See *ibid.*, 129-30; Huw Bennett, ‘The Other Side of the COIN: Minimum and Exemplary Force in British Army Counterinsurgency in Kenya’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 18:4 (2007), 640-44.

³⁷ Marshall S. Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs: History, Memory, and Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 64, 204-5; Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 315. In consideration of the camps within a wider history see: Dan Stone, *Concentration Camps: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 98-100.

³⁸ Huw Bennett disputes this approach in *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 108.

³⁹ Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag*, see 89, 90 for example.

⁴⁰ Though Elkins’ approach has been criticised for making ‘too much of an “eliminationist” analysis modeled on that of Daniel Goldhagen’: Marshall S. Clough, Review of *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya*, *The Journal of Military History*, 69:3 (2005), 886.

‘Kenya was Britain’s Algeria’ and clearly studies of decolonisation are challenging long-standing perceptions of Britain’s alleged ‘exceptionalism’.⁴¹

Violence was endemic rather than sporadic across the system of empire and it may be argued that the brutalities of the Kenya Emergency were the logical outcome of colonial policies and the violence that had preceded it, both in Kenya and across the Empire. This case also highlighted the fallacy of the British imperial project as a ‘civilising mission’. Much of the history of brutality in the decolonisation process has long remained hidden; in part, this is a consequence of the false perception of a benevolent British Empire. However, further studies are necessary to explore the ways in which the brutalities of decolonisation were consistent with Britain’s wider approach throughout the Empire. Historian Bethwell Ogot has argued that the British approach in Kenya (1952-60) was in keeping with the colonial tactics used hitherto in the country. For example, Ogot argued that the camps of decolonisation were not the first of Britain’s ‘gulags’ in Kenya.⁴² The wars of ‘pacification’ across the Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century anticipated the violence of decolonisation; hence the violence of the latter was the logical conclusion to British colonial rule, rather than a ‘radicalisation’ of this violence.⁴³ The present study likewise highlights the ways in which extreme violence was integral to the British Empire and argues that the brutalities of decolonisation were consistent with its wider approach.

Revisionist histories of British decolonisation are relevant to a reassessment of the actions of the British Army in their role of ‘imperial policing’, assumptions regarding a British propensity for ‘minimum force’ and an alleged British ‘tradition’ of successful counterinsurgency. It has been assumed that a ‘British way in counterinsurgency’ includes ‘hearts and minds’, civil-military cooperation and restraint.⁴⁴ The traditionalist view is being challenged by studies that are highlighting that Britain has not consistently acted with minimum force throughout the Empire, particularly during the interwar period as Britain suffered a ‘crisis of empire’ and

⁴¹ Bernard Porter, ‘How Did They Get Away With It?’ Review of David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* and Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*, *London Review of Books*, 27:5 (2005): 3-6, <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n05/bernard-porter/how-did-they-get-away-with-it>. Accessed 6 June 2017.

⁴² Bethwell A. Ogot, Review of David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* and Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*, *The Journal of African History*, 46:3 (2005), 493-505.

⁴³ As put forward in relation to the Indian Mutiny by Kim A. Wagner, ‘“Calculated to Strike Terror”: The Amritsar Massacre and the Spectacle of Colonial Violence’, *Past and Present*, 233:1 (2016), 223.

⁴⁴ One example is John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 [2002]). *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), special issue: British Ways of Counter-Insurgency: A Historical Perspective.

repeatedly faced indigenous opposition.⁴⁵ The concept of minimum force is highly problematic: a consideration of the levels of force that constitute the ‘necessary’ minimum is clearly subjective and perceptions have changed over time and place.⁴⁶ The concept was initially a result of British authorities’ approach to nineteenth-century internal unrest in which the application of the minimum amount of force necessary was advocated. There is much debate regarding the applicability of this concept to a colonial context and Matthew Hughes, amongst others, insists that minimum force was never employed in imperial policing or counterinsurgency.⁴⁷ It may be said that there has been the perpetuation of a ‘myth’ of minimum force, or as Simeon Shoul argued, at the very least its ‘sporadic negation’.⁴⁸ In any case, it is clear that more force was considered ‘necessary’ and accepted as part of Britain’s approach to warfare in the colonies. Bruno Reis argues that not only was minimum force all but absent in military practice on the ground, it was also absent in principle.⁴⁹ In marked contrast, Rod Thornton, a key proponent of the British tradition of minimum force, argues that the idea is ‘deeply rooted in the British military psyche’.⁵⁰ Indeed, Thornton has argued that the British Army’s propensity for minimum force was the result of ‘Victorian values’ that were embedded in the army’s role of imperial police force. Emphasising the British ‘gentlemanly’ ideal, Thornton argues that ‘restraint’ and ‘chivalry’ were inculcated through a variety of ways including the British public school system. Viewing the British Army’s relationship with violence in this way leads Thornton to claim that the British evacuated the empire ‘reasonably painlessly’.⁵¹ Thornton argues that the Amritsar Massacre in 1919 was met with shock because the concept of minimum force

⁴⁵ See: Peter Lieb, ‘Suppressing Insurgencies in Comparison: The Germans in the Ukraine, 1918, and the British in Mesopotamia, 1920’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 627–47; John Gallagher, ‘Nationalisms and the Crisis of Empire, 1919–1922’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 15 (1981), 355–68; Martin Thomas, Bob Moore and L. J. Butler (eds), *Crises of Empire: Decolonization and Europe’s Imperial States* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Mockaitis, ‘The Minimum Force Debate: Contemporary Sensibilities Meet Imperial Practice’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 762–80.

⁴⁷ Matthew Hughes, ‘The Banality of Brutality: British Armed Forces and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39’, *English Historical Review*, 124:507 (2009), 583; Simeon Shoul, ‘Soldiers, Riots, and Aid to the Civil Power, in India, Egypt and Palestine, 1919 – 1939’, (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 2006).

⁴⁸ Shoul, ‘Soldiers, Riots, and Aid’, 81.

⁴⁹ Bruno C. Reis, ‘The Myth of British Minimum Force in Counterinsurgency Campaigns during Decolonisation (1945–1970)’, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 34:2 (2011), 245–79.

⁵⁰ Rod Thornton, ‘“Minimum Force” A Reply to Huw Bennett’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 20:1 (2009), 215.

⁵¹ Rod Thornton, ‘The British Army and the Origins of its Minimum Force Philosophy’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 15:1 (2004), 99.

had already been standard ‘for several decades prior’ to the massacre.⁵² In contrast, Thomas Mockaitis clearly states that from 1870 until 1900 the principle was not in operation.⁵³ Thornton’s account is notable for its absence of first-hand accounts and it is beyond question that British perceptions of a ‘minimum’ were subject to the context of whether force was to be enacted at home or across the Empire;⁵⁴ indeed, it is hard to argue that ‘the principles of English Common Law’ were adhered to in the colonies.⁵⁵

Thornton has been involved in a dispute with Huw Bennett particularly in relation to minimum force in the Kenya Emergency.⁵⁶ Bennett emphasises that the term is ‘deliberately ambiguous’ and a ‘malleable’ concept and his work shows the important ways in which the brutalities of Britain’s fight against the Mau Mau were officially sanctioned and certainly do not fit with the narrative of minimum force.⁵⁷ Thornton’s critique of Bennett’s work focuses on differentiating between the various security forces on the ground and the issue of responsibility for exemplary violence, criticising Bennett for denigrating the reputation of the British forces for example.⁵⁸ Mockaitis has weighed in on the dispute by arguing that these debates demonstrate the manner in which ‘contemporary moral attitudes’ inform historical scholarship, suggesting that concepts of ‘minimum force’ have changed over time, as demonstrated, he argues, by the case of the Amritsar Massacre and the fact that the ‘previous generation of soldiers and administrators probably would have accepted Dyer’s argument and deemed his actions appropriate.’⁵⁹ Bennett’s work, as well as other revisionist histories of the emergency, demonstrates that the British campaign against the Mau Mau went above and beyond what was ‘necessary’ to defeat the opposition.

Mockaitis, whose work has also been central within minimum force debates, has emphasised the issue of British success within counterinsurgency.⁶⁰ Specifically, Mockaitis questions whether brutality was a contributing factor to Britain’s success including in the case of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936-9, which was relentlessly

⁵² Ibid., 86.

⁵³ Ibid., 86. Although it has even been argued that Amritsar can be viewed within the framework of minimum force: Nick Lloyd, ‘The Amritsar Massacre and the Minimum Force Debate’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21:2 (2010), 382–403.

⁵⁴ See Shoul, ‘Soldiers, Riots, and Aid’, 9.

⁵⁵ Thornton, ‘The British Army’, 87.

⁵⁶ Bennett, ‘The Other Side of the COIN’, 638-64; Thornton, ‘A Reply to Huw Bennett’; Huw Bennett, ‘Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21:3 (2010), 459-75.

⁵⁷ Bennett, ‘The Other Side of the COIN’, 657.

⁵⁸ Thornton, ‘A Reply to Huw Bennett’, 224.

⁵⁹ Mockaitis, ‘Contemporary Sensibilities’, 764.

⁶⁰ Similar to Liddell Hart’s assumptions of *British* success: see Colin McInnes, ‘The British Army’s New Way in Warfare: A Doctrinal Misstep?’ *Defense & Security Analysis*, 23:2 (2007), 129.

suppressed by the British.⁶¹ Mockaitis concludes that ‘Brutality may thus have been coincidental with successful counter-insurgency rather than contributing to it.’ However, the fact that such conflicts were not solely based on brute force is beside the point.⁶² Extreme violence was central to these campaigns. That the use of extreme violence is not a measure of ‘success’ or ‘failure’ has been discussed by David Jones and M. L. R. Smith, who conclude that the fact that British counterinsurgency was often extremely violent ‘does not, *ipso facto*, mean that they failed’.⁶³ The issue is surely not whether extreme violence contributed to the ‘success’ of British counterinsurgency, but rather the very fact that it was utilised, as well as how and why.⁶⁴ Karl Hack’s work has been important in challenging the perception of the British campaign in Malayan Emergency (1948-60) as the archetypal success of a ‘hearts and minds’ strategy, arguing the need for a more nuanced approach.⁶⁵ In his quarrel with Bennett, Thornton concludes that British adherence to minimum force and a concern for ‘hearts and minds’ is an approach that ‘made sense to Colonel Robert Sandeman back in 1866 in the Punjab when he first coined the term ‘hearts and minds’ and it makes sense today in Afghanistan’,⁶⁶ as though minimum force was a clear approach throughout this period. Clearly this position cannot be sustained; as this study will demonstrate, British colonial campaigns do not represent a history of restraint. Of course, one of the central reasons for ongoing interest in this topic is its relation to Britain’s most recent ‘small wars’ in Iraq and Afghanistan,⁶⁷ a fact that further emphasises the importance of a true understanding of Britain’s history of violence and the ways in which perceptions of that violence inform British campaigns today.⁶⁸

While it is clear that minimum force was not considered a doctrine for colonial warfare in the period in which the case studies occurred, it was nevertheless the case throughout the second half of the nineteenth century that belief was high in the British ‘civilising mission’ and its ‘benevolent’ endeavours; restraint was assumed to be central to Britain’s imperial approach. Charles W. Gwynn’s *Imperial Policing* espoused the

⁶¹ See for example, Hughes, ‘The Banality of Brutality’.

⁶² Mockaitis, ‘Contemporary Sensibilities’, 774.

⁶³ David Martin Jones and M. L. R. Smith, ‘Myth and the Small War Tradition: Reassessing the Discourse of British Counter-Insurgency’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 24:3 (2013), 449.

⁶⁴ Mockaitis, ‘Contemporary Sensibilities’, 767. The very existence of a British tradition of counterinsurgency has been questioned: Jones and Smith, ‘Myth and the Small War Tradition’, 436-64.

⁶⁵ For example, Karl Hack, ‘Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counterinsurgency’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), 671-99.

⁶⁶ Thornton, ‘A Reply to Huw Bennett’, 224.

⁶⁷ For example, Jones and Smith, ‘Myth and the Small War Tradition’.

⁶⁸ For example, Douglas Porch, ‘The Dangerous Myth and Dubious Promise of COIN’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 22:2 (2011), 239-57.

first formulation of the concept of minimum force.⁶⁹ Gwynn made his position clear and he perceived ‘small wars’ as an entirely separate category from ‘imperial policing’ and hence in the former, ‘No limitations are placed on the amount of force which can legitimately be exercised, and the Army is free to employ all the weapons the nature of the terrain permits’.⁷⁰ For the present study, the work of Charles Callwell, a theorist on ‘small wars’ is a more helpful contemporary guide and scholars have recently been revisiting his work. His book, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* was first published in 1896⁷¹ and is the most extensive outline of the British approach to colonial warfare (although Callwell also used a variety of examples and included an international focus⁷²) and is particularly pertinent regarding the case studies under discussion here. There were other examples of literature upon which one could draw and interest in the subject had increased from the 1870s onwards.⁷³ Callwell made use of Garnet Wolseley’s *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, which was first published in 1869, but it was Callwell’s work that was most comprehensive on the topic.⁷⁴ Several scholars have noted that, while important, Callwell’s work reflected military practice as much as it influenced it.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Ian Beckett emphasises the limited influence of Callwell based on the fact that *Small Wars* ‘was published at a moment when the army was increasingly turning its face to Europe.’⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Callwell’s and Wolseley’s works gained ‘semi-official status’ and were influential both at home and abroad.⁷⁷ As Kim Wagner importantly emphasises, the book’s significance lies in its ‘unique record of the manner in which the British at the turn of the century themselves interpreted their military campaigns throughout the Empire’.⁷⁸ Furthermore,

⁶⁹ See Lieb, ‘Suppressing Insurgencies’, 633.

⁷⁰ Charles Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, 2nd edn (London: MacMillan, 1939 [1936]), 3.

⁷¹ Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]).

⁷² For example in his discussion of guerrilla warfare: Callwell, *Small Wars*, 127.

⁷³ For example H. G. Gawler, ‘British Troops and Savage Warfare, with Special Reference to the Kafir War’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 17 (1873–74), 922–39.

⁷⁴ See Beckett, ‘British Counter-Insurgency’. For example, Samuel White Baker, ‘Experience in Savage Warfare’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 17 (1873–74), 1–18. Garnet Wolseley, *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, 5th edn, (London: Macmillan, 1886 [1869]). Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘Another British Way in Warfare: Charles Callwell and Small Wars’, in Beckett (ed.), *Victorians at War: New Perspectives*, Chippenham: Society for Army Historical Research, Special Publication 16 (2007), 93.

⁷⁵ See Daniel Whittingham, ‘“Savage Warfare”: C. E. Callwell, the Roots of Counter-Insurgency, and the Nineteenth Century Context’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 592 and Wagner, ‘Scattering of Death’ 6.

⁷⁶ Beckett, ‘British Counter-Insurgency’, 785.

⁷⁷ Susanne Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, trans. Andrew Smith (London: Harvard University Press, 2017), 127–8.

⁷⁸ Wagner, ‘Scattering of Death’, 6.

as Wagner argues, rather astoundingly, the book is still being read today as a guide to successful tactics of counterinsurgency.⁷⁹ Callwell considered there to be three main categories of small wars: conquest or annexation; the suppression of insurrections or lawlessness or to settle a recently conquered territory; to avenge a wrong or overthrow a dangerous enemy.⁸⁰ For Callwell, ‘small wars’ were

all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops. It comprises the expeditions against savages and semi-civilised races by disciplined soldiers, it comprises campaigns undertaken to suppress rebellious and guerrilla warfare in all parts of the world where organised armies are struggling against opponents who will not meet them in the open field....⁸¹

Callwell accepted that there was a clear distinction between ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’ warfare and that small war tactics may mean ‘committing havoc which the laws of regular warfare do not sanction’.⁸² Callwell did not espouse restraint and accepted that small war tactics ‘may shock the humanitarian’, particularly if the enemy could not be drawn into the open or if there was no capital to destroy. Callwell cited Wolseley’s oft-quoted statement that, ‘your first object should be the capture of whatever they prize most, and the destruction or deprivation of which will probably bring the war most rapidly to a conclusion’.⁸³ Central to this premise was the emphasis on ‘moral effect’, although Callwell also acknowledged that destroying the enemy’s property ‘may sometimes do more harm than good’.⁸⁴ However, it is important to emphasise Callwell’s acceptance of the need to not only defeat the ‘savage’ enemy, but to destroy them.⁸⁵ While Callwell does not address the Perak War, this campaign was a small war and Callwell’s work remains relevant; the cases of Sierra Leone and the Sudan were considered in the third edition of *Small Wars* – as such Callwell’s work provides a contemporary example of the manner in which military men endeavoured to ‘learn

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3. On scholarly praise for Callwell – in spite of the overt racism and advocacy of extreme brutality – see Beckett, ‘Another British Way in Warfare’, 95.

⁸⁰ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 25.

⁸¹ Ibid., 21.

⁸² Ibid., 42.

⁸³ Ibid., 40; Wolseley, *Soldier’s Pocket-Book*, 413-14.

⁸⁴ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 149.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 159.

lessons' from a variety of small wars and his work will be referred to throughout the present study.⁸⁶

In light of Callwell's work we may make some observations regarding a definition of 'colonial warfare'⁸⁷ and the challenges it presented for European troops: European military actions were often frustrated by the refusal of the indigenous 'enemy' to engage in open battle, often undertaking guerrilla-style tactics. Indigenous forces had the upper hand with regards to knowledge of the local terrain and access to resources, this reliance on the local population meant that such wars could include the targeting of whole 'hostile' populations. As such, colonial wars were often fought against an unclear and ill-defined enemy and European troops often resorted to destroying homes and food supplies. Conditions could be extreme for colonial troops and disease accounted for most European casualties.⁸⁸ Callwell emphasised colonial warfare as 'against nature' and issues of supply were key.⁸⁹ Hence, to defeat (or destroy) indigenous opposition, European troops utilised a range of extreme methods against their 'uncivilised' foes, including collective punishment, the destruction of villages and crops, punitive expeditions. The challenges that colonial warfare posed will be in evidence throughout this study, which examines how colonial warfare radicalised towards ever-more extreme violence on the part of the colonists. Callwell emphasised the need to act swiftly and decisively once violence broke out – but 'striking a heavy blow' could clearly lead to extreme violence, as this thesis will discuss.⁹⁰ Hence, 'exemplary violence' was key to colonial conflicts, as highlighted by Callwell. Elsewhere it has been argued that such violence was necessary as a universal 'language'; Elizabeth Kolsky has emphasised this point thus: 'As a tactic, it paved the way for colonial pacification and control. As a language, British administrators argued that violence was the only sign system the "rude and savage" people on the frontier understood.'⁹¹

⁸⁶ As well as updating *Small Wars*, see: Callwell, 'Lessons to be Learnt from the Campaigns in which British Forces have been Employed Since the Year 1865', reprinted in *The RUSI Journal*, 156:4 (2011 [1887]), 108-21.

⁸⁷ See Thoralf Klein und Frank Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege: Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006).

⁸⁸ On the 'ravages of mortality and sickness' in colonial service see Peter Burroughs, 'An Unreformed Army? 1815-1868', in David Chandler and Ian Beckett (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003 [1994]), 165.

⁸⁹ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 44.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74-75. See also, Gawler, 'British Troops and Savage Warfare', 5.

⁹¹ See Elizabeth Kolsky, 'The Colonial Rule of Law and the Legal Regime of Exception: Frontier "Fanaticism" and State Violence in British India', *American Historical Review*, 120:4 (2015), 1221, 1223.

While Callwell served as a guide, it is clear that there was no one type of colonial war; the scale and scope of colonial campaigns and their objectives differed, as will be borne out by the case studies below. Contemporary treatises and understandings of colonial warfare will be key to the present study; however, the case studies will also be considered in light of the role of ‘extreme violence’ in British colonial conflicts. Susanne Kuss’ definition of ‘extreme violence’ in a colonial context is highly useful with regards to considering the nature of the violence that was wrought across the Empire. Kuss defines extreme violence as that which ‘represents a level of violence uncoupled from military objectives’ and hence, in excess of what would be deemed a necessary minimum – though one could use a range of terms including ‘atrocities’, ‘barbarity’ or ‘excessive force’ for example. According to Kuss, this violence occurs after the military aims have already been achieved and as such is ‘strategically superfluous’. Importantly Kuss emphasises that the number of civilians and military casualties does not determine incidents of extreme violence; she also recognises the importance of local destruction and the implications of these actions for the indigenous inhabitants.⁹² The present study will utilise the concept of extreme violence throughout, as it provides a fitting definition, although clearly ‘colonial warfare’ as a concept will also be key.

Scholars have been considering issues of colonial violence in a variety of ways and in examining the nature of colonial warfare more specifically the imbalance of resources – including advances in technology and weaponry⁹³ – and power within colonial conflicts has been highlighted, as well as the ways in which colonial warfare deviated from European warfare, for example in a disregard for international standards of warfare.⁹⁴ However, the advantages gained through superior weaponry should not be overemphasised, as these could be offset by indigenous fighters’ local knowledge and mobility.⁹⁵ Regardless of the initial aim in conducting colonial violence against an indigenous enemy, the end result of European colonial wars was to defeat and almost always annex the territory and subject the population; hence, the aims of colonial

⁹² Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 6.

⁹³ Although the emphasis on superior weaponry should not be overstated and victory was not inevitable: H. L. Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars: An Introduction’, in J. A. de Moor and Wesseling (eds), *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 6.

⁹⁴ See: Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy: Empire and the Ideology of Selective Extermination’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 58:2 (2012), 159-80.

⁹⁵ Tanja Bührer, ‘Kriegführung in Deutsch-Ostafrika (1889–1914)’, in Bührer et al. (eds), *Imperialkriege von 1500 bis heute: Strukturen – Akteure – Lernprozesse* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011), 214.

warfare were ‘absolute’.⁹⁶ As a result, it is logical to consider the extent to which ‘total war’ is a useful concept regarding colonial warfare. Henk Wesseling emphasises that the means within colonial war were limited and certainly European powers did not *need* to deploy ‘total’ forces against indigenous opposition.⁹⁷ One issue with such debates is the fact that there remains no clear definition or consensus on the term’s meaning.⁹⁸ This is problematic with regards to the use of the concept as a tool for understanding colonial warfare more specifically; as Beckett observes, ‘It has become fashionable to suggest that colonial warfare was a precursor of “total warfare” in the twentieth century, the context being the degree of violence rather than the extent of economic, social and political mobilisation’.⁹⁹ Both the levels of destructiveness and societal mobilisation involved may be identified as two key elements of total war, but Eric Markusen argues that either factor or both may be present. Markusen asserts that the high stakes and ‘absolute’ nature of colonial warfare demonstrate the relevance of a total war approach to colonial warfare.¹⁰⁰ Focusing on the forms of European colonial violence has allowed scholars to explore the role of total tactics in the destruction of colonial opposition and it has been highlighted that the threshold between total war and genocide is ‘very low and easily crossed’ in a colonial context.¹⁰¹ Dierk Walter observes in his discussion of the ‘totalisation of the conduct of war’ (*Totalisierung der Kriegführung*), that it was only a small step from the destruction of the enemy’s subsistence basis to the use of direct violence on civilians.¹⁰² However, while colonial wars may have been total they

⁹⁶ Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars’, 3. Dierk Walter discusses ‘colonial wars’ and ‘imperial wars’ as categories and incorporates the former into the more extensive category of the latter, thereby including imperial wars both before and after the era of ‘new imperialism’: ‘Imperialkriege: Begriff, Erkenntnisinteresse, Aktualität’, in Bühner et al. (eds), *Imperialkriege*, 1-32.

⁹⁷ See Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars’, 5-6.

⁹⁸ Daniel Marc Segesser, ‘Controversy: Total War’, in Ute Daniel et al. (eds), *1914-1918-Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08; Roger Chickering, ‘Total War: The Use and Abuse of a Concept’, in Manfred F. Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13-28.

⁹⁹ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), 42. For example, it has been suggested that colonial wars ‘might be seen as a practice run for the world wars that followed’: Glenn Anthony May, ‘Was the Philippine-American War a “Total War”?’ in Manfred F. Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1999), 457.

¹⁰⁰ See Eric Markusen, ‘Genocide and Total War: A Preliminary Comparison’, in Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski (eds), *Genocide and the Modern Age* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 102.

¹⁰¹ Henrik Lundtofte, ‘“I Believe That the Nation as Such Must Be Annihilated...” Radicalization of the German Suppression of the Herero Rising in 1904’, in Steven L. B. Jensen (ed.), *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates* (Copenhagen: Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003), 52.

¹⁰² Walter, ‘Imperialkriege’, 14-15.

were also asymmetric.¹⁰³ This thesis argues that the one-sided nature of colonial warfare has implications for the ‘potentiality’ of genocide, as will be discussed below. In terms of a ‘totalising’ affect on colonial warfare, aspects of particular relevance include the blurring of the distinction between combatant and noncombatant, the dehumanisation of the enemy and the separation of ‘us’ from ‘them’.¹⁰⁴

Considering the fact that colonial wars could quickly become wars against an entire group of people, particularly in the context of guerrilla-style opposition, historian Dirk Moses has highlighted that, ‘Colonial war could mean total war on a local scale’.¹⁰⁵ Scholars have been examining colonial violence within a framework of genocide, as discussed above in relation to Elkins. In recent years genocide scholars have produced some of the most thought-provoking and challenging studies that highlight the violence of European imperialism. It is without dispute that atrocities were carried out in the name of the British Empire, and new studies in this area are now spanning decades, if not centuries, of British colonial rule.¹⁰⁶ Historians of empire are exploring the everyday violence that was inherent within the structures of the colonial systems and debates amongst genocide scholars could prove instructive regarding ‘the vexed question of intention’ and the ‘unintended’ consequences of colonial policy.¹⁰⁷ A central challenge to genocide scholars’ studies of colonial genocide is the representation of the Holocaust as the ‘prototypical genocide’;¹⁰⁸ such an approach has hindered understandings of other genocides as a result of the oft-made assumption that genocide must resemble the prevailing view of the Holocaust as a highly centralised, bureaucratically-led, industrial mass extermination.¹⁰⁹ Discussions of the extent to

¹⁰³ Dierk Walter, ‘Warum Kolonialkrieg?’ in Thoralf Klein and Frank Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege: Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006), 37.

¹⁰⁴ One example of this approach: Michael Lieven, “‘Butchering the Brutes All Over the Place’: Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879’, *History*, 18 (1999), 614-32.

¹⁰⁵ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005); Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 [2008]).

¹⁰⁷ A. Dirk Moses, ‘An Antipodean Genocide? The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in Australia’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2:1 (2000), 89-90.

¹⁰⁸ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Historiographical Review. Paranoia and Partisanship: Genocide Studies, Holocaust Historiography, and the “Apocalyptic Conjuncture”’, *The Historical Journal*, 54:2 (2011), 554.

¹⁰⁹ For further discussion see: Rebecca Jinks, *Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). In any case, an emphasis on the ‘industrial’ and ‘modern’ aspects of the Holocaust tends to ignore the realities of the violence, including the role of face-to-face killing. See, Dan

which colonial policies can, in certain circumstances, be understood as active policies of genocide are important here; as opposed to the ‘accidental’ effects of a complex and overlapping system of structures and policy-making. Establishing cases of genocide in a colonial context is further complicated by the actions and aims of colonial settlers, the objectives of colonial administrators on the ground, and politicians back in London. Scholars have shown how the British could be indirectly involved in genocidal practices by backing ‘settler massacres by supporting the patrol/commando systems with their notorious *modus operandi* of indiscriminate firing, and protected commando members by concealing irregularities and suppressing/revising indigenous evidence.’¹¹⁰ Despite much evidence to the contrary, it has often been argued that indigenous populations were reduced in spite of the ‘good intentions’ of the British government and colonial administrators.¹¹¹ Martin Shaw discusses the relationship between Britain and genocidal policies in particular and highlights that evidence suggests ‘that genocide was a repeated problem of British – as of most other – imperial and colonial expansions, in which the imperial centre was often, if usually indirectly, implicated.’¹¹² There is often a lack of engagement between imperial and genocide scholars and for some imperial historians, discussions of colonial genocide are addressing an ‘anachronistic question’.¹¹³ However, the aim of such discussions is not to ‘fit’ colonial violence into contemporary definitions of genocide, as Jordanna Bailkin claims. Rather, historians are viewing genocidal violence as part as a wider historical process. Stone, for example, has argued the need to ‘take a more historical view, which can explain why certain situations evolve into genocide policies and, importantly, why some violent ones do not’.¹¹⁴ As Moses argues, ‘colonialism needs to be viewed as a dynamic process’ within

Stone, ‘Modernity and Violence: Theoretical Reflections on the *Einsatzgruppen*’ in Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*, 1-14.

¹¹⁰ In the case of southern Africa, see: Susan I. Blackbeard, ‘Acts of Severity: Colonial Settler Massacre of AmaXhosa and AbaThembu on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, c.1826–47’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 17:2 (2015), 128.

¹¹¹ In the context of Tasmania, see: Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 54; A. Dirk Moses, ‘Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History’, in Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 5; regarding southern Africa: Nigel Penn, ‘The British and the “Bushmen”: The Massacre of the Cape San, 1795 to 1828’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 15:2 (2013), 188-89.

¹¹² Martin Shaw, ‘Britain and Genocide: Historical and Contemporary Parameters of National Responsibility’, *Review of International Studies*, 37:5 (2011), 2428.

¹¹³ Bailkin, ‘The Boot and the Spleen’, 467.

¹¹⁴ Dan Stone, ‘Defending the Plural: Hannah Arendt and Genocide Studies’, *New Formations*, 71 (2011), 52.

an international context,¹¹⁵ and both he and Mark Levene discuss the importance of genocidal ‘moments’ of potentiality¹¹⁶ within colonialism that need to be investigated, thus helping us to identify key instances in which genocide can become a policy option, even if this is not realised.¹¹⁷ Rather than holding genocide up as the ‘ultimate yardstick of depravity’, it is important to acknowledge that extreme violence is part of a wider framework of destruction that includes a range of dynamics of violence, which in certain circumstances may become genocidal.¹¹⁸ Importantly, genocide scholars are using a more flexible understanding of genocidal violence to understand the ‘potential’ for genocide in an imperial setting and are also interested in examples of extreme violence, which may not constitute genocide.¹¹⁹ The context of these debates is essential to the arguments of this thesis and I argue that the findings of genocide scholars should be incorporated into those of historians of empire. It is the case, however, that the research findings of the area of colonialism and genocide are still relatively recent and may need time to filter down into the broader historiography of the British Empire.

An area of study that has important ramifications for an understanding of the relationship between Britain and genocide is that of settler violence in Australia.¹²⁰ It is this historiography in particular that has ignited debate about the nature of settler colonialism and its relationship with genocide. Despite extensive research on the colonisation of Australia, there has been a marked failure by historians of the British Empire to incorporate genocidal violence against the indigenous population into ‘British History’.¹²¹ One recent exception is Tom Lawson’s study of the destruction of the Tasmanian people, which he considers to be a ‘British Genocide’.¹²² Lawson argues that this violence took place ‘almost exclusively under direct *British* rule, and was

¹¹⁵ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust’, in Moses and Dan Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2007), 171.

¹¹⁶ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 52.

¹¹⁷ Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages’, 171; see also, Moses, ‘An Antipodean Genocide?’ 89-106.

¹¹⁸ See Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume I: The Meaning of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008 [2005]), 54-55.

¹¹⁹ See for example: Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan (eds), *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity throughout History* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

¹²⁰ For examples of the literature see n9 of the introduction. For a consideration of genocidal violence against the indigenous populations of North America see: Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton (eds), *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014). For a comparative approach regarding colonial genocide in North America and the Holocaust see: Carroll P. Kakel, III, *The American West and the Nazi East: A Comparative and Interpretative Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹²¹ Stone, ‘Britannia Waives the Rules’, 182, 199, n32. See also Gott, ‘Shoot Them to Be Sure’, 108. Shaw, ‘Britain and Genocide’, 10.

¹²² Lawson, *The Last Man*.

committed by *British* colonists and settlers who either worked for the *British* Crown or for *British* companies, and who moved between Britain and the Antipodes'.¹²³ Hence, Lawson's study demonstrates that 'genocide is part of British history' and not one which offers 'alternatives to genocide'.¹²⁴ While there is a range of concepts that one may use to understand colonial violence, I argue that just as a framework of genocide aids an explanation of the nature of colonial violence, so a consideration of genocide 'potentiality' in a colonial context encourages an awareness of just how violent the British Empire truly was. Chapter 5 further explores the relevance of genocide studies for understandings of colonial violence.

As stated above, historians of empire are also assessing the ways in which everyday violence was inherent within the colonial relationship.¹²⁵ As Jill Bender emphasises, we need to understand both the 'micromoments' of everyday violence as well as the 'macromoments' such as the Indian Mutiny, which, as Bender and others have argued, 'dramatically shaped the accepted use of force in the colonies'.¹²⁶ Regarding such violence the role of law and order in the colonies is significant and this issue has implications for our understanding of both everyday violence and the processes of more extreme violence. Studies of everyday violence undertaken by the colonial state show, as Taylor Sherman's work does regarding state violence and punishment in India, that once colonial rule was established, quotidian violence remained in a variety of forms: 'from firing on crowds and bombing from the air, to dismissal from one's place of work or study, to collective fines, imprisonment and corporal punishment'.¹²⁷ Hence, the relationship between war and peace in the colonies was blurred as a result of inherent violence throughout the colonial system.¹²⁸ Elizabeth Kolsky's exploration of white violence in India shows how violence was endemic, not ephemeral in the colonial relationship.¹²⁹ Scholars are demonstrating the failings and contradictions of the colonial legal systems and systems of punishment, which were

¹²³ Ibid., xvii: emphasis in original.

¹²⁴ Ibid., xxi.

¹²⁵ Jill C. Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹²⁶ Ibid., 19, 144. Or indeed, connections between individual and state violence, Bailkin, 'The Boot and the Spleen', 491.

¹²⁷ Taylor C. Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1. On quotidian violence in employer-employee relations: Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

¹²⁸ Wesseling, 'Colonial Wars', 8-10. See also idem, 'Colonial Wars and Armed Peace, 1870-1914: A Reconnaissance', *Itinerario*, 5:2 (1981), 53-73.

¹²⁹ Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

hierarchised according to race, class and gender. In colonial rule, violence was inherent and a gulf was present between the principle and practice of law, despite contemporary claims to the contrary and upon which justifications of the ‘civilising mission’ were based.¹³⁰

The true extent of the violence used to uphold the Empire and British interests as a whole has failed to seep into the British consciousness more generally. Typically, the viewpoint is presented that Britain’s Empire was ‘not as bad’ as its European counterparts and the idea is conveyed that the “‘natives” were lucky’ to have been colonised by Britain rather than France for example.¹³¹ Scholars are emphasising the relevance of debates regarding the memorialisation and representation of the Holocaust and the failure of Britain to deal with its violent past.¹³² One example is the debates surrounding the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), which has further highlighted this lack of awareness and at times, apparent hypocrisy.¹³³ Britain’s direct relationship with extreme – and at times genocidal – violence needs to be acknowledged. However, as Shaw has noted, the typical approach has been that ‘our country stands as a “vigilant”, and if necessary armed, protector of the innocent’ and as such there is a lack of self-criticism and a failure to conduct even an ‘academic debate about our country’s relationship to the history of genocide, which has preoccupied intellectuals and scholars in these countries’.¹³⁴ While commemorations of the Holocaust are clearly to be welcomed, we must also explore the fact that, as Donald Bloxham points out, ‘the British linkage with mass atrocity and death is much more direct in the record of interference, settlement and exploitation in north America, Africa, Australasia and the Indian subcontinent’ than with the Holocaust.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, the

¹³⁰ See: Martin J. Wiener, *An Empire on Trial: Race, Murder, and Justice under British Rule, 1870-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Amanda Nettlebeck and Robert Foster, ‘Colonial Judiciaries, Aboriginal Protection and South Australia’s Policy of Punishing “with Exemplary Severity”’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 41:3 (2010); Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule*. On the role of ‘legalised violence’: Elizabeth Kolsky, ‘The Colonial Rule of Law and the Legal Regime of Exception: “Frontier Fanaticism” and State Violence in British India’, *American Historical Review*, 120:4 (2015), 1218-46.

¹³¹ As discussed in Moses, ‘Genocide and Settler Society’, 4.

¹³² See: Andy Pearce, *Holocaust Consciousness in Contemporary Britain* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2014); Caroline Sharples and Olaf Jensen (eds), *Britain and the Holocaust: Remembering and Representing War and Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

¹³³ Another key example is the opening of a permanent Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London. See in particular, Tom Lawson, ‘Ideology in a Museum of Memory: A Review of the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 4:2 (2003), 175.

¹³⁴ Shaw, ‘Britain and Genocide’, 2418: emphasis in original.

¹³⁵ Donald Bloxham, ‘Britain’s Holocaust Memorial Days: Using the Past in the Service of the Present’, *Immigrants and Minorities*, 21:1 (2003), 42; see also, Stone, ‘Britannia Waives the Rules’, 184. On

opportunity that HMD represented for the British to engage in debates about its own genocidal record has not been taken; but then, as Stone has stated, this was never the day's intention.¹³⁶ As these examples show, debates among scholars of the Holocaust and genocide studies have highlighted Britain's complicated relationship with violence, and in particular the context of the British Empire as a 'site of genocide'.¹³⁷

The recent surge of interest regarding the British Empire and its integral role in British identity has witnessed public figures, including British politicians, proclaiming that it is time for Britain to 'stop apologising' for the Empire (Tony Blair and Gordon Brown for example¹³⁸) and celebrate 'Britishness'; this approach comes in marked contrast to the current 'culture of apology' in some countries, and demonstrates the need for more research and a wider understanding of the true nature of the British Empire and its effects.¹³⁹ Clearly studies of everyday violence across the Empire are integral to our understanding of the experiences of the millions of people who found themselves under British rule, whether directly or indirectly. However, this violence was usually 'bookended' by more extreme acts of violence, initially to bring an area under British control or 'influence' and as the colonisers sought to maintain their power, fighting against the tide of decolonisation – and often with outbursts of violence in between. It seems that a dual process is underway within Britain; on the one hand, reflections of the darker side of empire are underplayed and on the other, the 'positive' aspects of empire are emphasised to create a positive British identity based on pride. Stone has argued that the emphasis on the Holocaust in Britain has produced a 'screen memory' effect, which 'conceptually prohibits inquiry into Britain's own historical record'.¹⁴⁰ However, he then goes on to conclude that 'it is precisely this focus on the Holocaust that has encouraged a reconsideration of the question of genocide in imperial history'.¹⁴¹ Hence, much of our understanding regarding the dynamics of violence against indigenous peoples in the colonies has been hitherto gained through genocide studies, or those

Britain's problematic relationship with the Holocaust see for example: Cesarani, 'Britain, the Holocaust and its Legacy'; Sharples and Jensen (eds), *Britain and the Holocaust*.

¹³⁶ Stone, 'Britannia Waives the Rules', 188. On local HMD commemorative efforts and their deviation from the centralised narrative of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust see, John E. Richardson, "'If Not Me, Then Who?'" Examining Engagement with Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration in Britain', *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, (forthcoming 2018).

¹³⁷ Tom Lawson, 'The Holocaust and Colonial Genocide at the Imperial War Museum', in Sharples and Jensen (eds), *Britain and the Holocaust*, 160.

¹³⁸ For example: Owen Jones, 'William Hague is Wrong... We Must Own Up to Our Brutal Colonial Past', *The Independent*, 3 September 2012.

¹³⁹ Elazar Barkan, 'Genocides of Indigenous Peoples: Rhetoric of Human Rights', in Gellately and Kiernan (eds), *Specter of Genocide*, 129.

¹⁴⁰ Stone, 'Britannia Waives the Rules', 190.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

interested specifically in studies of violence. Andrew Thompson has warned that ‘By becoming too steeped in their imperial history, the British may avoid squaring up to the problems of the present’, such as immigration and race relations.¹⁴² Alternatively, one could argue that attempts to glorify the Empire, rather than genuine considerations of the Empire’s true nature and empirical research into its violence and atrocities, are what give rise to such ‘screen memories’.

Conclusion

Historians are using a wide range of concepts and categories to explore issues of violence and colonialism, all of which are relevant to this study, which defends the merits of bringing together the fields of imperial history and studies of mass violence. While this thesis is particularly interested in the extreme colonial violence that the British military utilised in ‘macromoments’ of violence, areas for further research regarding ‘micromoments’ of everyday violence will also be alluded to;¹⁴³ issues of particular relevance include the utilisation of slavery as a justification for violence, the role of non-military violence and the hypocritical approach to British colonial rule, including law and order. With regards to popular perceptions of the British Empire and its ‘benevolent’ agenda, this study demonstrates that colonial administrators, politicians in London and British military men accepted the need for exemplary violence and the utilisation of extreme tactics when these were deemed to be necessary – violence was endemic across the British Empire. I argue that there needs to be a reassessment regarding both Britain’s relationship with violence and the supposed ‘nature’ of the British Empire. This study is part of an endeavour to determine the significance of colonial violence within a wider framework of European mass violence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to place Britain’s role within this framework. Representations and the memorialisation of mass violence are highly important, but they need to occur within an open and honest conversation about extreme violence in British history. The violence in Britain’s past needs to be explored and assessments of others’ misdeeds should not come at the expense of self-reflection. Bloxham has highlighted a more typical approach: “‘Our’ imperial record simply does not enter into the British collective memory as objectionable, and ‘our’ history of discriminations is

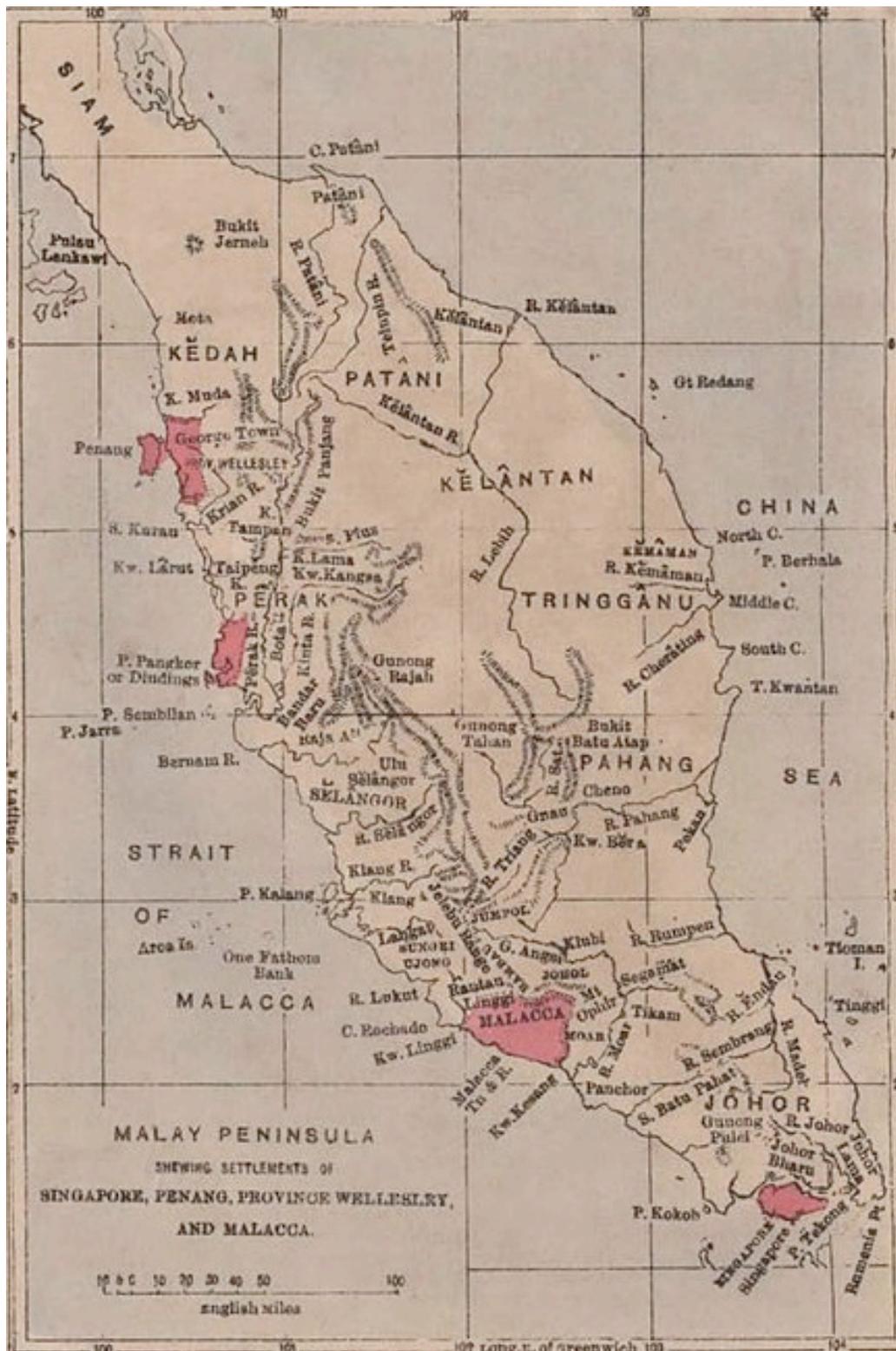
¹⁴² Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back*, 236.

¹⁴³ As discussed above in relation to Bender, *1857 Indian Uprising*, 19.

seen as nowhere near as relevant as those visited by someone else.’¹⁴⁴ Clearly this approach needs to change and this thesis can be seen as part of this endeavour.

¹⁴⁴ Bloxham, ‘Britain’s Holocaust Memorial Days’, 58.

Map of the Malay Peninsula



Source: Wikimedia Commons. Accessed 18 July 2016.

Chapter 2

A 'Little War' in Perak: British Intervention, 1875-6¹

The contact between the civilisation of the European races and effete semi-barbarous States has occurred all over the world. Its immediate results have differed widely. Some races have succeeded, others have signally failed. This contact has, in some cases, been marked by mutual savagery, in others by mutual deterioration. I do not pretend that in our dealings with the native States of the Malay Peninsula, we have been actuated by a spirit of pure disinterestedness. I do claim that our action will bear a close scrutiny, and that it has resulted in almost unmixed good to the States themselves, while a new and rich field has been opened out to the commerce of all nations.²

Surely we do not yet require to learn that nothing like direct European fighting is to be expected from the half-savage inhabitants of the Malayan Peninsula.³

The East India Company initially established British connections with Malaya in 1786 as it acquired the island of Penang, which along with Malacca and Singapore would form the Straits Settlements from 1826 onwards. In the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 and amidst a more general review of the Indian government – as well as protests by European merchants in Singapore against the Company⁴ – the administration of the Straits was transferred to the British Colonial Office in April 1867 as a Crown Colony.⁵ Contrary to the hopes of local traders and merchants, the British initially continued the Company's policy of 'liberal non-intervention' on the Malay Peninsula.⁶ However, as the future Governor of the Straits Settlements, Andrew Clarke,

¹ See Isabella Bird, *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), Kindle edition.

² Andrew Clarke, 'Straits Settlements', *The British Empire Series: Vol. 1* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1899), 461.

³ 'The Perak Expedition', *The Times*, 16 February 1876.

⁴ C. Mary Turnbull, *A Short History of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1981), 106-107.

⁵ See: Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and its Predecessors, 1867-1942* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), 4-5; C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1; A. J. Stockwell, 'British Expansion and Rule in South-East Asia', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 378.

⁶ Stockwell, 'British Expansion', 377.

later stated, Britain hereby came ‘into contact with native states in various stages of anarchy, whose perpetual quarrels became more and more intolerable’.⁷ As a result of this perceived ‘anarchy’, Britain’s strategy of non-intervention was abandoned in 1873 and several of the Malay States came under British control amidst concerns regarding local disputes and their effect on trade, as well as the potential threat of other European powers in the region.⁸ The British thus sought to take a more active role in the States surrounding the Straits and Clarke initiated a British Residents system, which was established via the Pangkor Engagement of 1874. However, local discontent to growing British influence culminated in the murder of the first British Resident in the State of Perak, James Birch on 2 November 1875. The era of British non-intervention in the area was officially at an end and the Governor of the Straits Settlements quickly sent in troops to promptly and brutally suppress any resistance to British authority.

This chapter examines the background to the Perak War and explores the circumstances in which the British Resident system was set up in Malaya, thus paving the way for greater British influence on the peninsula. The aggressive British policies that were implemented here will be explored, as well as the ways in which these policies contradicted the intentions of the Colonial Office. These events are important in terms of understanding the manner in which British colonisers dealt with those they sought to bring under direct British influence and how their actions made outbreaks of violence highly probable. This chapter demonstrates the significance of individual men on the spot in shaping events on the periphery, including the nature of the violence when indigenous opposition broke out. Directly after Birch’s murder, troops moved swiftly into the country, razing villages and brutally suppressing the opposition. Issues that will be addressed include the ways in which the resistance was suppressed, considering for example the severe punishments meted out to those allegedly involved in the Resident’s murder. By examining the role of the British administration in the colony and its communication with the Colonial Office we will be able to ascertain the development of the violence directed against the indigenous population of Perak, considering whether the violence accorded with British policy or whether it was the result of ad hoc decisions taken by individuals on the ground.

As historian C. D. Cowan has highlighted, in the early period of British involvement in Malaya, the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 had ‘left the British

⁷ Clarke, ‘Straits Settlements’, 450.

⁸ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 1.

settlements as the only outside power in the Peninsula'.⁹ The treaty, which marked a desire in London to 'end colonial disputes' between Britain and the Netherlands,¹⁰ ensured Dutch supremacy in Sumatra,¹¹ and British control of the Malacca Straits.¹² Hence, it is clear that European relations dictated British policies in the region. In the Malay States Britain initially undertook a colonial policy of committed non-intervention in which 'Earlier requests for intervention brought invariably prompt and emphatic refusal from Whitehall'¹³ under the Liberal government. As V. G. Kiernan has emphasised, 'As late as 1874 no maps or handbooks of the peninsula existed'.¹⁴ However, a series of local disputes and dynastic quarrels, failure by local officials to create a situation of stability, as well as the increasing fear of foreign intervention led the Colonial Office to consider an increased role in the area.¹⁵ In the early 1870s, the areas of Perak, a state on the northwest of the Malay Peninsula and Selangor, on the west coast, were said to be 'in a state of anarchy' as a result of continual disturbances and piracy.¹⁶ Internal conflicts were having a detrimental effect on the trade of British and Chinese merchants, the latter of whom wrote a petition to the British government requesting action.¹⁷ The Chinese community argued that as a result of the Government's policy of non-intervention, the States were 'rapidly returning to their original state of lawlessness and barbarism'.¹⁸ Mining disputes between Chinese tin-miners were a key source of conflict and the severity of the disturbances 'compelled the Straits Government to act'.¹⁹ It has also been highlighted that there was a 'deteriorating situation' in other areas of the British Empire and pressure from these disturbances led Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to express a 'desire to contain

⁹ Ibid., 17. Anglo-Dutch rivalry in the region dated back to the sixteenth century, see: Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: 'A Fleeting, Passing Phase'* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 48.

¹⁰ Anthony Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain 1858-1898* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, University of Malaya Press, 1969), 11.

¹¹ Leading to a conflict that lasted for forty years in Aceh, which cost the lives of approximately 75,000 Acehnese, see: Emmanuel Kreike, 'Genocide in the Kampongs? Dutch Nineteenth Century Colonial Warfare in Aceh, Sumatra', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 14:3-4 (2012), 297-316.

¹² Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, 11.

¹³ C. Northcote Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya 1867-1877* (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1960), 106.

¹⁴ V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: Black Man, Yellow Man, and White Man in the Age of Empire* (London: The Cresset Library, 1988 [1969]), 83.

¹⁵ P. L. Burns, 'Introduction', in Burns and C. D. Cowan (eds), *Sir Frank Swettenham's Malayan Journals 1874-1876* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), xvi.

¹⁶ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 109.

¹⁷ Petition to Ord in *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula, in the Neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements*, C. 1111 (1874), 30-32; Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 109-10.

¹⁸ Petition to Ord, C. 1111, 32.

¹⁹ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 115.

the spreading troubles in Malaya and his willingness to reconsider British-sponsored pacification of the troubled Malay states'.²⁰ On Kimberley's orders, the new Governor of the Straits Settlements Andrew Clarke was sent to Malaya on 20 September 1873 to investigate the situation on the peninsula and report back with suggestions for further action:

to promote the restoration of peace and order ... I should wish you especially to consider whether it would be advisable to appoint a British officer to reside in any of the States. Such an appointment could, of course, only be made with the full consent of the Native Government, and the expenses connected with it would have to be defrayed by the Government of the Straits Settlements.²¹

While these instructions marked a 'new phase in the history of Malaya and of the British empire',²² these directives were not strictly adhered to. Upon arrival in Singapore on 4 November 1873, Clarke had already decided that he would go beyond his mandate, later justifying his actions thus: 'Reporting alone scarcely seemed to meet the grave urgency of the situation. It was necessary to act in the first place, and to report afterwards'.²³ Clarke argued further that 'the War Office is at this moment crammed with such documents, the majority of which have never been even studied. Still less acted upon'.²⁴ At this time there was also a succession dispute and further justification for British intervention in the region was provided by Raja Abdullah, who was vying for recognition as the new Sultan, in an ongoing succession dispute.²⁵ In an attempt to gain British favour, Abdullah wrote to Clarke requesting that a British officer come to Perak to advise him in reference to the local hostilities, thus providing Clarke with his chance to intervene, or as Emily Sadka has stated, he offered Clarke a 'key to the

²⁰ E. Chew, 'The Reasons for British Intervention in Malaya: Review and Reconsideration', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 6:1 (1965), 88.

²¹ Cited in Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 111-12.

²² W. David McIntyre, 'Britain's Intervention in Malaya: The Origin of Lord Kimberley's Instructions to Sir Andrew Clarke in 1873', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 2:3 (1965), 47.

²³ Cited in Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 114.

²⁴ Clarke, 'Straits Settlements', 451; see also: John S. Galbraith, 'The "Turbulent Frontier" as a Factor in British Expansion', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2:2 (1960), 160.

²⁵ As Turnbull explains, Perak had an intricate power structure: the sultan was at the apex, followed by the *raja muda* and then a hierarchy of chiefs: see Turnbull, *A Short History of Malaysia*, 130; see also: William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), ch. 1.

door'.²⁶ Although this 'key' was actually provided by W. H. M. Read, a Straits merchant, who wrote up the letter, which was then translated into Malay and signed by Abdullah, requesting that Clarke intervene in the local disturbances as an 'umpire' and that after peace was restored 'it would be the desire of the Sultan and chiefs to place the country under the protection of the British flag, and for that purpose to enter upon a new treaty of a friendly and liberal nature'.²⁷ In order to increase British influence in the region, Clarke set about establishing a Residents system in the states of Negri Sembilan, Selangor, and Perak in which a British officer would advise the Malay chiefs. Clarke sought to settle the disputed succession of the Sultan, bring peace to the mining areas, as well as gain new British territory. Clarke's policies were brought together in the Pangkor Engagement, which was agreed upon on 20 January 1874 on Pangkor Island, just off the coast of Perak.²⁸ The heads of the warring Chinese factions were present and a peace settlement was agreed which included disarmament, the destruction of stockades and compensation.²⁹

A key aspect of Pangkor was the question of succession, which had been disputed since the death of Sultan Ali in 1871; there were three potential successors to consider: Rajas Abdullah, Ismail and Yusuf. The latter was the son of the late Sultan, but he had been previously passed over because of unpopularity for his role as a 'ruthless commander' in a local dispute; Ismail was elected in 1871, as a result of Abdullah's unpopularity as 'an opium-smoker and a coward'.³⁰ At Pangkor, Abdullah became the new Sultan – although this decision continued to be disputed – Ismail officially became the ex-Sultan and Yusuf was again overlooked. Neither Ismail nor Yusuf attended the event at Pangkor for reasons that are unclear.³¹ In any case, Clarke 'had taken the law into his own hands' by reversing the election of 1871;³² this decision created a highly ambiguous situation, as 'the settlement recognised one of the three

²⁶ Burns, 'Introduction', xxi; Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970 [1968]), 47; see W. David McIntyre, *The Imperial Frontier in the Tropics, 1865-75: A Study of British Colonial Policy in West Africa, Malaya and the South Pacific in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 292-93.

²⁷ [W. H. M. Read], *Play and Politics, Recollections of Malaya By an Old Resident* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton, 1901), 26; McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 292. For further information on Read see: P. L. Burns (ed.), *The Journals of J. W. W. Birch: First British Resident to Perak: 1874-1875* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 17, n3.

²⁸ See: McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 295.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 293.

³⁰ See: Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 73. As Mary Turnbull explains, Perak had an intricate power structure: the sultan was at the apex, followed by the *raja muda* and then a hierarchy of chiefs, Turnbull, *A Short History of Malaysia*, 130-31.

³¹ Turnbull, *A Short History of Malaysia*, 133. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 185, n29.

³² McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 295.

claimants without securing his acceptance by the other two. Birch, the new resident, found himself accredited to a Sultan whose right was denied by half his subjects, and who could not guarantee the support of the Perak chiefs for the Resident'.³³ The new Governor William Jervois, later admitted to Lord Carnarvon, Kimberley's successor as Secretary of State, that 'from the day when we deposed the late Sultan Ismail and set up Abdullah upon the throne, it was merely a question of time, and that of no long duration, when opposition to our intervention would become apparent'.³⁴ As a result of Pangkor, both the new Sultan Abdullah and the Mantri, ruler of Larut (a district in Perak) were now subject to British advice which 'must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom'; adjustments to the territorial boundaries were also made in favour of the Straits Settlements.³⁵ It has been claimed that the British version of the treaty was much more assertive than its Malay translation³⁶ and the agreement demonstrated a misunderstanding (whether intentional or otherwise) of the role of religion and custom in Perak,³⁷ thereby creating a precarious situation regarding the distribution of power between the chiefs and residents. Events at Pangkor were conducted by Clarke at great speed and with much secrecy and as Colonel Anson, Lieutenant-Governor of Penang observed: 'There can be little doubt that these chiefs did not fully realise what they were asked to agree to; or if they did, had no intention of acting up to it',³⁸ in contrast, Anthony Webster has argued that the 'Malay rulers saw the new arrangements for what they were, an unwelcome intrusion of British imperial power'.³⁹

Previously, British control in the region had been increased through local treaties and, as Sadka has highlighted, it was 'common practice throughout the period to secure documents legitimising British actions by presenting drafts for signature under

³³ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 80.

³⁴ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 November 1875 in *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula, in the Neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements*, C.1505 (1876), 85-86.

³⁵ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 136; the Pangkor Engagement is reproduced in Burns, *Journals*, 375-77.

³⁶ Iza Hussin, 'The Making of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in British Malaya', in Thomas David DuBois (ed.), *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 157. Regarding the issue of the translation see: M. A. Mallal, 'J. W. W. Birch: Causes of his Assassination' (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1952), 44-45.

³⁷ See Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 80.

³⁸ A. E. H. Anson, *About Others and Myself: 1745 to 1920* (London: John Murray, 1920), 322; see also Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 139.

³⁹ Anthony Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in South East Asia 1770-1890* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 182.

pressure'; a long established colonial practice.⁴⁰ While A. J. Stockwell is correct in stating that in Southeast Asia, 'British imperialism advanced by the pen as well as by the sword and its history is peppered with treaties—albeit unequal ones', it was nevertheless the case that the threat of British force was never far behind.⁴¹ One correspondent recognised the reality for indigenous communities that made treaties with European imperial powers; he wrote that because the chiefs had signed the Pangkor Treaty they have 'forfeited their rights'.⁴² The Resident system was to prove highly problematic as a result of their ambiguous role and the extent to which the chiefs were obliged to act on British 'advice'. Stockwell has argued that British intervention was motivated by concerns regarding the increased threat of Germany and the area was of particular strategic importance for the empire as of 1869 owing to the opening of the Suez Canal.⁴³ E. Chew also argued that British interests in the area were focused on keeping out other potential foreign influence and highlights that the war came at a period of 'renewed imperial sentiment in England and the appearance of the German colossus on the continent'.⁴⁴

Perak's first Resident was James Birch, whose actions within his new role contradicted Clarke's instructions and antagonised Perak's various chiefs and the new Sultan.⁴⁵ There had been a nine-month delay in Birch taking up his residency, which 'allowed Abdullah's enemies to harden their resistance to the Pangkor decisions', or at the very least, led the chiefs to believe 'that the Pangkor Treaty could be ignored'.⁴⁶ Changes made by Birch included a new civil code, a police force and a superior judge who was answerable only to the Resident and Sultan.⁴⁷ The chiefs were further provoked by Birch's criticism of the long-established system of debt-slavery and his attempts to hinder the practice, and his insistence on providing refuge to escaped slaves

⁴⁰ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 57. On 'informal empire' see the path-breaking article: John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, 6:1 (1953), 11; Gallagher and Robinson with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

⁴¹ Stockwell, 'British Expansion', 372.

⁴² 'The War In Perak', *The Times*, 5 February 1876.

⁴³ Stockwell, 'British Expansion', 377, 382. See also: K. G. Tregonning, 'How Germany made Malaya British', *Asian Studies*, 2:2 (1964), 180-87; Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Origin of British Administration in Malaya', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* [hereafter: *JMBRAS*], 39:1 (1966), 52-91.

⁴⁴ Burns, 'Introduction', xvi; Chew, 'The Reasons for British Intervention', 93. See also: Nicholas Tarling, 'The Establishment of the Colonial Régimes', in Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume 2: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 32-33.

⁴⁵ For a detailed analysis regarding the circumstances of Birch's murder see: Mallal, 'J. W. W. Birch'.

⁴⁶ Burns, 'Introduction', xxii.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, xxix; Burns, *Journals*, 104, n3.

particularly antagonised the chiefs,⁴⁸ as well as his creation of a new system of revenue, which was to diminish the income of the chiefs.⁴⁹ Financial incentives were offered to the chiefs if they complied with British demands and Sadka has highlighted that financial issues represented a central problem within the relationship:

Money was doled out to buy support or as a reward for obedience; it was withheld when rajas or chiefs were recalcitrant, with the explanation that there would be no money for allowances till the revenues were properly collected. The chiefs were unwilling to exchange their rights for irregular and arbitrary payments, and Birch was not in a position to make fixed allowances until he had revenue.⁵⁰

In April 1875, Clarke had reminded Abdullah that he was bound to the Pangkor Engagement which stipulated that the British Resident was to receive all revenue and taxes.⁵¹ As C. Northcote Parkinson stated, by ‘striking at the chiefs’ means of livelihood, Birch managed to create a common resistance among men who agreed, perhaps, in nothing else’.⁵² Frustrated by Abdullah’s refusal to cooperate, Birch threatened to have him removed from the throne.⁵³ Jervois also realised too late that Abdullah was not up to the job and that he did not enjoy local support.⁵⁴

Lord Henry Stanley of Alderley from the India Office provided staunch opposition to British policy in the area and highlighted Birch’s incompetence, stating that ‘on several occasions he had to resort to strong measures, such as burning the houses of refractory headmen, by way of example’. Stanley concluded that ‘while the Colonial Office fancied that the Resident was acting by advice, he was advising by burning’.⁵⁵ Birch was informed that the Raja Ngah in the town of Bidor was illegally raising taxes on tin exports and as punishment Birch decided to burn down Ngah’s

⁴⁸ E. Sadka, ‘The Residential System in the Protected Malay States, 1874-1895’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1960), 141. That this was a key issue is clear from the Sultan’s list of grievances, see: *Enquiry as to Complicity of Chiefs into the Perak Outrages; Précis of Evidence*, (Singapore, 1876), 11.

⁴⁹ On the issue of slavery see Jervois to Carnarvon, 15 October 1875, C.1505, 27. On the eradication of slavery see Hussin, ‘The Making of Islamic Law’, 160.

⁵⁰ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 84.

⁵¹ Clarke to Abdullah, Enclosure 1 in No. 49, 22 April 1875, C.1505, 39.

⁵² Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 222.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁵⁴ Jervois to Carnarvon, 10 July 1875, The National Archives (hereafter: TNA) PRO30/6/40. See also, Birch to Jervois, 13 May 1875, PRO30/6/40

⁵⁵ HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol. 230, cc824-46; ‘The Malay Peninsula’, *The Times*, 25 December 1875.

house.⁵⁶ However, Birch came to regret his actions, stating in his journal: ‘Yusuf and Ismail complain of the burning of Ngah’s house and Ismail has now got to calling it his house ... I am not satisfied by any means that it was a wise thing to do, and I may have made a mistake in doing it’. He continues: ‘At all events I shall not burn any more houses, but this was a place in the jungle....’⁵⁷

However, Birch’s actions were not solely to blame for the precarious situation, as Sadka has highlighted, the Pangkor Engagement was inherently problematic, particularly with regards to the Resident’s role in which ‘control’ was called ‘advice’.⁵⁸ While Jervois would later criticise Clarke’s approach, on his arrival in Perak, Jervois continued to implement Clarke’s policy of intervention in the area during his time as Governor (1875-77).⁵⁹ Jervois arrived in Perak in May 1875 to investigate the growing tensions and realised that some form of action was needed; the Resident system appeared untenable.⁶⁰ As Jervois stated: ‘The Resident’s advice is disregarded, and he must either passively look on while acts are committed which he disapproves, but cannot control, or he must assume to himself a power which is inconsistent with his position as adviser’.⁶¹

It was in the midst of the tensions between Birch and the Malay chiefs that Jervois travelled to Perak to implement a new agreement. After an unsuccessful consultation with Abdullah, Jervois independently decided to introduce a new system in which two British officers would be appointed as Queen’s Commissioners to carry out the administration of the country in the name of the Sultan with the assistance of a Malay Council; these changes were to be conveyed to the chiefs via the issuing of a Proclamation.⁶² Whilst negotiations were being conducted with Abdullah for his consent to the new system, a plot to rid Perak of Birch was allegedly underway, however, in the lead up to the outbreak of violence Jervois had failed to recognise the true extent of the tensions and the gravity of the situation. Jervois claimed, regarding the likelihood of resistance, that ‘there is not the least probability of such an event’.⁶³

⁵⁶ See: Burns, *Journals*, 23, 181. Although it seems that Birch was misinformed regarding Ngah’s position, see: *Enquiry*, 6.

⁵⁷ Burns, *Journals*, 210.

⁵⁸ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 79.

⁵⁹ See for example: Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 November 1875, C.1505, 86. Burns, ‘Introduction’, xvi.

⁶⁰ Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*, rev. edn. (London: Lane, 1929 [1927]), 199.

⁶¹ Cited in Unsigned, ‘The Malay Outbreak’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, (1875), 813.

⁶² Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 200.

⁶³ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 October 1875, C.1505, 38; a view confirmed by Birch, see, Mallal, ‘J. W. W. Birch’.

Furthermore, Jervois stated, 'I believe the desire is general amongst the great body of the population that the British should take into their hands the government of the country, for they know that then they would then be protected, be paid for their labour, and receive justice, which they neither get nor expect under the Sultan's rule'.⁶⁴ Frank Swettenham (who was appointed Assistant Resident in Selangor) later claimed to have been aware of the worsening tensions on his visits to Perak and knew that 'trouble was brewing'.⁶⁵ Jervois had failed to understand the extent of the animosity towards Birch and how it had united the otherwise divided chiefs and he believed that the majority of the people wanted to be under British rule⁶⁶ and on his September trip to Perak he went on to make matters even worse; as Parkinson states: 'His visit was the Malays' last opportunity for redress of their grievances, and its main result was a decision to make Birch's powers more absolute'.⁶⁷ Both Birch and Swettenham were to distribute the new Proclamation throughout Perak which stated that: 'Her Britannic Majesty's Government have determined to administer the government of Perak in the name of the Sultan'.⁶⁸ Birch had previously received death threats and had been warned that the posting of the Proclamation would not be allowed in Pasir Salak, but still he did nothing to protect himself and it was whilst his men attempted to carry out this assignment that Birch was stabbed to death at the bath-house on 2 November 1875.⁶⁹ It seems that the violence was sparked by the attempts of Birch's interpreter Arshad to post the Proclamation, which was immediately torn down; 'Arshad struck with a stick one of the Malays who had been concerned in the proceeding'.⁷⁰ In the following moments Arshad was stabbed, shortly followed by Birch.⁷¹

In the immediate aftermath of Birch's murder, Colonel Anson, Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, swiftly sent out a garrison to carry out a surprise assault on Pasir Salak and bring the area under control; this attack was unsuccessful however and marked a military reversal for the British in which 17 officers and men were killed,

⁶⁴ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 October 1875, C.1505, 38.

⁶⁵ Frank Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya* (London: Hutchinson, 1942), 52.

⁶⁶ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 215.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁶⁹ See: *ibid.*, 237-38.

⁷⁰ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 November 1875, C.1505, 83.

⁷¹ Abbott had accompanied Birch to Pasir Salak: for his account of events see: T. F. Abbott, MSS.Ind.Ocn s.114, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies, Rhodes House [hereafter: 'Abbott Papers'].

including Captain Innes the Commissioner in charge.⁷² This reversal was the result of the hasty manner in which Anson had organised the expedition into the village, with a lack of command and outdated weaponry – including rockets ‘of an obsolete fashion’ – which the participants could not operate.⁷³ Confusion amongst the Sepoys led to them shooting on the British troops and as Jervois reported, ‘Want of knowledge of their language was also a serious difficulty in dealing with the [Sikhs], and Mr. Plunket had to give orders through an interpreter’.⁷⁴ As Abbott stated, ‘The Sepoys and police were huddled together behind a large tree close to the river, and proved utterly useless, and rather dangerous from their wild firing, which wounded some of the troops’.⁷⁵ Furthermore, as Swettenham later observed, ‘We had no surgeon and no stretchers, and the journey back was far from pleasant’.⁷⁶ With reference to the aftermath of Innes’ death and the failed attack on Pasir Salak, Peter Benson Maxwell, the former Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements, stated that

now people fairly lost their heads. With the news of this reverse a season of panic set in. Rumours of a great Mahometan ‘revival’, and of a general rising of all the Malay Peninsula arose in the Colony, and spread like wildfire to this country, where we were told that the ferocious and fanatical Malays were about to kindle a religious war against hated foreigners traders and Christians [sic].⁷⁷

Anson’s swift attempt to rid Pasir Salak of any opposition was representative of a wider approach across the British Empire and adhered to broader practices of colonial warfare, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this instance, Anson’s decisive response was counter-productive and led to an initial British defeat, which in turn led to a sense of panic; it was warned in the British press that ‘if we are to maintain the tradition of our invincibility among these semi-civilised races, we cannot afford to adopt a slovenly manner either of making war or of keeping the peace in our relations with them’.⁷⁸ William Napier, Chairman of the Straits Settlements Association, acknowledged the

⁷² J. F. A. McNair, *Perak and the Malays* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1878), 377; Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 234.

⁷³ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 244-46; Abbott to Stirling, Sub-Enclosure 10 in Enclosure 1, 9 November 1875, C.1505, 233.

⁷⁴ Swettenham to Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlement, Enclosure 5 in No. 78, 18 November 1875, C.1505, 91. See also: ‘Abbott Papers’.

⁷⁵ Abbott to Stirling, Sub-Enclosure 10 in Enclosure 1, 9 November 1875, C.1505, 233.

⁷⁶ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 62; see also, ‘Abbott Papers’.

⁷⁷ P. Benson Maxwell, *Our Malay Conquests* (London: P. S. King, 1878), 60.

⁷⁸ ‘The War in the Malayan Peninsula’, *The Times*, 31 January 1876.

importance of the failed assault, stating that with these events ‘the affair assumed a new aspect; and an expedition which, in its origin, could have been properly considered as limited to merely punitive objects, and specially directed against the murderers of the Resident, acquired a different character’.⁷⁹

Jervois had not consulted with the Colonial Office prior to the Proclamation initiative and his actions had received no official sanctioning; hence his sudden calls for military assistance in the wake of Birch’s murder ‘provoked suspicion and dismay in the Colonial Office’.⁸⁰ Carnarvon expressed his hope that the violence was an ‘isolated outrage’ and stated his desire to avoid any military intervention: ‘I hope this may admit of being treated as an individual outrage, and not lead to military operations, which would endanger British policy in native States’.⁸¹ Carnarvon also reiterated Kimberley’s concerns regarding the need to contain the conflict, emphasising that his ‘hands are *extraordinarily* full of very heavy work now’.⁸² Kimberley gave Clarke his instructions during the same period in which he instructed Wolseley with regards to the Ashanti expedition in West Africa (1873-4).⁸³ In his reluctance to act in Perak, Carnarvon also cited a range of disputes throughout the Empire and it is likely that his concerns were influenced by recent events in India regarding the ‘Kooka outbreak’, which occurred in 1872. This incident involved the summary execution of sixty-eight Kuka Sikh prisoners in the wake of a small-scale rebellion in Malerkotla, a principality in Punjab, and caused a stir in the imperial metropole; the threat of the rebellion had been limited and the killings were undertaken *after* peace had been restored.⁸⁴ Brutal events throughout the Empire left an ‘indelible memory’ on the colonists, notably the Indian Mutiny in 1857 and the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865 in Jamaica, both of which will be discussed further in chapter 5.⁸⁵ Colonel Anson later reflected that the events in Jamaica were at the forefront of his thoughts as he made his way to the Malay Peninsula.⁸⁶ Hence, the wider context of episodes of violence was important to the approach in Perak and

⁷⁹ William Francis Patrick Napier, ‘The Malays: and A Few Words Regarding Perak and Salangore’, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Collection*, (1876), 18-19.

⁸⁰ Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists*, 191.

⁸¹ Carnarvon to Jervois, 5 November 1875, ‘Correspondence Respecting Affairs in Perak’, TNA CO882/3.

⁸² Cited in McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 307.

⁸³ McIntyre, ‘Britain’s Intervention in Malaya’. See W. D. McIntyre, ‘British Policy in West Africa: The Ashanti Expedition of 1873-4’, *The Historical Journal*, 5:1 (1962), 19-46.

⁸⁴ See Kim A. Wagner, “‘Calculated to Strike Terror’: The Amritsar Massacre and the Spectacle of Colonial Violence”, *Past and Present*, 233:1 (2016), 185-225. That the ‘insurrection’ had already been suppressed is discussed in *The Times*, 1 March 1872, 9.

⁸⁵ Wagner, “‘Calculated to Strike Terror’”, 212.

⁸⁶ Anson in *The Spectator*, 20 August 1920.

concerns were further fuelled by the Dutch conflict in Sumatra, which was also seen as relevant. As expressed in *The Times*, the events in Sumatra were perceived in the imperial metropole as a sign of a ‘flame of the Musselman revival’ and that ‘encouraged by the sight of the Dutch reverses in [Aceh], the Malays of the Peninsula may cherish the hope of driving the English out of Malacca. If such be the character of the outbreak at Perak, it may give us not a little trouble’.⁸⁷ However, Jervois believed that Ismail would not demonstrate open resistance against the Government once he saw that the British would ‘bring a force into the field’.⁸⁸ Jervois’ call for troop reinforcements was received with concern from Carnarvon who feared that Jervois would use the murder as an excuse for the conquest and annexation of Perak.⁸⁹ However, 2,000 troops were sent out from Hong Kong and India, despite Carnarvon’s reservations, and a bitter series of correspondence ensued between the two,⁹⁰ which was worsened by delays in communication that led to Carnarvon receiving requests for troop reinforcements without having received a full explanation from Jervois of the events on the ground;⁹¹ hence, Jervois ‘demanded large reinforcements from a Government which was in the dark as to their purpose’.⁹² Carnarvon noted in his journal on 13 November: ‘I am utterly disenchanted with Jervois. I believe he is getting up a little war of annexation but I am nearly powerless to stop it. At this distance I cannot take the responsibility of refusing the troops if he persists in calling for them’.⁹³ This situation demonstrates the extent to which British politicians in London were reliant on the men on the ground for accurate assessments of colonial conflicts and they were often subject to the colonial objectives of these men. It also shows the difficulties regarding the technology of communication at this time, resulting in delays, which meant that the colonial administrators had to use their initiative and acted without having their actions sanctioned by London.

It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Jervois utilised Birch’s murder to carry out a military campaign in the country with the aim of annexation; it is clear,

⁸⁷ *The Times*, 10 November 1875, 9.

⁸⁸ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 November 1875, C.1505, 86.

⁸⁹ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 254.

⁹⁰ See for example: Carnarvon to Jervois, 10 December 1875, C.1505, 64-67.

⁹¹ Jervois later explained that ‘the telegraphic communication with Europe was interrupted both by the Madras and by the Siberian line’: Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 November 1875, C.1505, 86.

⁹² Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists*, 191; Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 213; McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 310.

⁹³ Peter Gordon (ed.), *The Political Diaries of the Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, 1857-1890: Colonial Secretary and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland* (London: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2009), 272.

however, that future British policy in the area was at the forefront of his mind throughout 1875: Jervois wrote to Carnarvon expressing his advocacy of a policy of annexation, which he argued, ‘would certainly pay well, whilst it would be an incalculable advantage to the State itself, and a great benefit to the cause of humanity and freedom’.⁹⁴ Jervois also believed that annexation was achievable ‘without costing a penny or firing a shot’.⁹⁵ As reports in *The Spectator* make clear, Jervois’ actions were certainly viewed as amounting to annexation and the role of the Residents was fundamentally ‘to govern the country’.⁹⁶ Carnarvon’s position on this issue was clear however, and Jervois was under strict instructions that annexation was not an option at this time, although Carnarvon did not rule it out for the future, but stated that the time ‘has not yet come’.⁹⁷ After his tour of the state, Jervois concluded that a complete takeover should be resisted for the moment; one reason he gave for this view was that ‘it would be very inconvenient if the inhabitants of Perak all at once became entitled to the rights and privileges of British subjects’.⁹⁸

In any case, Jervois now planned for a military campaign to find and punish those culpable for Birch’s murder and suppress any resistance; as he communicated to the Colonial Office, ‘it is most advisable to make a display of power, and that difficulties present and future will cease by the adoption of such a course’.⁹⁹ As Swettenham later stated, this task was to entail ‘perpetual work day and night’.¹⁰⁰ The Navy was ordered to blockade the Perak coastline, although this was deliberately not announced publicly.¹⁰¹ A prohibition of the sale of arms was also enforced throughout the area. It has been argued that Commander Stirling and his naval soldiers were particularly ‘spoiling for a fight’ and had ‘a reputation to retrieve and casualties to avenge’¹⁰² after the first failed attempt to take Pasir Salak. Theirs was an attitude fit for the assignment intended to show an ‘imposing display of force’.¹⁰³ The troops were further spurred on as they passed Birch’s abandoned boat en route to Pasir Salak for the second attack on 16 November; it has also been claimed that the troops were further

⁹⁴ Jervois to Carnarvon, 10 July 1875, PRO30/6/40.

⁹⁵ Jervois to Carnarvon, 7 August 1875, PRO30/6/40.

⁹⁶ *The Spectator*, 27 November 1875, 2.

⁹⁷ Carnarvon to Jervois, 13 September 1875, PRO30/6/40; V. G. Kiernan, ‘Britain, Siam, and Malaya: 1875-1885’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 28:1 (1956), 5; Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 314.

⁹⁸ Jervois cited in Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 91. See: HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol. 230, cc824-46.

⁹⁹ Jervois to the Colonial Office, 13 November 1875, C.1505, 54.

¹⁰⁰ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 67.

¹⁰¹ Jervois to Carnarvon, 2 December 1875, C.1505, 119.

¹⁰² Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 260.

¹⁰³ Jervois to Colborne, Enclosure 7 in No. 93, 18 November 1875, C.1505, 127-28.

encouraged by ‘rivalry between the army and the navy’.¹⁰⁴ This time the operation was equipped with reinforcements, as well as the ‘needed artillery support and the needed unity of command’ and the operation was carried out without British losses.¹⁰⁵ As the forces made their way towards the village, Stirling described how he ‘directed rockets and shell to be thrown into the jungle at intervals to clear the way for the troops (who burnt the houses on their way as they advanced) ... the enemy again made a stand, and opened fire on us with their rifles, but with no effect and they were soon dislodged’.¹⁰⁶ As the troops entered the deserted village it was soon destroyed and as one participant described, ‘the village was fired, and the banks for a mile and a half were ablaze’¹⁰⁷ – this was just one of many ‘acts of vengeance’ to be executed throughout Perak.¹⁰⁸

Lt. H. B. Rich of the Royal Engineers described how Major-General Francis Colborne and his troops then proceeded north from Pasir Salak; having spent a few days marching with no signs of opposition, Colborne arrived in the village of Bota where they tried to ‘obtain news of the whereabouts of Maharajah Lela and ex-Sultan Ismail’. However, he ‘could gain no information until he tied some of the chief men to a tree, preparatory to lashing them, when they told him Lela was about one day’s march in front of our force’.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, on the following day the troops advanced to Blanja ‘intending to attack’, but then, ‘contrary to expectation, they entered the place without opposition’.¹¹⁰ Essential to these operations was the desire to find Lela who resided in the village and was a key suspect in Birch’s murder; it was reported that in the aftermath of the murder, Lela shouted from the steps of his house, ‘This is not the will of the Raja, or his order; it is our will, because we cannot stand it any longer. Others’ houses have been burned, and where are we to go to, if our houses are burned too! It is better that we should die at once’.¹¹¹ As Jervois wrote: ‘the suspicions that point to Lela as the instigator of the crime are so strong that the occupation of his village, to be followed by the uncompromising demand for his surrender, is the first object to be aimed at’, however, he did not expect his surrender ‘until an imposing display of force

¹⁰⁴ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 261; Harold E. Raugh Jr., ‘Storming the Strongholds: The Perak War, 1875-76’, *Soldiers of the Queen*, Journal of the Victorian Military Society, 102 (2000), 9; Dunlop’s Report, 16 November 1875, TNA CO276/6.

¹⁰⁵ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 260; Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 63.

¹⁰⁶ Stirling’s Report cited in ‘The War in the Malayan Peninsula’, *The Times*, 31 January 1876; Stirling to Ryder, 16 November 1875, C.1505, 235. See also: Dunlop’s Report, 16 November 1875, CO276/6.

¹⁰⁷ ‘The Malay Peninsula’, *The Times*, 25 December 1875.

¹⁰⁸ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 262.

¹⁰⁹ H. B. Rich, ‘The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula: November 1875 - February 1876’, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Collection*, (1876), 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹¹ HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol. 230, cc824-46.

has been exhibited'.¹¹² Captain Dunlop reported that he had received information that Lela had 'about 300 men with him and food for only one day'.¹¹³ In his next letter, Dunlop expressed his belief that the scarcity of food would aid their attempts to capture the alleged culprits and stated: 'One thing is very certain, rice is becoming scarce, and this in my opinion will do more towards weakening our enemies than anything else'.¹¹⁴ Dunlop also described how the British 'determined to burn' the village of Gaja, opposite Pasir Salak, because of the alleged complicity of one inhabitant in Birch's murder.¹¹⁵ Dunlop concluded in his report that 'the lesson they received yesterday, though a severe one, will not be sufficient to restore order or safety to Europeans in Perak'.¹¹⁶ Pasir Salak was destroyed and its reoccupation prevented; Swettenham acknowledged that 'These measures were then very necessary if they sound severe now', but he then states that when 'considering the circumstances they cannot really be considered harsh'.¹¹⁷ The incident at Pasir Salak was not the only example of a village being held to ransom; after shots had been fired upon British provision boats from the village of Bhota, it was proposed to 'inflict chastisement' on the village and the British began to destroy it. However, seeing the destruction that they intended to cause, the headmen of the village soon handed over the alleged perpetrators.¹¹⁸

After the successful occupation of Pasir Salak the troops subsequently proceeded to the village of Kinta, believing Ismail to have fled there although interestingly, Jervois informed Carnarvon in a despatch from 18 December that Brigadier General Ross was making his way from Blanja to Kinta but that this movement 'has not been made in accordance with instructions from me.'¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Jervois expressed his misapprehension at the plans to enter Kinta 'where I expect considerable opposition will be made'.¹²⁰ However, Private Michael Weir's account details how Kinta was taken with little difficulty on arrival, despite the village being defended by a small Malayan force: 'the natives under Sultan Ishmad and Rajah Sela [sic] were completely demoralised and when they heard loud cheers of our little Brigade charging their Capital the [sic] broke in wild confusion and fled firing off their braf's guns just before the final

¹¹² Jervois to Colborne, Enclosure 7 in No. 93, 18 November 1875, C.1505, 127-28.

¹¹³ Dunlop to Jervois, 12 November 1875, C.1505, 133.

¹¹⁴ Dunlop to Jervois, 13 November 1875, C.1505, 133.

¹¹⁵ Dunlop's Report, 16 November 1875, CO276/6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 210.

¹¹⁸ Jervois to Carnarvon, 14 January 1876, C.1505, 269. See also, 'The War in Perak', *The Times*, 3 February 1876.

¹¹⁹ Jervois to Carnarvon, 18 December 1875, C.1505, 224.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 224.

rush'. As was often the case throughout this campaign the expected strength of opposition of the enemy did not materialise and Weir concludes that 'Kinta was ours with 5 guns and much spoil. We burned part of the town and occupied the remainder ever since'.¹²¹ Rich confirms this destruction, stating that on capturing Kinta, 'The General then gave orders for all the houses on the right bank of the river to be burnt'.¹²² It was also acknowledged in the press that 'The Malays are reported to be everywhere dispirited and retreating. Driven from place to place, frightened by our "unfair" fighting with the "devilish rockets" as they say, they see that they are playing a losing game, and it is the general opinion that active resistance is at an end'.¹²³ Clearly, the campaign went well beyond Jervois' mandate of 'the punishment of those connected to Mr. Birch and the protection of the lives of British subjects wherever they may be in danger';¹²⁴ Jervois argued that, 'A timid and vacillating policy might furnish a real ground for alarm, as likely to lead to a combination against us which might entail lengthened hostilities and a heavy outlay'.¹²⁵

On capturing Kinta, Jervois' instructions to Major J. F. A. McNair, the Senior Commissioner, were decidedly vague:

Further steps should be taken in order (if possible) to fulfil the objects of the expedition, viz., the capture of those implicated in the recent outrages, and the pacification of the country. I am unwilling to hamper you with minute instructions which you may find it impossible to carry out, but I desire you in all eventualities to keep these ends in view.¹²⁶

These instructions left McNair to decide for himself the best means to achieve the 'pacification' of Perak. Another village, Kota Lama, was also targeted for destruction; an initial attack took place on 4 January 1876. According to the regimental records of the 3rd Regiment ('the Buffs'), as Ismail had fled from Kinta, McNair was 'forced' to 'turn his attention to Kota Lama and the Lok Raja, who treated all his communications with silent contempt'.¹²⁷ The records state that 'Towards the close of December the

¹²¹ Diary Private Michael Weir, 7 January 1876, Staffordshire Regiment Museum Archives (hereafter: SRM) BV/29. See also: Buller, 'Operations against the Disaffected Malays on the Perak River', 29 December 1875, C.1505, 301.

¹²² Rich, 'The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula', 8.

¹²³ 'The War In Perak', *The Times*, 5 February 1876.

¹²⁴ Carnarvon to Jervois, 10 December 1875, C.1505, 67.

¹²⁵ Jervois to Carnarvon, 14 December 1875, C.1505, 68.

¹²⁶ Jervois to McNair, 23 December 1875, C.1505, 250.

¹²⁷ 'With the Buffs in Perak—II', *The Straits Times*, 20 February 1935.

Malays of Kota Lama began to show signs of hostility ... and the Commissioner determined to punish them, but as they made no open attack on our force it was resolved to disarm the inhabitants of Kota Lama and those proving refractory were to have their habitations burned'. Rather than being met with opposition, the British saw that 'armed Malays were seen running away' and furthermore, 'the inhabitants had abandoned their houses and shut them up'. Nevertheless, the dwellings were to be 'searched and burned'. It is clear that shots were only fired at the British after Ross approached a house through the jungle in which there were women and children who, 'at the approach of white faces commenced screaming'.¹²⁸ As Commander Garforth of the Naval Brigade reported, the enemy used their spears 'with great effect'.¹²⁹

The evidence suggests that the inhabitants of Kota Lama had had no intention of attacking the British. The village was destroyed completely by Ross' men during a further punitive expedition on 20 January 1876 under Jervois' instructions 'to make an example of this village', which included the burning of rice stores.¹³⁰ In a letter home, Private James George Johns described the attack from his post on sentry duty thus:

It was a pretty sight to see the Rockets flying over the river into the village. ... The Malays were frightened to death very near for they all ran out of the village and there was about 50 of our men waiting for them and as soon as they saw them running they fired into them, and killed a good number of them, but they could not catch the lot as the jungle was too thick.¹³¹

Garforth stated that the blue jackets were 'trying to outvie [each] other in individual acts of gallantry'.¹³² Johns stated that, 'They then went into the village and burnt it to the ground, they had built it up again since the 4th of January when it was burnt down before'.¹³³ Johns described the action on 20 January thus:

there was another Expedition sent against Kota Lama as it was believed they were as thick as ever and so they was [sic], for when the party about 100 altogether went up to it the Malays opened fire on them, but it was very harmless, and our men returned it pretty warm, they killed another lot of

¹²⁸ Ibid.; see also: 'The Malay Peninsula', *The Times*, 18 February 1876.

¹²⁹ Garforth to Ryder, 5 January 1876, C.1505, 289.

¹³⁰ Jervois to Carnarvon, 14 January 1876, C.1505, 269. Thomas Carter and W. H. Long, *War Medals of the British Army and How they were Won* (London: Norie and Wilson, 1893), 368.

¹³¹ Private James George Johns, 26 April 1876, National Army Museum (hereafter: NAM), 2001-09-53.

¹³² Garforth to Ryder, 5 January 1876, C.1505, 289.

¹³³ Johns, 26 April 1876, NAM 2001-09-53.

Malays and burnt the village to the ground again for they had built it up again and came home after about 6 hours knocking about.¹³⁴

That these actions were partly conceived as punishment is made clear by historian Alan Harfield's statement that 'The Kota Lama Malays were pursued for a while and then the British force withdrew having suitably avenged the death of Major Hawkins and the others who had been killed on 4 January'.¹³⁵ Furthermore, 'Fire was immediately applied to the houses on this side of the river, every one of which was burnt'. Johns goes on to describe a further operation in the village of the same nature on 4 February, which was then followed by the march into a larger village of 200 houses that was also 'burnt to the ground'.¹³⁶ Kota Lama was relentlessly targeted as a result of its alleged reputation 'of being the resort of the worst of characters' and as part of the mission to capture Ismail.¹³⁷

The general population suffered greatly, not only as a result of the destruction of these villages, but also due to the blockading of the coastline, which soon resulted in a scarcity of rice amongst the inhabitants. Correspondence with Ismail reveals that he explained to the authorities that he was unable to meet with them due to the scarcity of rice, as 'his boatmen [were] refusing to leave their families without rice'.¹³⁸ Jervois' response made his position clear:

We are sorry for the people, but the responsibility of all the suffering of the country must rest with those who have caused and excited the disturbances. If no opposition is shown to our troops, and there is a pacific settlement of the affairs of the country, food will be allowed to come in as usual.¹³⁹

Regarding Ismail's message, Jervois stated that 'he did not consider the excuse a good one' and described him as being 'blinded with obstinacy'.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless Ismail was ordered to provide accommodation for British troops.¹⁴¹ However, that Ismail's people were indeed in a desperate situation became clear after his surrender; John Hewick,

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Alan Harfield, *British and Indian Armies in the East Indies, 1685-1935* (Chippenham: Picton Publishing, 1984), 246.

¹³⁶ Johns, 26 April 1876, NAM 2001-09-53.

¹³⁷ Jervois to Carnarvon, 14 January 1876, C.1505, 268; Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 296-97. On the village's reputation see, Bird, *Golden Chersonese*.

¹³⁸ As described by Jervois to Carnarvon, 17 December 1875, C.1505, 179.

¹³⁹ Jervois to Ismail, Enclosure 40 in No. 93, 29 November 1875, C.1505, 140.

¹⁴⁰ Jervois to Carnarvon, 17 December 1875, C.1505, 179-80.

¹⁴¹ Harfield, *British and Indian Armies*, 240.

Assistant Superintendent of the Police, stated that Ismail's people were destitute and he had lost a number of them in the jungle.¹⁴² McNair also later confirmed this situation:

It seems that the sufferings of Ismail and his followers must have been very severe; for when he surrendered he was in a destitute condition, his people emaciated, many of them ill while many more had been left behind in the jungle and had died off.¹⁴³

One correspondent, however, disputed the view that food shortages were occurring as a result of the war and argued that Kota Lama was 'fully provisioned'.¹⁴⁴ In any case, the colonial authorities acknowledged the importance of the blockades in preventing the spread of further outbreaks of resistance and the blockade clearly weakened not only the 'enemy' but also the population at large. This importance was also acknowledged by a correspondent from *The Times*: 'The circumstance that the harvest had not set in, and that last year's supplies had been well-nigh finished, added to the fact that the blockade of the coast prevented supplies from being thrown into Perak, has contributed greatly to the success which has attended the British advance and the comparatively little opposition which has been experienced'.¹⁴⁵

McNair's above statement also highlights a further problem of villagers fleeing 'in great terror' into the jungle ahead of the arrival of British troops,¹⁴⁶ for example, as the British headed towards the villages of Sri Mananti and Datu Moar, it was discovered that the 'whole of the population upon either route had abandoned their homes and taken to the jungle'; these abandoned villages were subsequently destroyed.¹⁴⁷ It is clear that the authorities perceived people fleeing their homes in fear as a sign of guilt. These British military tactics were utilised across the region at the first sign of any disturbance; however, despite the devastation that these tactics caused, British officers failed to understand the effects of these actions on the native population in the region. This fact is apparent from an account of a punitive expedition in Sungei Ujong (in Negri Sembilan); Anson describes an encounter with women from a deserted village: 'The inhabitants having deserted their houses, and fled into the jungle, I sent messengers out

¹⁴² Ibid., 247.

¹⁴³ McNair, *Perak and the Malays*, 407-408.

¹⁴⁴ 'The Perak Expedition', *The Times*, 16 February 1876.

¹⁴⁵ 'The Malay Peninsula', *The Times*, 18 February 1876.

¹⁴⁶ Ismail to Jervois, Enclosure 6 in No. 104, 3 December 1875, C.1505, 183.

¹⁴⁷ Jervois to Carnarvon, 14 January 1875, C.1505, 275.

to try and induce them to return; but only the women, to the number of about two hundred came in'. Anson continues:

I asked them why they ran away. They said they were very frightened. I said, 'Do we look such dreadful people that you should be afraid of us?' Again they said they had been very much frightened. I then told them, that English people did not fight against women and children, nor against any people who were peacefully disposed.¹⁴⁸

Punitive expeditions took place in Sungei Ujong in both 1874 and 1875;¹⁴⁹ the latter of which occurred at the same time as the campaign in Perak, although, as Napier pointed out the two outbreaks had little to do with each other, despite attempts in the British press to connect them.¹⁵⁰ There is little information available on these events, as Stanley highlighted in the House of Lords at the time.¹⁵¹ The Parliamentary Papers suggest that the methods undertaken in Sungei Ujong were similar to those in Perak and Rich stated that based on accounts of the 1875 campaign 'The plan of operations seems to have been, to march right into the heart of the enemy's country, burning and pilaging [sic] on the way'.¹⁵² The accounts of these punitive expeditions also describe the burning down of villages and looting.¹⁵³ Sungei Ujong's first British Resident, P. W. Murray, concluded at the end of the 1875 expedition that 'The lesson has been a severe one, and the cost heavy, but the moral effect, will, I trust, repay us'.¹⁵⁴ In 1874, Dunlop, who was at this time the Commissioner in Sungei Ujong was instructed to 'take steps to restore tranquillity to [Sungei] Ujong' in the aftermath of a 'disturbance', and advocated that 'the proper punishment for rebels was death and confiscation of property, and all who aided and assisted rebellion deserved the same fate'. Furthermore, Dunlop 'detained' the chief headmen to aid him with his search for potential collaborators in the disturbance and stated clearly to him that 'unless I got every assistance, I should, in the

¹⁴⁸ Anson, *About Others and Myself*, 339

¹⁴⁹ J. W. Simmons, 'The Sungei Ujong Wars', *The Straits Times*, 20 January 1931.

¹⁵⁰ Napier, 'The Malays', 22-23. See also J. M. Gullick, 'Sungei Ujong', *JMBRAS*, 22:2 (1949), 20.

¹⁵¹ HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol 230, cc824-46.

¹⁵² Rich, 'The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula', 15.

¹⁵³ Hinxmann, 9 December 1875, CO276/6; Rich, 'The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula', 17. Jones' Report, Enclosure 3 in No. 10, 10 December 1874, *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula, in the Neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements*, C.1320 (1875), 59-60; Dunlop's Report, Enclosure 18 in No. 8, 29 December 1874, C.1320, 48.

¹⁵⁴ Murray, 8 December 1875, CO276/6.

Klana's name, inflict severe and summary punishment'.¹⁵⁵ This conflict was another example of a system imposed by the British and maintained by the threat of force.¹⁵⁶

Jervois' proclamations regarding the campaign in Perak were highly contradictory as he called for the military 'to avoid, as far as possible, the punishment of the innocent along with those engaged in armed resistance to the Government of Perak', although he goes on to state that 'under the present circumstances it is difficult to discriminate'.¹⁵⁷ Whilst Jervois instructed: 'I desire that all places shall be treated as friendly until there is evidence to the contrary, and that punishment shall as far as possible be confined to places where resistance is made', this order was clearly not adhered to.¹⁵⁸ General orders as conveyed by Colborne on 7 December 1875 stated that: 'The setting fire to or destruction of property, except under orders from competent authority, is *strictly* forbidden'.¹⁵⁹ He further stated that, 'It is important that all natives of the country and others (with the exception of those in arms and opposing the advance of troops) are to be held as friendly, and to be treated with consideration, and encouraged to bring in supplies for the use of the troops'.¹⁶⁰ However, official correspondence makes it quite clear that the operation's purpose was the punishment of the entire area and its goal was to demonstrate the power of the British Empire in order to prevent any further spread of unrest, with little thought for the suffering of the population, including women and children. The brutal nature of the campaign was motivated by the desire to show that the Resident system would be enforced and that 'each British officer would be supported, in the last resort, by the whole strength of the British Empire'.¹⁶¹ Jervois argued his policy thus: 'Had I acted upon the assumption that the country was hostile, and proceeded indiscriminately on the burning and slaying principle, I should have turned friends into foes and have bred in Perak a hatred of the British name'.¹⁶² Whilst contradicting his actual policy, he also shows that attempts to keep the British campaign under control were a result of considerations of future policy, not as a result of any moral objection. It is not possible to determine the number of casualties of the native population as no investigation has been conducted regarding the

¹⁵⁵ Dunlop's Report, Enclosure 18 in No. 8, 29 December 1874, C.1320, 48.

¹⁵⁶ Jervois to Anson, Enclosure 20 in No. 105, 5 December 1875, C.1505, 207. See also McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 300.

¹⁵⁷ Jervois to Dunlop and McNair, Enclosure 25 in No. 93, 22 November 1875, C.1505, 137.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁵⁹ 'General Orders by Major-General Colborne', 7 December 1875, C.1505, 176: emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁶¹ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 294.

¹⁶² Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 December 1875, C.1505, 244.

adverse effects of the British campaign on the wider population; with respect to the number of casualties as a result of open warfare, no estimates have been made, although Harfield has highlighted that there were discrepancies regarding the number of enemy casualties reported.¹⁶³ In truth, often little attempt was made in colonial warfare to count the number of enemy casualties.¹⁶⁴ McNair stated that ‘As the Malays always, when they have time, carry off their dead and wounded, it was impossible to ascertain exactly the full extent of their losses; but, from the traces left, it was evident that they must have suffered severely’.¹⁶⁵ Such evidence is made clear by an account given by a correspondent from *The Times* in Perak:

While at Banda Baru I heard that a civil officer had discovered in the jungle, about a week after the attack on [Pasir Salak], a wretched Malay who had lain wounded, unable to assist himself for days. The ants had already commenced eating about his wounds, and he was senseless and dying from thirst. It is to be feared that many more have died a lingering death, wounded, in the recesses of the dense thickets, with no human aid near. A more horrible death could hardly be devised. Some Malays were sent to this man’s assistance, but I did not hear whether he survived.¹⁶⁶

The brutality of the British campaign came in stark contrast to the scale of the Perak resistance. As Maxwell made clear: ‘Everything seemed complete; and yet there was a want - an uncommon want. Where was the enemy?’ As Maxwell states, ‘Not more than thirty or forty armed Malays were ever seen at any one time; the whole number in arms in Perak throughout the so-called campaign, did not probably exceed three hundred men’.¹⁶⁷ British reinforcements highlight the one-sided nature of the campaign as ‘a force numbered about 1600 bayonets, with a battery and a half of Royal Artillery, and a company of Bengal sappers’ were sent from Hong Kong and India.¹⁶⁸ Firsthand accounts also confirm that more often than not British troops were met with

¹⁶³ Harfield, *British and Indian Armies*, 242.

¹⁶⁴ H. L. Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars and Armed Peace, 1870-1914: A Reconnaissance’, *Itinerario*, 5:2 (1981), 59.

¹⁶⁵ McNair, *Perak and the Malays*, 401; see also Buller in the Supplement to *The London Gazette*, 23 February 1876, 880; Dunlop’s Report, 16 November 1875, CO276/6.

¹⁶⁶ *The Times*’ Special Correspondent, ‘The War in Perak’, *The Times*, 3 February 1876.

¹⁶⁷ Maxwell cited in Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 91-92.

¹⁶⁸ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 64.

deserted villages rather than heavy resistance.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the British used methods of burning and blockading against the population to achieve an end to the conflict and the disproportionate nature of the violence was intended to deter future unrest.

As stated above, Birch's controversial actions resulted in uniting the chiefs on the issue of British interference in the region; however, it is clear that no systematic attack on the colonists was planned.¹⁷⁰ Swettenham later reflected that the chiefs 'determined to kill [Birch] believing that would be an end to the matter'.¹⁷¹ Sadka argues that the manner of Birch's death suggests 'a sudden act of passion under considerable provocation',¹⁷² however, the official enquiry into the 'Perak outrages' concluded that the murder was 'no chance affray' and that the murders were 'premeditated'.¹⁷³ In any case, the chiefs failed to understand the nature of British colonial rule, which would not tolerate challenges to its authority; they also underestimated the force which underpinned the British Empire and the willingness of the colonists to employ this force. The 'absolute' nature of colonial warfare as discussed in chapter 1 was clear in this case, as Robert Heussler states, '...the British were irresistible. They meant to stay and transform the country'.¹⁷⁴ Jervois expressed his opinion that the hostilities were a result of the actions of the chiefs, 'whose power would be affected by civilised rule', rather than a reflection of the views of the people themselves.¹⁷⁵ Hence, on the one hand the authorities argued that strong measures were needed to combat wider resistance to British power and on the other, argued that the people wanted British rule. It is clear that the British campaign was motivated by a desire to deter further potential unrest both in Perak and the surrounding area; further isolated incidents of violence were treated in a similar manner, as described above in the case of Sungei Ujong, an approach which was typical across the Empire.¹⁷⁶ Jervois' overestimation of the rebellion – whether genuine or deliberate – played a key role in the escalation of the campaign. As Maxwell claimed, 'The plain truth is, that before the

¹⁶⁹ See for example: Weir, SRM BV/29; Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 66; Dunlop's Report, 16 November 1875, CO276/6.

¹⁷⁰ Maxwell, *Our Malay Conquests*, 61-62; see also: Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 93. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 235. That an attack on the Residency was planned was alleged by Swettenham in his *Malay Sketches* (London: John Lane, 1903), 244.

¹⁷¹ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 212.

¹⁷² Sadka, 'The Residential System', 155.

¹⁷³ *Enquiry*, 27-28.

¹⁷⁴ Heussler, *British Rule*, 56.

¹⁷⁵ Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 December 1875, C.1505, 244.

¹⁷⁶ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 236. Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 92

troops sent for had arrived, the fighting, such as it was, was over'.¹⁷⁷ Hence, Jervois now needed to create justification for having called in reinforcements in the first place and 'Accordingly, the campaign continued for a few more months'.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, Jervois wrote to Carnarvon on 12 November 1875 that 'Disaffection most likely restricted to small portion of the country; wise, nevertheless, to act as if not so'.¹⁷⁹ Swettenham argued that 'The reverse had been atoned for; but it was decided by high authorities that there must be a punitive expedition and never was there more need for one.'¹⁸⁰ Rich also supported the argument that by 17 December 1875, British troops had effectively brought the situation under control.¹⁸¹ Carnarvon had previously chastised Jervois' actions in the lead up to the outbreak of violence and stated clearly that despite Jervois' suggestions otherwise, 'the retention of Her Majesty's forces in a country continuing to possess an independent jurisdiction for the purpose of enforcing measures which the natives do not cheerfully accept, could clearly not be permitted.' Carnarvon further stipulated that regarding the Residents the 'leading principle must obviously be one that it should not need to be upheld by force against the feelings and wishes of the people, or of any persons, by whatever right, to exercise a great and undoubted authority'.¹⁸² However, after the victory at Kinta, Jervois was still not ready to withdraw the troops and in response to Carnarvon's concerns of a prolonged conflict he claimed that they had a moral obligation to retain the troops:

Supposing Perak abandoned by us, the Chiefs and others implicated in murder and outrages will come back, without the object of our expedition being attained; there will be a return of anarchy; the natives who have adhered to us, and all who have refused to join malcontents, will be left to their fate; civil war will be the consequence, to be soon followed by the war of extermination between Malays and Chinese.¹⁸³

In consideration of the discrepancy between British military overzealousness and the weak resistance that it faced, the extent of the British campaign can perhaps be explained by the frustrations of a group of soldiers who were desperate for military

¹⁷⁷ Maxwell, *Our Malay Conquests*, 62; Raugh, 'Storming the Strongholds', 9.

¹⁷⁸ Raugh, 'Storming the Strongholds', 9.

¹⁷⁹ Jervois to Carnarvon, 12 November 1875, C.1505, 24.

¹⁸⁰ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 63-64.

¹⁸¹ Rich, 'The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula', 9.

¹⁸² Carnarvon to Jervois, 10 December 1875, C.1505, 67.

¹⁸³ Jervois to Carnarvon, 28 December 1875, C.1505, 112.

action; that Pasir Salak had been taken in a ‘bloodless victory’¹⁸⁴ is perhaps one reason for the potential frustrations of both officers and men and helps to explain the devastation that was wrought in the areas through which the British traversed. It has been argued that the officers present in Perak had seen little armed conflict and that: ‘Fortunate were they who could boast of their deeds during the Indian Mutiny’.¹⁸⁵ Parkinson also emphasises the importance of ‘the whole Victorian attitude to war’, and states that ‘At the least hint of a campaign the less fortunate would rush to the scene from all points of the compass, sword in hand and eager for decorations’.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, the poor conditions for the troops during the campaign may have been a factor; this included the prevalence of illnesses such as dysentery.¹⁸⁷ Participants in the campaign described the difficult conditions, which were typical in colonial warfare, as discussed in chapter 1 in relation to Callwell’s *Small Wars*.¹⁸⁸ Weir for example detailed the trying circumstances of the campaign thus: ‘we encamped in the mud and were so worried by Mosquitoes that sleep was out of the question and during the time we remained there about a fortnight it rained all the time still making the swamp more uncomfortable making us all the colour of mud’, he continues to complain that ‘to complete our wretchedness we were continually on duty going a days [sic] march into the jungle burning the villages and returning to camp at night’.¹⁸⁹

The brutality of the British campaign was heightened further by the punishments meted out to those found guilty of involvement in Birch’s death. By mid-1876 all of the fugitives had been captured and Lela and his three followers were subsequently hanged.¹⁹⁰ Others accused of complicity including Ismail, the Mantri and Abdullah were deported to either the Seychelles or Johore. It has been pointed out that the events ‘cleared Perak of both Sultans and nearly every chief of the first and second rank’.¹⁹¹ Yusuf, as ‘practically the only important chief not implicated’ was to become the new Sultan. Swettenham would later insist that Yusuf had ‘the best hereditary claim’.¹⁹² The circumstances in which the trials of the alleged collaborators were carried out are highly

¹⁸⁴ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 263.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁸⁷ See for example: ‘With the Buffs in Perak—III’, *The Straits Times*, 21 February 1935.

¹⁸⁸ Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]).

¹⁸⁹ Weir, SRM BV/29. See also Colborne in the Supplement to *The London Gazette*, 23 February 1876, 874 and Rich, ‘The Campaign in the Malay Peninsula’, 5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 236.

¹⁹¹ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 92.

¹⁹² Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 32. Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 237. For criticism of Yusuf see ‘The Perak Chiefs’, *The Straits Times*, 31 March 1877.

questionable. The documentation regarding the trials that took place is not complete due to the absence of cross-examinations in the proceedings, as well as the fact that most of the accused were not even formally charged or questioned; their guilt had been predetermined.¹⁹³ Yet R. O. Winstedt and R. J. Wilkinson claimed that ‘The finding of the Executive Council was fair’, as it was stated that

It must be admitted that provocation was given to the Sultan and his chiefs. The late Mr. Birch was a most zealous and conscientious officer. He was, however, much thwarted from the outset, and there is reason to believe that his manner may at times have been overbearing. It must also be admitted in some instances he showed a want of respect for Malay custom. It was also injudicious to interfere with local taxes before the general scale of allowances had been fixed in lieu of them.¹⁹⁴

This statement was a rare admission from the colonial authorities that the chiefs in Perak had indeed been provoked by British interference in the region. In consideration of these dubious trials it is interesting that British administrators frequently depicted the country, the chiefs and their rule as ‘lawless’.¹⁹⁵ Clarke had warned Abdullah against giving an ‘order of death of any man of the country, including Malays, without the order for his death being made after full and impartial trial, and with the signature and approval of the Resident’.¹⁹⁶ The trials and treatment of the accused by the British were criticised by the Aborigines’ Protection Society, arguing that ‘whatever might be the deserts of the men, we think it of paramount importance that the character of this country for justice and fair play should be preserved above reproach or question’.¹⁹⁷ Clearly, this was not the case. It was also acknowledged that Lela had been executed ‘after no proper trial, and in violation of all justice’.¹⁹⁸ The case of Perak once again highlights the contradictory nature of the British approach to law and order, which was inherent within the ideology of the British Empire and its justifications for colonial rule. Nevertheless, Parkinson has argued that we need not ‘question that the British motives

¹⁹³ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 92-93. See: Enquiry.

¹⁹⁴ The Committee of Inquiry cited in R. O. Winstedt and R. J. Wilkinson, ‘A History of Perak’, *JMBRAS*, 7:1 (1934), 116.

¹⁹⁵ For example: McNair, *Perak and the Malays*, 387.

¹⁹⁶ Clarke to Abdullah, Enclosure 1 in No. 49, 22 April 1875, C.1505, 40.

¹⁹⁷ Cited in ‘The Aborigines’ Protection Society and the Ex-Chiefs of Perak’, *The Straits Times*, 12 October 1878. For a study of the society see: James Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836-1909* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

¹⁹⁸ ‘The Fortieth Anniversary’.

were as genuinely philanthropic as human motives ever are' regarding their interference in the country.¹⁹⁹

There was limited criticism in Britain of the Perak campaign; Stanley had forewarned the House of Lords that Clarke's policies in Perak would 'inevitably lead to the invasion and conquest of the whole of the Malay Peninsula' and he had voiced his concerns regarding an article in *The Times*, which expressed apprehension that interference in the Malay States might 'drag us into another [Ashanti] business', which the newspaper described as another 'display of British power'.²⁰⁰ In official correspondence, he went on to condemn Jervois' policies. One of Stanley's criticisms was related to Jervois having ordered the building of a new road between Larut and Perak; curiously, Stanley criticised Jervois for not having allowed a 'native ruler' to make the Proclamation to 'have cleared the Resident from all responsibility as to those arbitrary measures which are sure to be resorted to in making the road, such as compulsory labour and cheating labourers of their hire, and the appropriation of land necessary for the roadway'. Jervois responded by stating that 'No arbitrary measures have been resorted to' and further claimed that, 'No land has been "appropriated"', particularly because there is 'scarcely any part of the road that does not run through the jungle, which is Crown property'.²⁰¹ Central to British movements was the laying down of new roads in the area; it was reported that the conditions were harsh for those employed in this work, as the engineer in Banda Baru had told a reporter: 'he was for some days up to his waist in water and he nearly lost all his men by starvation'.²⁰² It is interesting that Stanley's concerns were based on the assumption that the exploitation of the local labour force and appropriation of land were a given in Britain's approach. Maxwell was also critical of British actions in the region and condemned the treatment of the ex-chiefs as 'an outrage on justice' in his work *Our Malay Conquests*, a work that Kiernan described as deserving 'a place in the record of dissent from the barbarism of civilisation'.²⁰³ Maxwell's work further criticises the lack of public interest in the case of Perak 'because it is not horrible and sensational enough' and posed the question:

¹⁹⁹ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 224; this statement highlights the rather problematic nature of Parkinson's work.

²⁰⁰ HL Deb 19 May 1874, vol. 219, cc456-477; 'The Malay Peninsula', *The Times*, 5 May 1874. McIntyre, *British Policy in West Africa*, 44.

²⁰¹ Memorandum on the Perak Resident's Report, Enclosure in No. 48, C.1505, 29-30.

²⁰² 'The War in Perak', *The Times*, 3 February 1876.

²⁰³ Cited in 'Sir Peter Benson Maxwell on "Atrocities" in Perak', *The Straits Times*, 3 November 1877; Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 84.

‘Will injustice not move them unless it steeps its hands in blood?’²⁰⁴ The Perak War was just one of many ‘small wars’ that warranted little attention in the metropole. Maxwell acknowledged the typical British approach that ‘If a town is shelled in some distant land ... or some hecatombs of natives are slaughtered, up we throw our hats and rend the air with cheers for the gallantry of our troops or tars. ... But nobody asks about the rights and wrongs of the matter’.²⁰⁵ Whilst some opposition was voiced regarding the extent of the violence that took place, it is clear that this criticism had little effect and Britain’s presence continued to be supported by force. Furthermore, Carnarvon appears to have taken no action to limit Jervois’ approach, and wrote to him in mid-1876 stating, ‘you will see from the enclosed correspondence that provision is made for the prompt execution by the military officer in command of the troops at the Straits of whatever urgent measures may be necessary for the maintenance of order’.²⁰⁶

Importantly, Parkinson has highlighted the occurrence of a war crime – ‘probably the only one committed’ – which was carried out during the conflict and involved the hanging of a Malay named Pajang Meroo at the village of Tumung near Kuala Kangsar on 3 January 1876.²⁰⁷ This incident has received little attention from historians; Parkinson only mentions it as an explanation for Ross’ failure to be awarded for his participation in the campaign (although he escaped court martial).²⁰⁸ As Parkinson explains: ‘This summary execution was carried out by seamen under Captain Garforth’s command but acting on Ross’s orders. McNair and Maxwell [deputy commissioner] disclaimed responsibility, but Jervois blamed them for not preventing it’.²⁰⁹ Significantly, McNair omitted the occurrence from his account of the war.²¹⁰ The incident occurred after Ross’ order to Garforth, who was to send out troops to identify and capture ‘three notorious outlaws’; following identification from W. E. Maxwell, ‘the officer in command will at once hang them opposite or near their house and set fire to the buildings. The men are to be left hanging. The officer in command assuring himself of their death before leaving’.²¹¹ Confidential correspondence, however, reveals

²⁰⁴ Cited in ‘Sir Peter Benson Maxwell on “Atrocities” in Perak’.

²⁰⁵ Cited in Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 84.

²⁰⁶ Carnarvon to Jervois, 31 July 1876, CO882/3.

²⁰⁷ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 309.

²⁰⁸ The incident is also mentioned – but not discussed – by McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 314. See also: Mohamad Rashidi Pakri, ‘An Imperial or a Personal Legacy? The Rivalry of W. E. Maxwell and F. A. Swettenham in British Malaya’, *JMBRAS*, 84:2 (2011), 36, 42.

²⁰⁹ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 309.

²¹⁰ McNair, *Perak and the Malays*.

²¹¹ Ross to Garforth, 2 January 1876, CO882/3. W. E. Maxwell was Peter Benson Maxwell’s son; see Heussler, *British Rule*, 35.

that those in charge were asked to account for their role in the summary execution. Maxwell initially justified his own actions thus: 'My duties ended with the identification of the man, and I was not present, nor were my party of Malays, at the execution'.²¹² In a later report he sought to further excuse his failure to act against Ross' intentions, stating 'It never occurred to me to question the right of Brigadier General Ross to give the orders he did'.²¹³ Although he goes on to admit that 'there had been no resistance to the advance of the troops in Kuala Kangsa, and there was no force of Malays openly in arms against us in the district', but that the men had however 'caused Brigadier-General Ross's force considerable inconvenience and pecuniary loss'.²¹⁴ Maxwell puts his failure to object to Ross' actions down to his subordinate position and states that his failure to object should seem 'natural' in the circumstances.²¹⁵ Maxwell's superior, McNair, took a similar approach: 'Deeming it a question to be dealt with by the military, Brigadier Ross said that he would take the matter out of the hands of the Commissioners'.²¹⁶ Indeed, Carnarvon also expressed his unwillingness to interfere in the matter, although in a summary of his views it was acknowledged that 'he would not be fulfilling his duty if he did not request that Mr. Hardy's [Secretary of State for War] most serious attention may be directed in this case, in which he fails to see that there was adequate justification for the orders given or the course adopted'.²¹⁷ Furthermore, whilst it may be noted that authorities were unsettled by these events and explanations were requested, no actions of consequence were taken; in the admission of Ross' guilt it was stated that 'His Royal Highness feels compelled to express his deep regret at the course that was adopted in peremptorily ordering the summary execution of this Malay without any sort of trial'.²¹⁸ It is also fair to assume that a trial would have remained unfair and that the outcome was a forgone conclusion.

Overall there is a lack of studies on the nature of the British campaign in Perak and the wider practices of burning whole villages and cutting off supply chains to the wider population; these aspects of the British campaign are all but absent from the historiography. Historians have tended to focus on the events surrounding the war only insofar as they influenced decisions which led to Britain's changed role within the

²¹² Enclosure: Maxwell to Colonial Secretary, 1 March 1876, TNA CO882/3.

²¹³ Maxwell to Colonial Secretary, 5 June 1876, CO882/3.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Enclosure: McNair to Colonial Secretary, 31 March 1876, CO882/3.

²¹⁷ Meade to War Office, 17 August 1876, CO882/3.

²¹⁸ Enclosure: Armstrong to Ross, 27 October 1876, CO882/3.

region. The Perak War has received relatively little attention from historians and key studies were undertaken in the 1960s, hence the present study must to some extent rely on an outdated body of work. It is therefore essential to revisit the archives and also seek new primary sources from the campaign. The neglect of the war has been accounted for as a result of ‘the relatively short campaign; the small number of troops involved ... and relatively few casualties sustained; the campaign’s low cost; the distance from Great Britain; and arguable marginal popularity of imperial wars’.²¹⁹ A. C. Milner has discussed problems within the historiography and highlights the bias that has resulted from a ‘colonial records’ approach’.²²⁰ Writing in 1987, Milner stated that the historiography was ‘dated’ and histories on the subject ‘appear “colonial” in their preoccupations and perspectives’; unfortunately no new studies have emerged since this time to alter this approach,²²¹ although, as J. M. Gullick acknowledged, ‘The key point is that one has to do what one can with the source material available for the purpose (or give up altogether)’.²²² Patrick Sullivan has also highlighted this issue regarding sources, stating ‘Any attempt at reinterpreting colonial history must come to terms with partisan sources’.²²³ Kiernan is exceptional in his inclusion of the Perak War within wider studies of European colonial violence.²²⁴ Cowan for example sums up the war by briefly mentioning the areas that the British occupied, merely adding that the troops then ‘subdued the surrounding villages’,²²⁵ thus, failing to explore the large devastation that resulted throughout the area and the issues that surround this disproportionate military campaign.

While Parliamentary Papers are essential to this study, it is necessary to look beyond the ambiguous language of contemporaries such as Jervois who spoke often of ‘making an example’ of a person or place.²²⁶ The Papers do, however, illuminate the prejudices and contradictions that underpinned the British imperial project and also highlight the disproportionate and destructive actions of the British throughout the territory. The extent of the violence in the British campaign is difficult to comprehend, particularly considering the level of resistance that the troops faced, and the conduct of

²¹⁹ Raugh, ‘Storming the Strongholds’, 7.

²²⁰ A. C. Milner, ‘Colonial Records History: British Malaya’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 21:4 (1987), 773-92.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 773.

²²² J. M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States 1870-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 10, n28.

²²³ Patrick Sullivan, ‘Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: Nineteenth Century Perak’, *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1982), 77.

²²⁴ See, Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 82-87.

²²⁵ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, 235.

²²⁶ See for example: Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 December 1875, C.1505, 244.

the soldiers needs to be considered within a wider pattern of British colonial violence. Rationalisations for intervention in the area were shrouded in the language of imperialism, which sought to justify intervention as a result of the perceived need to ‘civilise’ the population; as Kiernan has argued, ‘belief in the “civilising mission” always had its dangers’.²²⁷ The rhetoric of the ‘civilising mission’ was also very much in evidence in the case of Perak: British colonists advocated the belief that the peninsula’s progress could only be achieved by opening up trade in the area and thus increasing the number of non-natives.²²⁸ Contemporary accounts very much emphasised the need for British intervention to put a stop to alleged anarchy and piracy,²²⁹ and as Kiernan argued, much of the peninsula ‘was in a chronic state of disorderliness, easily depicted by critics as “anarchy” which it would be a service to civilisation to step in and suppress’.²³⁰ Accusations of ‘anarchy’ were typical of the British colonial authorities and this viewpoint and the perceived need to ‘civilise’ the inhabitants had previously informed the brutal suppression of ‘piracy’ on the Malacca Straits.²³¹

Swettenham portrayed British intervention in the area as a ‘duty forced upon England, as the dominant Power’ and argued that this ‘duty’ originated from ‘motives of humanity alone but would also be highly beneficial to British interests and trade’.²³² He argued further that the Malays needed ‘saving from themselves’ and that the British could give them the ‘blessings of peace and justice’.²³³ Swettenham also refused to admit the importance of Perak’s resources to Britain’s involvement in the area, maintaining ‘that the Malayan policy embarked on in 1874 was not inspired by mercantile greed but was a genuine “new departure” aimed at the well-being of the native people’.²³⁴ However, British interests in the area were focused on exploiting the economic situation in Malaya for the benefit of British trade; in 1848 rich tin deposits were discovered in Perak and Walter Knaggs, a tea planter from Province Wellesley was sent to Perak in 1874 to assess the area’s potential for tea plantations and concluded

²²⁷ Kiernan, ‘Britain, Siam, and Malaya’, 3.

²²⁸ See Harry Ord (Clarke’s predecessor), 3 January 1876, C.1505, 169.

²²⁹ Unsigned, ‘The Malay Outbreak’, 812.

²³⁰ Kiernan, ‘Britain, Siam, and Malaya’, 2-3. On the myth of ‘anarchy’ in the Malay States see Azmi Arifin, ‘Perak Disturbances 1871-75: British Colonialism, the Chinese Secret Societies and the Malay Rulers’, *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies*, 39:1 (2012), 60.

²³¹ For examples see: Napier, ‘The Malays’, 8; E. Chew, ‘The Naning War, 1831-1832: Colonial Authority and Malay Resistance in the Early Period of British Expansion’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 32:2 (1998), 353; Richard Gott, *Britain’s Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011), 285-87.

²³² Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 173.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 173.

²³⁴ Kiernan, ‘Britain, Siam, and Malaya’, 3.

that ‘opening the country up’ would be beneficial.²³⁵ Clarke later discussed the economic benefits of British intervention in the area, arguing that these had, ‘with the single exception of the little expedition of 1875-6’, ‘been won without the expenditure of blood or money’.²³⁶ Colonial administrators typically chose to emphasise ‘humanitarian’ motivations over economic ones. As Kiernan highlights, the Malays’ ‘homeland was depicted as being in a frightful condition of misrule or chaos, the mass of its cultivators in a state of slavery’; however, whilst ‘Debt-slavery was indeed prevalent’, the ‘British public had learned to react sharply to the word, little as the reality might differ from indentured labour on a British plantation’.²³⁷ It has been argued that in the case of Kimberley, ‘humanitarian motive’ was adopted ‘as a convenient rationalisation of his new policy’ of intervention.²³⁸ *The Friend of India* acknowledged, however, that ‘We are not fighting the wild and lawless Malays, solely in “the cause of suffering humanity”’, although ‘that is what the Government of the Straits and some of our contemporaries wish us to believe’.²³⁹

The belief in the British ‘civilising mission’ and the ‘obligation’ to protect indigenous populations is in evidence in the case of Edward Lyulph Stanley (Henry Stanley’s brother) of the Aborigines’ Protection Society, who set out his views thus:

to see our efforts directed to raising uncivilised tribes to a higher social level, even though some of those which were incapable of progress should die out under the new conditions, rather than keep up barbarous tribes by an artificial protection in a state of tutelage, where they exist rather as specimens in a natural history museum, or as wild animals in a menagerie, and not as responsible and progressive human beings.²⁴⁰

Clearly, his views were informed by ideas of the ‘civilised’ versus ‘barbaric’ dichotomy and ‘extinction theory’. Official British correspondence persistently emphasised the need for British intervention to introduce ‘civilised rule and respect for life and

²³⁵ Walter Knaggs, ‘A Visit to Perak’, *The Journal of Eastern Asia*, 1:1 (1875), 36-37.

²³⁶ Andrew Clarke, ‘Straits Settlements’, 455. The wealth of resources in the region was also acknowledged by Jervois in correspondence to Carnarvon, 2 December 1875, C.1505, 162.

²³⁷ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 83. On the contradictory approach of the British to issues of slavery and exploitation see for example, Esme Cleall, “‘In Defiance of the Highest Principles of Justice, Principles of Righteousness’: The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897-1900”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40:4 (2012), 601-18. Also, Catherine Hall, ‘Displaced Histories: Memories of the Slave Trade and Slavery’, paper presented at the Hayes Robinson Lecture at Royal Holloway University, Egham, 6 March 2012.

²³⁸ Chew, ‘The Reasons for British Intervention’, 91.

²³⁹ ‘Perak’, *The Friend of India*, 18 December 1875.

²⁴⁰ ‘The Fortieth Anniversary’.

property, for the barbarism, anarchy, recklessness, and poverty which are now its prominent features'.²⁴¹ Such proclamations appear highly contradictory considering the destruction that British troops wrought in the country, particularly regarding property; this discrepancy was also clear in the following statement by Jervois regarding the need to rid the country of disaffected chiefs: 'the question then arises whether, in the interests of humanity and civilisation, we should not enter into their country and break down their power'.²⁴² *The Times* correspondent also unintentionally highlighted this contradiction, arguing on the one hand that 'The restraints of law are intolerable to people like the Malays. ... [and] must be imposed upon them, if at all, by superior force'. On the other hand, the author acknowledged that 'The orders given to burn the villages of Malaya who had not offered the slightest resistance to the troops who had hung out the white flag, and against whom there was no evidence of any complicity in the offences of Maharajah Lela and the Sultan Ismail, were clearly objectionable on every ground of principle and policy'.²⁴³ These statements demonstrate an attempt to justify British intervention based on a 'barbaric' versus 'civilised' dichotomy and convey the arbitrary nature of such categories which were integral to British imperialism.

The brutal approach that underpinned the rhetoric of the 'civilising mission' is made clear by Swettenham's statement in which he remained unrepentant: 'I am convinced that twenty years of advice ... would not have accomplished, for peace and order and good government, what was done in six months by force of arms'.²⁴⁴ In 1912, a study of Britain's role in Malaya described the country's involvement as changing 'the home of ruthless barbarism steeped in bloodshed and anarchy into a centre of ordered and enlightened government'.²⁴⁵ Swettenham observed that during the period prior to the British involvement in Perak, little was known about the area and 'it was firmly believed that the race was dying out, and that belief was well-founded so far as the people of the Peninsula were concerned'.²⁴⁶ As the opening quote of this chapter shows, Clarke also proclaimed that the Malays were marked by 'mutual deterioration'. Dr. R. Little of the Legislative Council in Singapore also supported the view that the

²⁴¹ Ord, 3 January 1876, C.1505, 167

²⁴² Jervois to Carnarvon, 2 December 1875, C.1505, 164.

²⁴³ *The Times*, 21 December 1875.

²⁴⁴ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 215.

²⁴⁵ Arnold Wright and Thomas H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula: A Record of British Progress in the Middle East* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1912), 138; Milner, 'Colonial Records History', 775.

²⁴⁶ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 25.

population was slowly dying out; interestingly, Little placed the history of Malaya within the context of the destruction of ‘South-Sea Islanders, and some American tribes’, arguing that the Malays had also suffered a vast population decline and that ‘It was necessary that a European Power should now step in to save the Malays from utter extinction’.²⁴⁷ Little continues, ‘The Malay had not had, like some of these races, wars and invasions to exterminate them. They had not, like the South-Sea Islanders, and some American tribes, been wiped away by the introduction of firewater and European diseases’.²⁴⁸ In the case of the Malays, Little blamed this demise on the ‘despotic Rajahs’, stating: ‘The causes from which the decay of the Malay race originated were not external, but internal, and might be summed up in one word—*misrule*’.²⁴⁹ Little advocated the need to protect the peasants and therefore stated: ‘the only way of settling the country was to dispose of these chiefs either by hanging or pensioning them’.²⁵⁰ It is interesting that Little framed his understanding of the region and justification for intervention within the context of the devastating effects of British policies in other countries and the resultant destruction of indigenous populations.²⁵¹

The manner in which the colonial administration dealt with the native population demonstrates a sense of superiority typical of the British Empire; this superiority complex and its accompanying racism are essential to an understanding of Britain’s policies in Perak and the nature of the military campaign. As a result of this approach the administrators failed to question their own part in these events and believed in the inherent righteousness of British policies: for any negative consequences the ‘savage native’ could be blamed. The racial language of empire became increasingly pronounced in the second half of the nineteenth century and was apparent throughout the Perak conflict. One contemporary typically viewed the war as ‘a clash between civilisation and “wild aborigines”’.²⁵² Rather than a result of Britain’s expansionist policies, the war was often portrayed both in the British press and by those on the ground as inevitable on account of the ‘nature’ of the ‘natives’.²⁵³ Hence, the ‘civilised’ versus ‘barbaric’ dichotomy was very much in evidence in the British press; for

²⁴⁷ Little: Legislative Council, 5 November 1875, C.1505, 79.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 80: emphasis in original.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁵¹ For more on this subject see chapter 1 regarding ‘extinction discourse’ for example.

²⁵² Kiernan in reference to R. Temple in *Lords of Human Kind*, 313.

²⁵³ For more on this theme see: Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: Frank Cass, 1997). McNair expressed a similar attitude in *Perak and the Malays*, 201.

example, *The Times* wrote in response to Birch's death: 'The jealousy of ancient civilisations which England has supplanted, the ferocity of religious fanaticism, the sheer brutality of the savage, have all claimed their victims within our most recent recollection, and every loss gave a painful shock to English feeling'. Furthermore, the article continues, 'Whether the Malays have only broken out in a momentary spasm of that savage frenzy peculiar to their race we must wait patiently to see'.²⁵⁴ Birch's murder was often viewed in relation to the concept of 'running amok', a catch-all concept that referred to a murderous 'illness' that struck fear among colonists and highlighted the 'irrationality' and 'unpredictability' of the 'natives'.²⁵⁵ The enquiry into Birch's murder concluded that cries of 'amok' were heard as Arshad, Birch's interpreter, was stabbed to death.²⁵⁶

In the aftermath of the war, *The Times* advocated the need for Britain's continued presence in the country, based on moral obligation, arguing that 'the effects of a demonstration of power which up to now has done untold good will be annihilated, and our blood and treasure expended in vain'.²⁵⁷ Another article discussed the issue of annexation and stated that 'It would certainly be in the interest of civilisation if this should be the result of the war *which is forced upon us*; and we are clearly entitled to seize Perak and hold it until indemnified for all the costs of the war, as well as for the murder of Mr. Birch and any others who have treacherously fallen.... We are not among those who would advocate any attempt causelessly to seize and annex the dominions of a neighbour'. The article even states that Birch's murder was 'a direct attack on England'.²⁵⁸ Jervis justified British policy in Perak to Carnarvon thus:

My Lord, this is no question of oppression of the Native by the European, as some few, –who take the matter up but really do not understand the subject would represent it to your Lordship to be. It is just the reverse. Those who thus speak are in reality the advocates for the protection of the Rajahs in their oppression of the people. I submit that our Policy, in those states in which we intervene, should be, to hurt the power of the Rajahs in the interests of the freedom of the people. The one implies cruelty,

²⁵⁴ 'The Responsibilities of Empire', *The Times*, 10 November 1875.

²⁵⁵ See: Jialin Christina Wu, 'Disciplining Natives in Malaya, "Land of the Pirate and the Amok"', paper presented at the conference: *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern and Contemporary World* on 1 July 2015 at the British Academy. As advocated by Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 52.

²⁵⁶ *Enquiry*, 27.

²⁵⁷ 'The War In Perak', *The Times*, 5 February 1876.

²⁵⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 November 1875; Issue 18816: emphasis added.

barbarism, and stagnation;- the other protection, civilisation, and progress.²⁵⁹

The Perak War demonstrates the importance of individuals in British colonial affairs and highlights the ways in which the metropole could lose its grip on events in the colony: in this case politicians in London advocated a minimal role for Britain in the area, but nevertheless became increasingly interventionist as a result of the actions of ambitious administrators who believed they were acting in the name of the British government. Contemporaries including Lord Stanley emphasised this issue and criticised the role of the men on the ground and the Colonial Office for the consequences of British actions in the area and its ‘neglect in watching over the conduct of the Residents, and the selection of them, and a habit of leaving the officials to do very much as they thought fit’. Stanley goes on to lament the consequences of this approach in terms of

life and expenditure, and that the whole Malay Peninsula has been set in a blaze, and the inhabitants, many of whom have been driven from their homes, have been made hostile to us, and we must either retrace our steps to non-intervention or assume the responsibility and the cost of securing proper government for the people we have now deprived of their independence.²⁶⁰

Stanley recommended fundamental changes to the system of communication between the metropole and colony: ‘copies of all letters from the Government to the Residents [should] be sent home, so that the Secretary of State may not again have to complain, as he has lately done, that Sir Andrew Clarke’s instructions to the Residents had never come under his eye’.²⁶¹ Lyulph Stanley also questioned the role of representatives in the colonies and outbreaks of violence, stating the need to stop the impunity with which administrators acted, creating in this case ‘a needless war’, for which they would not be punished²⁶² and he also highlighted the Colonial Office’s failure to keep its ‘satraps’ under control.²⁶³ Acts of colonial violence often led to questions at home regarding the nature of the British Empire and the role and actions of colonial administrators, as

²⁵⁹ Jervois to Carnarvon, 17 October 1876, PRO30/6/40.

²⁶⁰ HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol. 230, cc824-46. For further criticism of British officials see: ‘Leave of Absence’, *The Straits Times*, 19 June 1875; Mallal, ‘J. W. W. Birch’, 37.

²⁶¹ HL Deb 3 July 1876, vol. 230, cc824-46.

²⁶² HC Deb 29 April 1881, vol. 260, cc1411-1530. See also ‘The Fortieth Anniversary’.

²⁶³ ‘The Fortieth Anniversary’.

demonstrated by the Morant Bay Rebellion and the 'Kooka outbreak'.²⁶⁴ Similarities between these cases and the Perak War include Jervois' attempts to rationalise further violence in Perak, after the threat was clearly over; in the case of the Kuka 'outbreak', proof of the 'intention' of a more general rising was also sought to legitimise Britain's disproportionate response.²⁶⁵

Despite criticism, Clarke continued to defend his own role in Perak and the outbreak of violence, writing later that, 'In place of anarchy and irregular revenues, I held out the prospects of peace and plenty'.²⁶⁶ In further justification of his policies Clarke wrote that the chiefs 'were willing to listen to reason, as the vast majority of persons, whether wearing silk hats or turbans usually are; and since, I have often wondered how many of our useless, expansive, and demoralising wars might have been avoided by similar modes of procedure'.²⁶⁷ Clarke failed to acknowledge that it was his policies that contributed to the outbreak of a war of this nature, and continued to state that 'A butcher's bill appeals to the dullest imagination, and speedily brings down rewards and honours, which the mere negotiator, however successful, cannot hope to obtain. Perhaps some future analyst of causation will be able to tell us for how much slaughter and wasted treasure decorations are responsible'.²⁶⁸

Jervois' actions completely contradicted Carnarvon's wishes and were carried out without his approval. With regards to Jervois, McIntyre came to the conclusion that 'The Perak War is a classic example of the man on the spot embarrassing the home government'.²⁶⁹ As Jervois himself acknowledged as he informed Carnarvon of his decision to create Queen's Commissioners: 'I am sensible that, in acting without instructions, I have incurred a grave responsibility', but he emphasised that Britain could now act to 'further the cause of humanity and freedom'.²⁷⁰ Of course, given the nature of communications at this time, such situations were difficult to avoid. Evidently, Jervois had the backing of the Legislative Council in Singapore and it was emphasised there that through Abdullah 'the chiefs came to us'.²⁷¹ Furthermore, the Council supported Jervois' actions, in the belief that they were the next logical step to policies

²⁶⁴ See for example, 'What the Lawyers Call Legality', *The Friend of India*, 15 August 1872. Wagner, "'Calculated to Strike Terror'". See also Derek Sayer, 'British Reaction to the Amritsar Massacre 1919-1920', *Past & Present*, 131 (1991), 131-32.

²⁶⁵ Wagner, "'Calculated to Strike Terror'", 208.

²⁶⁶ Clarke, 'Straits Settlements', 452.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 452.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 452.

²⁶⁹ McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 315-16.

²⁷⁰ Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 October 1875, C.1505, 38.

²⁷¹ T. Shelford, Legislative Council, 5 November 1875, C.1505, 78.

initiated by the Colonial Office and Clarke – a view also put forward by Jervois.²⁷² Jervois defended his actions to Carnarvon and argued that ‘a system of virtual administration in Perak, either covertly or openly, was but the logical sequence of the terms of the Treaty’.²⁷³ As Heussler has highlighted, both Clarke and Jervois went beyond their mandate in Perak; indeed, Jervois had inherited a poor situation from Clarke which ‘left his successor to face the consequences of half measures and bad staffing’.²⁷⁴ It may be correct to conclude that Carnarvon realised that ‘Jervois’s demonstration of force would be remembered for years’, thus making annexation an unnecessary expense.²⁷⁵ It seems that Carnarvon was willing to wait and see whether Jervois’ actions proved to be beneficial to Britain, providing annexation on the cheap. One contemporary publication highlighted the apparent contradiction within the government’s policy towards Perak, stating ‘we are unable to comprehend or in any degree approve of, the indescribable policy which disclaims all wish or intention to annex, and yet persistently takes or permits to be taken measures that can lead to nothing, but miserable collapse or ultimate annexation’.²⁷⁶ This approach demonstrates the tension between the metropole and the man on the spot, but also the fact that London did not intervene, as long as the imperial project remained in tact.

Birch’s actions were clearly a major factor in the outbreak of violence and the manner with which he dealt with the chiefs exacerbated the situation. Indeed, he believed that ‘Eastern people’ were ‘perfectly incapable of good government, or even of maintaining order, without guidance or assistance from some stronger hand than is ever to be found amongst themselves’.²⁷⁷ *The Times* also took the view that the ‘nature’ of the ‘natives’ was to blame, rather than Birch, arguing that one needs more than ‘conceptions of justice, unsupported by any show of force’ to convert ‘the quarrelsome Malays into peaceable, industrious citizens, with a proper respect for the public peace, the rights of other people, and the benefits of hard work’.²⁷⁸ As Sadka has stated, Birch’s murder ‘made withdrawal from existing commitments impossible, and also provided, with the full consent of the Colonial Office, a means of destroying resistance

²⁷² See: *ibid.*, 77-82.

²⁷³ Jervois to Carnarvon, 10 February 1876 in *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of Certain Native States in the Malay Peninsula, in the Neighbourhood of the Straits Settlements*, C.1503 (1876), 4.

²⁷⁴ Heussler, *British Rule*, 29. See Carnarvon to Jervois, 10 December 1875, C.1505, 66 and for Jervois’ defence: Jervois to Carnarvon, 10 February 1876, C.1503, 4.

²⁷⁵ Parkinson, *British Intervention*, 313.

²⁷⁶ ‘Perak’, *The Friend of India*, 18 December 1875.

²⁷⁷ Birch: Enclosure 5 of 54, C.1111 (1874), 222.

²⁷⁸ *The Times*, 21 December 1875.

and disposing of obstacles to change'.²⁷⁹ As a result of the continuously hasty actions of individuals such as Clarke, Birch and Jervois, who sought to make their mark in the area, the end result was colonial domination and suffering for the population. The case of the Perak War demonstrates how the conflicting aims of the British, their overwhelming military might, as well as the inability and refusal – of Birch in particular – to understand local customs and the perspectives of the local leaders, created a precarious situation which was further exacerbated by the superiority complex and racial prejudices of the British colonists. Henrika Kuklick has highlighted that colonial officials were concerned with 'the problems of pacifying and controlling reluctant subjects' and emphasised the need to train potential candidates for the colonies, arguing that 'unless colonial officials were trained to appreciate the cultures of subject peoples they were bound to make decisions that would cause offense – and inspire rebellion'.²⁸⁰ It is clear in the case of Perak that the refusal of the colonial administrators to comprehend the grievances of the chiefs was a key factor in the intensification of violence and this refusal was informed by racial stereotypes of the indigenous population. Clarke referred to the sultans as 'thoroughbred Pirates' and believed, as did Birch, that 'The Malays, like every other rude Eastern nation, require to be treated much more like children, and to be taught, whether in the question of good government and organisation, or of material improvement'.²⁸¹

As well as highlighting the importance of individual colonists, this case of colonial violence clearly demonstrates the significance of communications between the periphery and metropole in the escalation of colonial conflict; the objectives of those on the ground were difficult to control. Furthermore, misunderstandings were rife and the inexperience of colonial administrators telling. It is clear that both Clarke and Birch were deliberately misleading each other and the Colonial Office;²⁸² the latter of whom was in favour of caution in this matter.²⁸³ Carnarvon had also advised restraint, warning Clarke from the outset not to create a situation which 'may easily lead us further than we now intend to go'.²⁸⁴ Importantly, events in Perak demonstrated the need for deliberate vagueness with regards to colonial policy; after hostilities in Perak little was

²⁷⁹ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 93.

²⁸⁰ Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 184.

²⁸¹ See Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 48, 53.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁸³ See: McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 297.

²⁸⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 299.

done to clarify the role of the Resident and the system clearly encouraged the Residents to act at their own discretion.²⁸⁵ Furthermore, this vague approach was taken throughout the war in relation to the levels of violence to be undertaken. In contrast, the military objectives were clear and the war was to act as a deterrent against future ‘rebellion’ in Perak. The war also conveyed the importance of the Imperial Treasury to events in the colonies; economy remained a key factor in dictating the likelihood of violence. It has been concluded that the military operations in both Perak and Sungei Ujong ‘were generally conducted professionally, effectively, expeditiously, and perhaps most importantly to civilian administrators and Whitehall wallahs, economically’.²⁸⁶ Whilst one can question this perspective regarding the conduct of the campaign, the emphasis upon the satisfaction of the treasury is certainly true.²⁸⁷ The conflict resulted in new British territory which came under British control in a ‘thinly disguised system of direct rule’ in which a diverse group of officials were united by ‘their shared opinion that the Malays were unfit for self government’.²⁸⁸ British forces remained in the colony for a further 18 months before being replaced by an armed, ‘paramilitary’ police force²⁸⁹ and, according to Swettenham the Malays ‘still worked under the shadow of warning they had received.’²⁹⁰

Ultimately, discussions would continue regarding the nature of the British Residency system,²⁹¹ but it was clear that policies would be informed by a typically prejudiced approach; as Frederick Weld, the Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1880 to 1887 candidly stated for example: ‘I doubt if Asiatics will ever learn to govern themselves; it is contrary to the genius of their race, of their history, of their religious systems ... their desire is a mild, just and firm despotism; *that* we can give them’,²⁹² arguing that ‘capacity for governing is a characteristic of our race’.²⁹³ In any case, the brutal utilisation of force against Perak had its intended effect and the chiefs had been

²⁸⁵ Sadka, *Protected Malay States*, 101, 103.

²⁸⁶ Raugh, ‘Storming the Strongholds’, 12. In any case, the cost of the campaign was paid out of Perak’s revenue: McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 313.

²⁸⁷ McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 313.

²⁸⁸ Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists*, 191.

²⁸⁹ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 209; Sadka, ‘The Residential System’, 178.

²⁹⁰ Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, 67.

²⁹¹ See Sadka, ‘The Residential System’, 174.

²⁹² Cited in Heussler, *British Rule*, 15: emphasis in original.

²⁹³ Frederick A. Weld, ‘The Straits Settlements and British Malaya’, in Paul H. Kratoska (ed.), *Honourable Intentions: Talks on the British Empire in South-East Asia Delivered at the Royal Colonial Institute 1874-1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 46. See also: Leigh Dale, ‘“This Nineteenth Century of Progress and Humanity”: The Life and Times of Frederick Weld (1823-1891)’, in Helen Gilbert and Chris Tiffin (eds), *Burden or Benefit? Imperial Benevolence and its Legacies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 72-89. Sadka, ‘The Residential System’, 212.

forced into submission. Carnarvon stated that the policy now was to ‘find and train up some Chief or Chiefs of sufficient capacity and enlightenment to appreciate the advantages of a civilised government and to render some assistance in the government of the country’.²⁹⁴ However, as Gullick argues, ‘In 1876, the Malay ruling class was in no mood to show itself “enlightened”, which was the code word meaning receptive to European influence’.²⁹⁵ As McIntyre has argued, in the aftermath of the Perak War changes to the system were minimal and ‘one cannot avoid the conviction that the Resident system of government by advice, as it was eventually evolved ... bore a certain affinity to the Jervois plan’;²⁹⁶ clearly, British military intervention had made this uncertain system of government tenable. In the wake of the bloodshed in Perak, the British administration in the area became increasingly centralised, widening its influence over the following twenty years before establishing British rule in the form of the Federated Malay States in 1895. In light of the absence of resistance to British troops in the aftermath of Birch’s murder and the continued presence of the British in the country and the failure to clarify the role of the colonists, McIntyre’s assessment may be correct that perhaps the campaign in Perak ‘should be described as an occupation rather than a war’.²⁹⁷ This occupation was to continue until independence was granted in 1957 amidst the brutal suppression of the Malayan Communist Party – the Malayan Emergency – by the British, which lasted until 1960 and resulted in the internment of nearly 34,000 people without trial and the hanging of 226 Communists, ‘a figure only exceeded in the post-1945 period by the judicial slaughter carried out in Kenya’ in the decolonisation process.²⁹⁸

Conclusion

The actual resistance to the British authorities in Perak in 1875-6 was very limited, but in a bid to suppress any present or future opposition the British carried out destructive tactics, which were entirely disproportionate to the situation at hand. In spite of the unnecessary violence inflicted in this case, Carnarvon still concluded that Jervois had ‘not hesitated to discourage all extreme measures in which the innocent have suffered

²⁹⁴ Cited in Gullick, *Rulers and Residents*, 17.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁹⁶ McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 316. See Emily Sadka (ed.), ‘The Journal of Sir High Low, Perak, 1877’, *JMBRAS*, 27:4 (1954), 1-108.

²⁹⁷ McIntyre, *Imperial Frontier*, 311.

²⁹⁸ John Newsinger, *The Blood Never Dried: A People’s History of the British Empire* (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2010 [2006]), 208. See chapter 1 for literature on decolonisation in Kenya.

with the guilty'.²⁹⁹ As stated above, Jervois' proclamation regarding the conduct that was expected from the troops was highly contradictory. Jervois wanted to make an example of certain areas, but also advocated the need to differentiate between friend and foe. Clearly starvation tactics flew in the face of such statements, as did holding hostages, destroying abandoned villages and scorched earth tactics: he was more concerned with 'moral effect' than moral objection. As Kim Wagner has highlighted, and as this case shows, considerations of 'hearts and minds' in an analysis of colonial warfare are not relevant.³⁰⁰ Jervois' approach is consistent with Callwell's, which also had a 'mixed message' with regards to the issue of force.³⁰¹ The events in Perak demonstrate the imbalance in relations between the coloniser and the colonised in the British Empire because of the significant amount of resources and the number of troops that Britain had at its disposal. This imbalance was underpinned by imperial ideology, which presented the indigenous population as 'barbaric' and inherently incapable of ruling themselves. Whilst the Perak War may have caused relatively few casualties and the war was small in scale, it nevertheless highlights the dynamics of British colonial violence which led to the disproportionate response of British troops and the consequences of that response.

This war shows a typical approach to colonial warfare as espoused by Callwell's *Small Wars*, including the need for 'bold and resolute' action. However, Anson's swift response was unsuccessful and merely led to further loss of life at Pasir Salak and a sense of panic regarding the aims of the limited indigenous resistance.³⁰² It is clear that the British campaign was undertaken not only to punish the chiefs for Birch's murder but also to show a significant amount of force towards the general population. After a demonstration of British military might, the colonial system continued more or less as planned and brute force had served its purpose. Callwell stated the objective of this force thus: 'fanatics and savages ... must be thoroughly brought to book and cowed or they will rise again.'³⁰³ The war also demonstrates the ways in which the Empire was expanded without a clear policy from the metropole and is an example of the use of extreme measures, in spite of the small scale of the conflict. The war highlights the

²⁹⁹ Carnarvon to Jervois, 1 February 1876, C.1505, 264.

³⁰⁰ Kim A. Wagner, 'A Scattering of Death: Violence and the Colonial Rule of Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency', *History Workshop Journal* (forthcoming 2018), 13.

³⁰¹ See Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Another British Way in Warfare: Charles Callwell and Small Wars', in Beckett (ed.), *Victorians at War: New Perspectives*, Chippenham: Society for Army Historical Research, Special Publication 16 (2007), 98.

³⁰² Callwell, *Small Wars*, 78.

³⁰³ *Ibid*, 148.

brutal nature of colonial expansion ‘in which either civilisation or barbarism must rule without a rival’.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ ‘The War in the Malayan Peninsula’, *The Times*, 31 January 1876.

Map of Sierra Leone



Source: Based on UN map accessed via Wikimedia Commons, 18 July 2016:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sierrale.pdf>

Chapter 3

British Suppression of the Hut Tax War in Sierra Leone, 1898-9

*'The White Man's Burden' has been heavy, but time will show that, in vulgar phrase, even financially, it will pay.*¹

*No one would say seriously, if they considered the matter, that savage methods are fit for us to use, even if we are dealing with savages.*²

The so-called 'Hut Tax' War broke out in Sierra Leone in early 1898³ as the result of opposition to a tax, which was to be enforced per household by the colonial authorities to fund the newly declared British Protectorate in the hinterland of the Colony of Sierra Leone. British involvement beyond the boundaries of the Colony had been increasing in recent years. Similar to the circumstances which led to the Perak War, indigenous leaders were becoming increasingly dissatisfied in the face of increased British colonial influence and their expressed grievances were met with obstinacy on the part of the man on the spot, which escalated the situation and led to prolonged violence and destructive military tactics. The introduction of the tax in the hinterland of the Colony came at a time when there was mounting discontent as a result of the arbitrary violence that had been conducted by the Frontier Police, which was introduced in 1890. Local chiefs had also become increasingly disgruntled at the realisation that they had effectively given up their sovereignty via a series of treaties with the British colonial administration. Initially, this opposition was voiced in the form of a series of petitions, which emphasised the chiefs' opposition to the introduction of the tax in particular; the colonial authorities, however, ignored the petitioners' grievances and resistance rapidly escalated into open warfare. This event shows a clear example of the devastating effects that British prejudice and feelings of superiority toward the native population could have. This case of British colonial suppression demonstrates how a situation of potential conflict could escalate into violence in the colonies; dire British miscalculations were

¹ By One Who Was There, 'The Sierra Leone Protectorate Expedition, 1898-1899', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 43:1 (1899), 542.

² *Sierra Leone: Report by Her Majesty's Commissioner and Correspondence on the Subject of the Insurrection in the Sierra Leone Protectorate 1898: Part I, Report and Correspondence*, C.9388 (1899) [hereafter: Chalmers Report Part I], 77.

³ Originally described as a house tax, 'hut tax' was a pejorative term created by the Freetown press to express their disdain for direct taxation: Arthur Abraham, *Mende Government and Politics under Colonial Rule: A Historical Study of Political Change in Sierra Leone 1890-1937* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1978), 133.

made and this chapter examines the background to the fighting to provide a clearer picture of how British rule could result in explosive violence on both sides. This study focuses predominantly on the conflict which broke out in the North of the Protectorate against the chief, Bai Bureh, rather than the Mende conflict in the South, although the two conflicts did overlap.

This colonial conflict occurred at a time of increasing pressure and international rivalries throughout the British Empire. These pressures were further exacerbated in West Africa by the accidental confrontation which broke out between Britain and France at Waima in 1893, with fatalities on both sides.⁴ Due to these tensions, the new Governor of the Colony of Sierra Leone, Frederic Cardew, waited until the Anglo-French boundary agreement was accepted on 21 January 1895 before announcing the Protectorate in an attempt to avoid any further tensions between the two countries; ‘It is instructive that none of these agreements involved the interior peoples or their rulers, whose land and lives were being taken over by these arrangements’.⁵ The war also coincided with a number of uprisings against British rule, which were suppressed during this period throughout Africa, making the revolt in Sierra Leone particularly ‘inconvenient’ for the British administration in London. As Christopher Fyfe has highlighted, during the time of the risings ‘when news from Sierra Leone was published almost daily, disturbing accounts from all over the Empire filled the English papers’, all of which ‘demanded Chamberlain’s attention’.⁶ Hence, the context of other colonial conflicts provided added pressure to the colonists to decisively bring resistance in the Sierra Leone Protectorate under control. The revolt in Sierra Leone was part of a catalogue of threats to Britain’s international prestige, which had a profound impact on the colonial rulers, affecting Britain’s approach to colonial policy into the twentieth century.⁷

As Fyfe has highlighted, the first settlement that was sent over from Britain to Sierra Leone in 1787 ‘brought dramatic discontinuity’ to the country; ‘During the succeeding twenty years three successive settler communities of African descent arrived—the 1787 settlers (the so-called “Black Poor”) from England, in 1792 the

⁴ Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 519-21.

⁵ Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism, and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), Kindle edition.

⁶ Joseph Chamberlain was Secretary of State for the Colonies at this time (1895-1903); Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 578.

⁷ Andrew Porter, ‘Introduction: Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth Century’, in Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.

settlers from Nova Scotia, and in 1800 the Jamaica Maroons'.⁸ While this first settlement was unsuccessful,⁹ Freetown became a Crown Colony in 1808, a year after the ratification of the Abolition Act in Britain in 1807 and the Colony was to provide a settlement for slaves captured (the so-called 'recaptives') by the British Navy and was thus 'turned into the centre of [Britain's] naval actions to suppress the slave trade in West Africa ... and to try offenders under the Abolition Act'.¹⁰ It has been argued that the goal of the colony was to create 'Black Englishmen, [who] would eventually be the agents for the propagation of European civilisation' and Christianity in Africa.¹¹

Arthur Abraham has highlighted that the settlers did not penetrate the interior of the Colony and that their trade 'did not extend much beyond twenty-five miles inland'.¹² Central to British policies in the hinterlands of the Colony was a desire to gain economic access rather than political domination in the area¹³ and as justification for the extension of British influence into the interior, the reliance of the Colony on the hinterland economically was acknowledged.¹⁴ Abraham has emphasised the contradictory forces that were at work at this time as a result of

a conflict in policy between, on the one hand, the British Government's insistence on barely preserving, and if possible contracting, the existing responsibilities in West Africa, and on the other, the men-on-the-spot, the frontiersmen, chafing restlessly to extend colonial jurisdiction over the adjoining hinterland.¹⁵

That the men on the ground were pushing British influence further than London intended was not uncommon in the British Empire, as the previous chapter demonstrated. In this case, official policy stipulated that British responsibilities were not to be extended; nevertheless several punitive expeditions were conducted along the Colony's frontier, particularly as a result of the actions of British traders who expected

⁸ Christopher Fyfe, '1787-1887-1987: Reflections on a Sierra Leone Bicentenary', *Journal of the International African Institute*, 57:4 (1987), 411. Both the 'Black Poor' and the Nova Scotians were slaves who had joined the British forces in the War of American Independence. See: Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 13-19, 31-35, 79-81.

⁹ See Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 19-25.

¹⁰ Wai, *Epistemologies*.

¹¹ Akintola Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History* (London: C. Hurst, 1989), 1.

¹² Abraham, *Mende Government*, 42.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴ Chalmers Report Part I, 10.

¹⁵ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 45.

protection outside of the Colony's boundaries.¹⁶ British concerns focused on the role that the area played in the economics of the Colony and in particular the detrimental effects of slave raids as well as trade wars. As Cardew stated, he had 'no hesitation in asserting that the source and origin of all native wars is the slave traffic'.¹⁷ Hence, the British were slowly increasing their power in the region and the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890 had already resulted in 'consolidating a series of earlier acts, [which] empowered the Crown to exercise any jurisdiction claimed in a foreign country as if by right of cession or conquest'. At this time, Cardew's predecessor, James Hay, had already begun a process of extending British authority in the interior and so began the curtailment of the inhabitants' rights. For example, two travelling Commissioners were introduced as well as a Frontier Police Force in 1890 and a Native Affairs Department in 1892, which was established to advise the Governor regarding matters concerning the hinterland.¹⁸ From 1894, Cardew was to '[manipulate] the treaties that his predecessors had signed with the interior rulers, suggesting that they had consented to give up their countries to the British by virtue of the terms of those treaties'¹⁹ and by 1895, the 'hinterland was by now a virtual British territory'.²⁰ The formation of a Sierra Leone Protectorate was announced on 31 August 1896, and consisted of the hinterlands of the Sierra Leone Crown Colony.²¹ However, as Abraham has highlighted, the treaties upon which the Protectorate was based were 'a downright fraud'.²² Indeed, a lawyer was brought in to question the very legality of the Protectorate, given that the land had not been acquired by conquest and would thus need to be based on the consent of the chiefs.²³ The Sierra Leone Legislative Council was now able to legislate for the Protectorate as it did for the Colony.²⁴ As J. D. Hargreaves explains:

In 1896 the remaining regions not conceded to be under French or Liberian influence were proclaimed a British Protectorate; which also included, for administrative purposes, certain chiefdoms formerly part of the Colony. In this period, therefore, the term 'Colony' is applied to the peninsula and

¹⁶ See for example the actions of acting Governor Pinkett in the interior: Abraham, *Mende Government*, 76-80; *Sierra Leone: Correspondence Respecting the Disturbances in the Neighbourhood of British Sherbro, in April and May 1883*, C.3765 (1883).

¹⁷ Cardew cited in Abraham, *Mende Government*, 117.

¹⁸ T. J. Alldridge, *The Sherbro and its Hinterland* (London: Macmillan, 1901), 5; Wai, *Epistemologies*.

¹⁹ Wai, *Epistemologies*.

²⁰ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 110.

²¹ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 541.

²² Abraham, *Mende Government*, 123.

²³ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁴ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 541.

islands originally settled, with a few predominantly tribal areas around the river Sherbro; the term ‘Protectorate’ to territories the size of Ireland, which form the great bulk of the area marked ‘Sierra Leone’ on a modern map, and whose social organisation was at this time exclusively tribal.²⁵

The announcement of the Protectorate was arguably ‘the logical conclusion of British colonising activities in Sierra Leone, which had begun with the 1787 colonial experiment’.²⁶

The Protectorate was divided into five Frontier Police Districts based on traditional tribal divisions as perceived by the British; however, as Fyfe has highlighted, the Protectorate’s ‘limits depended on how the frontiers were decided in Europe—not on treaties or chiefs’ consent’.²⁷ Unlike in the Colony, the Protectorate was not to be ruled by English law and Cardew argued that the country should be administered ‘as far as possible by native law and through the chiefs’ and hence ‘two legal systems adjoined’.²⁸ However, it was clear that the colonists would ultimately control the area, as one observer stated, ‘Government is to be carried on by the chiefs wherever, and in so far as, such government is tolerable; but the white man is to be there, and wherever he sees fit he is to have his way’.²⁹ The Frontier Police were employed in an attempt to patrol the hinterland as ‘the para-military arm of the administration’s new policy’ and their central aim was to hinder the trade of slaves.³⁰ The fact that ‘any slave reaching the soil of the Colony was entitled to claim his freedom’ created bitter resentment among the chiefs.³¹ The methods used by the force were a central grievance of the chiefs and were also condemned in the local press in 1894, as it was stated that:

the very body of men sent to the interior for the purpose of impressing the natives with a sense of the protecting power of the local government, that the very force located in the country to pacify it, and restore the old confidence, and open up the trade routes, should degenerate into a band of

²⁵ J. D. Hargreaves, ‘The Establishment of the Sierra Leone Protectorate and the Insurrection of 1898’, *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 12:1 (1956), 56.

²⁶ Wai, *Epistemologies*.

²⁷ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 541.

²⁸ Cited in Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 61; Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 545.

²⁹ Harry L. Stephen, ‘The Sierra Leone Disturbances’, *The Nineteenth Century* (1899), 476.

³⁰ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 95; Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 60.

³¹ Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 57.

lawless desperadoes, ill-conditioned rogues and plunderers, terrorising over their own kith and kin.³²

‘The activities of the Frontier Police thus contradicted the very *raison d’être* of their establishment’³³ and in 1895 Cardew recognised the problems within the force in so far as he dismissed thirty of its members and sought reform, although these measures did little to contain the violence of its members.³⁴

The colonial administration expected the Protectorate to raise its own revenue and insisted that it would not be supported by the Colony;³⁵ central to this assumption was the imposition of a house tax, which was envisaged by Cardew to fund his plans for the implementation of the Protectorate Ordinance completed on 10 September 1897. The house tax was to consist of a payment of 5 shillings a year for two room houses and 10 shillings a year for larger houses and the tax was to be enforced in the three districts closest to the Colony (Ronietta, Bandajuma and Karene) and which were therefore deemed to be the most important in terms of trade.³⁶ District Commissioners were put in place in these three areas, all of whom were previous members of the controversial Frontier Police.³⁷ In 1894, Cardew had expressed his belief that the imposition of the tax would not be a problem and even in 1897 he stated that an ‘adequate police-force and a sufficient complement of white officers’ would ensure peace.³⁸ Cardew mistakenly believed that the tribes were too disunited to join together and oppose the tax.³⁹ Cardew was determined to pursue these policies, despite the reservations voiced by the Colonial Office; for example Cardew was warned that ‘the general assent of the people is indispensable to the success of any laws that be introduced’.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Colonial Office criticised Cardew’s policies as being ‘too ambitious and premature’.⁴¹ Despite these concerns Cardew determinedly continued with his policies. The tax was just one of many changes being implemented throughout the area and

³² The Sierra Leone Times cited in ‘The Sierra Leone Risings’, *Transactions of the Aborigines’ Protection Society*, 1 February 1899.

³³ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 107.

³⁴ Ibid., 109; see also: E. D. Morel, ‘The Sierra Leone Hut-Tax Disturbances: A Reply to Mr Stephen’, (Liverpool: John Richardson & Sons, 1899), 18.

³⁵ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 111.

³⁶ Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 65.

³⁷ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 551.

³⁸ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 119-20; Cardew cited in Michael Crowder, ‘Bai Bureh and the Sierra Leone Hut Tax War of 1898’, (with LaRay Denzer), in Crowder (ed.), *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 64.

³⁹ Crowder, ‘Bai Bureh’, 66; Cardew to Chamberlain, 24 December 1897, TNA CO879/55.

⁴⁰ Cited in Abraham, *Mende Government*, 118.

⁴¹ Cited in *ibid.*, 132.

Cardew toured the country to explain his policies in the various chiefdoms, although his intention was to ‘explain his plans to the rulers, though not seal their consent—the terms were dictated, not negotiated’.⁴² Furthermore, Cardew acknowledged in the aftermath of the conflict that the imposition of the hut tax would hold out ‘no hopes of such a consummation’.⁴³ Hence, Cardew was more than aware that his policies would lead to discontent, although he erroneously believed that there would be no united opposition and he was clearly determined to implement his policies regardless. It seems likely that these ‘attempts’ to explain British policy to the chiefs were merely token gestures considering Cardew’s view of the native population. Cardew stated that he was dealing ‘with a people that are practically savages – some are cannibals – quite illiterate and very degraded by ignorance and gross superstition ... accustomed to the most despotic sway on the part of their chiefs’.⁴⁴ Cardew’s prejudice clearly affected the ways in which he dealt with the indigenous peoples; he viewed them as unreasonable and dismissed their points violently, using language which was almost impossible to translate.⁴⁵ The chiefs were particularly aggrieved by the fact that ‘nearly three-quarters of the £30,000 spent annually on the Protectorate was paying for the unpopular Frontier Police’.⁴⁶

Initially, inhabitants of the new Protectorate voiced their protests to the new Ordinance in the form of petitions from the end of 1896 onwards. In the chiefs’ petition of 17 December 1896 for example, they took particular issue with the new land laws. These laws were relevant to the issue of the Crown’s right to minerals in the Protectorate and the question of ‘waste lands’ as perceived by the Governor of Sierra Leone, as well as the ‘subsidiary powers in District Commissioners to determine what lands were waste or uninhabited’.⁴⁷ These laws were ultimately repealed, but not before they caused much animosity between the chiefs and colonial authorities and also, these debates demonstrated a typical of approach of British colonists regarding indigenous lands. However, as David Chalmers, who was later commissioned to conduct an enquiry into the reasons for the war, argued, ‘it was not a no Man’s Land which was being dealt with, or vast tracts peopled only by a few wandering herdsmen, but a populous territory,

⁴² Wai, *Epistemologies*.

⁴³ Chalmers Report Part I, 92-93.

⁴⁴ Cardew cited in Abraham, *Mende Government*, 132.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁶ Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 66. In May 1898, Cardew estimated the cost of the Protectorate – including the Frontier Police – as being approximately £36,000: Cardew to Chamberlain, 28 May 1898, TNA CO267/438.

⁴⁷ Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 65.

which had been for ages parcelled out and under definite government, although the plane of civilisation might be far removed from a European standard'.⁴⁸

The intended house tax was central to the chiefs' petition and they emphasised with 'evident sincerity', that 'we all have been friends with the Queen for a long time', but the incremental takeover of the country had now become clear and they had lost their rights without a British conquest of the land.⁴⁹ The petitions gave the administration ample chance to revise or withdraw the taxes, but only slight revisions were later made so that all inhabitants in villages of twenty huts or more were obligated to pay a flat rate of 5 shillings, regardless of house size. A petition from 28 June 1897 was delivered personally by the chiefs to Freetown, however, as Cardew was on leave at this time they decided to wait for his return, despite being told that he would not be back for two months. On finally meeting with the chiefs on 15 November 1897, Cardew provided his explanation for his policies and cut the meeting short when the chiefs expressed a desire to consider the matter further; for Cardew, negotiations were out of the question.⁵⁰ That the chiefs would have felt that Cardew did not deal with their grievances properly is clear considering his response to the complaint that the country was virtually under the rule of the Police; Cardew replied as follows:

Every act of oppression on part of police severely punished is brought to notice of the authorities, but it is you people that so often spoil them by bribes &c, and withholding information that would cause their punishment. ... Though police will be punished when they commit acts of oppression, remember they wear the Queen's uniform and their authority must be respected.⁵¹

Cardew also warned the chiefs that if they did not accept the Ordinance then they risked being occupied by another European power that 'might not deal so considerately with you as the English do'.⁵² Cardew did not deny the fact that the chiefs had ultimately lost control of their own country, stating 'Of absolute control, certainly, because only the Queen can govern'.⁵³ As Chalmers later summarised, the chiefs were dejected and 'left

⁴⁸ Chalmers Report Part I, 17.

⁴⁹ Hargreaves, 'Sierra Leone Protectorate', 66; cited in Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 182.

⁵⁰ Summarised by Chalmers in his Report, Part I, 22-23.

⁵¹ 'Text of an Address Given by the Governor to Certain Chiefs of the Karene District at Freetown on the 15 Nov: 1897', CO267/438.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

in silence'.⁵⁴ In contrast, Cardew, came away from the meeting stating more optimistically, 'I was glad to have the opportunity of showing them how they had been misled and how unfounded their grievances were'.⁵⁵ Both before and after the war, Cardew stood by the implementation of the tax regardless of the consequences, arguing that there is 'a great principle involved in this struggle which is the right of the Government to compel the governed to contribute towards the support of the Government which ensures them the security of life and prosperity, just laws and all the other benefits of the most advanced civilisation'.⁵⁶ However, the problem with this line of argument was that 'the people did not want the so-called benefits of his government, and they were certainly not prepared to pay for what they did not want'.⁵⁷

Tax collections began on 1 January 1898 and the administration's actions, as well as those of the Frontier Police persistently caused resentment and the authorities continued to deal harshly with those who refused to pay or endorse the tax. Fyfe has argued that 'Cardew preferred not to harass his District Commissioners with too many explicit orders, relying on their initiative to carry out the policy he outlined. He left it up to them to decide how to collect tax, only asking them to combine patience with firmness'.⁵⁸ Cardew's vagueness allowed the Frontier Police to undertake severe methods to collect the tax. One account describes how 'They went ruthlessly through the chieftdom, demanding instant payment, tying up those who refused till they paid, or burning their houses, exacting tax even from small, exempted villages, so raising £300, but also bitter hatred'.⁵⁹ In the aftermath of the war, Captain E. D. H. Fairtlough, District Commissioner of Kwalu in the East of the Protectorate, claimed that officials went out of their way to 'avoid anything like irritating or hurting the feelings of the natives in any way',⁶⁰ however, this argument is unsustainable. With regards to the oppressive methods used by the Frontier Police to collect the tax, Cardew admitted that coercion was adopted but stated that this was only after 'it became quite evident from the armed gatherings which took place all over the country that there was to be a

⁵⁴ Chalmers Report Part I, 23.

⁵⁵ Cardew to Chamberlain, 24 December 1897, CO879/55.

⁵⁶ Cardew cited in LaRay Denzer and Michael Crowder, 'Bai Bureh and the Sierra Leone Hut Tax War of 1898', in Robert I. Rotberg and Ali A. Mazrui (eds), *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 177.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁵⁸ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 558.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 569.

⁶⁰ 'The Recent Disturbances in Sierra Leone', *The Times*, 25 October 1898.

determined resistance to such collection'.⁶¹ However, this claim seems highly improbable, considering the methods utilised by the force over the previous years. The failings of the Frontier Police were linked by contemporaries to the 'nature' of the indigenous members of the force, rather than the system itself and it was claimed that they acted as 'little judges and governors' and were able to abuse their positions of power amongst the indigenous population, without the 'civilising' influence of the colonists.⁶²

The central grievance of the chiefs regarding their treatment by the British authorities and the Frontier Police was worsened by the arrest of five Port Lokko chiefs including Bokari Bamp by Captain W. S. Sharpe, the District Commissioner of Karene; these actions were particularly controversial – occurring as they did 'Without a shot having been fired, a blow struck, or the slightest sign of physical resistance offered' – and caused outrage amongst their people.⁶³ The chiefs were asked the following: "Will you do your best to order all your people not to molest the Sierra Leonians [the traders] for paying the tax?" and "Will you undertake to start collecting the Hut Tax due from you at once?"⁶⁴ The chiefs replied in the negative, although as Chalmers later highlighted neither of these responses were illegal.⁶⁵ It should be noted that as the chiefs were about to be taken away to Freetown, Bokari Bamp told their angry supporters that they 'must sit down quietly, and not do anything, and that he was going to suffer for the country'.⁶⁶ E. D. Morel was critical of the Government's policies in Sierra Leone and accurately described the ensuing violence: 'Chiefs were dragged from their villages, treated as felons, handcuffed and marched off to gaol under the eyes of their unresisting people'.⁶⁷ At the time, Sharpe claimed that the arrest of the chiefs had 'cleared the air',⁶⁸ however, he later showed that he was well aware of the antagonising effect that the arrests would have on the morale of the general population and admitted that the chiefs' treatment was an 'indignity' to them.⁶⁹ As Chalmers stated, 'Like the other District Commissioners Captain Sharpe was obviously imbued with and acted on the

⁶¹ Chalmers Report Part I, 115.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶³ Morel, 'The Sierra Leone Hut-Tax Disturbances', 18-19.

⁶⁴ Cited in *Sierra Leone Report by Her Majesty's Commissioner and Correspondence on the Subject of the Insurrection in the Sierra Leone Protectorate 1898 Part II, Evidence and Documents*, C.9391 (1899) [hereafter: Chalmers Report Part II], 211.

⁶⁵ Chalmers Report Part I, 32.

⁶⁶ Chalmers Report Part II, 372.

⁶⁷ E. D. Morel, *Affairs of West Africa* (London: William Heinemann, 1902), 282.

⁶⁸ Sharpe to Colonial Secretary, 12 February 1898, TNA CO267/437.

⁶⁹ Chalmers Report Part II, 219.

initial idea that imperative and uncompromising *force* was the factor to be relied on for success in connection with the Hut Tax'.⁷⁰ The chiefs were sentenced to imprisonment of between twelve months and two years, as well as hard labour; Sharpe actually claimed that he 'never knew that there was imprisonment without hard labour'.⁷¹ However, Sharpe admitted that he wanted to make an example of the chiefs stating, 'Though my sentences on the acting Chief [Bokari Bamp] and four headmen sent down appear severe at first sight, it was absolutely necessary, as an example to others, and will lighten my difficulties considerably'.⁷²

During this time, rumours were circulating in the North that the Temne chief and warrior from the Karene district, Bai Bureh, was planning a rising against the administration. The chief was already well known to the British and was also one of the signatories of the Temne petition; he had previously been a British ally.⁷³ Sharpe had written to Bai Bureh announcing his intention to visit him and collect the tax from him personally; the letter was returned unsigned and Sharpe perceived this action to be a clear affront, although Bai Bureh later claimed not to have received the letter.⁷⁴ At the beginning of the conflict Cardew described Bai Bureh as 'a great drunkard and a worthless character, and it is only by a combination of recklessness and good luck that he has succeeded in giving trouble for such a long time'.⁷⁵ Cardew had already tried and failed to arrest the chief in 1894,⁷⁶ a fact that Cardew had not forgotten.⁷⁷ As rumours regarding Bai Bureh continued Cardew decided that a show of force was needed; initially a group of Frontier Police was sent out on orders to have Bai Bureh arrested, as a result of his having 'defied' Sharpe.⁷⁸ However, as Sharpe and Inspector General Major A. F. Tarbet of the Frontier Police set out to arrest him, they were met with a group of 'warboys' who threw stones, scattered rice over the ground 'to show their contempt' and jeered at the troops; as the military report states, 'Capt. Hastings a young officer fresh out of England called out "Let us have a plug at them". This appears to have decided Maj. Tarbet who thereupon gave orders to fire then [the District

⁷⁰ Chalmers Report Part I, 33: emphasis in original.

⁷¹ Chalmers Report Part II, 210. Cardew to Chamberlain, 14 September 1898, CO879/55.

⁷² Sharpe's Report, 12 February 1898, CO879/55.

⁷³ Chalmers Report Part II, 215.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁷⁵ Cardew to Chamberlain, 25 February 1898, CO267/437.

⁷⁶ LaRay Denzer, 'Sierra Leone-Bai Bureh', in Michael Crowder (ed.), *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation* (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 247.

⁷⁷ Cardew to Chamberlain, 25 February 1898, CO267/437: emphasis in original.

⁷⁸ Chalmers Report Part II, 216.

Commissioner] telling him that he must accept the responsibility'.⁷⁹ Hence, Sharpe had been against opening fire on the crowd, however, on Tarbet's orders the first shots of the campaign were fired.⁸⁰ Major R. J. Norris, the Commanding Officer, claimed that he had not been made aware by Cardew of the severity of the situation in Karene, having been told by the Governor that 'there was not such a thing as a fortified town in the Protectorate.'⁸¹ Further incidents took place which did little to curtail the hostilities including a confrontation that occurred in an attempt to disarm the native population in Karene in which in Sharpe's words, 'a friendly native of Port Lokko, was killed practically *in cold blood*'.⁸² With the outbreak of violence Cardew ordered in extra troops from the West India Regiment; as the violence continued, it was not long before martial law was declared in Karene. The proclamation of martial law was made on 2 March 1898, in which it was pronounced that there was a 'state of siege' and that 'Any unauthorised person found carrying swords, firearms, or any offensive weapons will be treated as a rebel and dealt with accordingly'; furthermore, the declaration claimed that 'Every protection will be afforded to loyal and peaceful inhabitants, who are hereby ordered to give all possible assistance in their power towards the suppression of the rising which has taken place'.⁸³ The orders of the proclamation were decidedly vague and one may question the ways in which local inhabitants were expected 'to give all possible assistance' and no doubt included, in reality – as it had elsewhere in the British Empire – providing 'active assistance' to the British Army in suppressing any unrest.⁸⁴

Hence, the grounds for Bai Bureh's attempted arrest were based upon rumours that he would refuse to pay the tax and his 'defiance' of British authorities in not opening Sharpe's letter; as a result, Sharpe expressed his desire that Bai Bureh and the 'ringleaders' be captured 'dead or alive'.⁸⁵ However, it is clear that Bai Bureh's campaign did not begin until the British, and Cardew in particular, had made it apparent that there were to be no negotiations regarding British policy. In an atmosphere of discontent and hostility, tensions were high: it has been claimed that 'Whatever the

⁷⁹ Appendix C, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary 24 February to 20 and 27, 28 March 1898', TNA WO32/7624.

⁸⁰ For Sharpe's account of these events see: Chalmers Report Part II, 217.

⁸¹ Appendix C, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624. Colonel Woodgate noted and questioned these criticisms in his diary, see: Diary of Colonel E. R. P. Woodgate, 10 November 1898, KO2580/06, King's Own Museum.

⁸² Sharpe in Chalmers Report Part II, 609: emphasis in original.

⁸³ See: Hargreaves, 'Sierra Leone Protectorate', 69; 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', TNA WO32/7623.

⁸⁴ In relation to the Boer War see: Charles Townshend, 'Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800-1940', *The Historical Journal*, 25:1 (1982), 180.

⁸⁵ Sharpe's Report, 19 February 1898, CO879/55.

underlying causes, the British administration precipitated the war by firing the first shots', a point also made by Bai Bureh.⁸⁶ After hostilities broke out Bai Bureh undertook a campaign of guerrilla warfare against the British; having previously accompanied British expeditions, he was well aware of the fighting techniques and organisation of the Frontier Police and the West India Regiment;⁸⁷ although during their first attack, Bai Bureh's men attempted to fight the British in the open, thus leaving them exposed and with sixty men dead. However, 'This taught them to fight from cover, firing out suddenly at the columns marching, distended with carriers, along the narrow bush paths'.⁸⁸ These new tactics initially proved very effective and Bai Bureh was able to retain the initiative from 23 February until 1 April with an estimated three thousand of his 'warboys'; during this time the British only took the offensive once.⁸⁹ The British campaign was frustrated by Bai Bureh's strategy which was based upon the stockading of towns and villages in which snipers would attack British forces in unknown bush territory,⁹⁰ as well as the targeting of white officers;⁹¹ although first-hand accounts of the campaign make clear that these sniper tactics were largely ineffective; as Colonel E. Woodgate stated, 'the long range shots of the enemy doing us no harm – our replies effectually silenced them'.⁹²

As the British failed to gain the upper hand, the West India troops were left demoralised, exhausted and susceptible to disease, leading to an outbreak of smallpox.⁹³ The tactics used by Bai Bureh made the campaign all the more challenging, as one participant stated: 'Bush fighting is so entirely different, but in its own line far more trying to the nerves. The silent march through the almost deathlike stillness of the West African forest ... the longing to substitute the constant menace of the unseen for the exhilaration and excitement of the seen'.⁹⁴ Brigadier General F. M. Carleton stated in relation to bush fighting that 'You can do nothing in return unless you happen to catch the enemy in the open which is very seldom. All you can do is burn their villages and

⁸⁶ Arthur Abraham, 'Bai Bureh, the British, and the Hut Tax War', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 7:1 (1974), 104; see also Chalmers Report Part I, 35-38. Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 566.

⁸⁷ Denzer, 'Sierra Leone-Bai Bureh', 247.

⁸⁸ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 564.

⁸⁹ Denzer and Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 204.

⁹⁰ Denzer, 'Sierra Leone-Bai Bureh', 248-49.

⁹¹ Michael Crowder, 'West African Resistance', in Crowder (ed.), *West African Resistance*, 15.

⁹² Woodgate, 17 April 1898, 'Karene Report on Operations 14 April to 24 April 1898', TNA WO32/7626.

⁹³ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 564; Appendix D, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

⁹⁴ By One Who Was There, 'The Sierra Leone Protectorate Expedition', 541.

occupy the country'.⁹⁵ Brigadier General E. Craig-Brown's account also demonstrates the difficulties of fighting against Bai Bureh's tactics: 'This was the first time I was under fire but as we couldn't see the enemy we did not fire back. Besides we were afraid of hitting our [advanced guard which] had evidently turned a corner somewhere ahead for some of their bullets came singing over our heads'.⁹⁶ Norris was frustrated by Cardew's reluctance to supply further troops and the inexperience of the troops that were sent.⁹⁷ The situation led Norris to blame Cardew for the escalation of the violence, stating that he had '[assumed] unto himself the supreme command of military operations' and claimed that if reinforcements had been sent immediately 'I have no doubt whatever the insurrection would have been crushed out within fourteen days.'⁹⁸ Norris even wrote a despatch directly blaming the Governor for worsening and prolonging the situation but Colonel Bosworth refused to forward it.⁹⁹ Lt. Foulkes also criticised Cardew's interference in the campaign, stating:

This method of reinforcement in driblets was a mistake, because each success over a small column encouraged the enemy and brought in many 'war boys' from outlying districts. The Governor naturally wished to economise in the force employed, and perhaps he relied on his title of Commander-in-Chief to specify its size, instead of leaving the matter to the judgement of the Officer Commanding the Troops.¹⁰⁰

Clearly, from a military standpoint a swift and decisive blow to the resistance was perceived as necessary and Foulkes' statement reflects Callwell's work regarding the 'moral effect' of such violence.¹⁰¹ It is evident that in this conflict the fighting conditions for the troops were particularly trying; one field report also described 'the 10 hours almost continuous fighting in high dense bush and occasional forest with frequent masked stockades' in which '[t]he rearguard was continually harassed during the first

⁹⁵ Private Papers of Brigadier General F. M. Carleton DSO, Documents.20718, 8 May 1898, Imperial War Museum (hereafter: IWM).

⁹⁶ Private Papers of Brigadier General E. Craig-Brown DSO, Documents.1862, 'Hut Tax Expedition Near Sierra Leone, 1898', 22 March 1898, IWM, Ec-b 2/1 92/23.

⁹⁷ 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', WO32/7623.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Major General Charles Howard Foulkes (1875-1969): GB0099 KCMA Foulkes 4/1, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College (hereafter LHMA).

¹⁰¹ Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]), 37-38.

five hours of fighting'.¹⁰² As Lt.-Col. J. W. A. Marshall described in his military report, the stockades posed a particular challenge for the European troops: 'It is absolutely impossible for European eyes to discover them by an outward sign; occasionally a particularly quick-sighted native will discover the locality of a stockade by some slight indication such as a dead twig, or some drooping leaves overhead'.¹⁰³ In his description of the stockades, Foulkes later conveyed the basic nature of Bai Bureh's weapons: 'Old muzzle-loading guns, charged with black powder and filled with stones and pieces chipped off iron bars and rods, were thrust through the interstices and discharged at the passing column, and later some of our own capture rifles were used against us.'¹⁰⁴ The difficult fighting conditions were further heightened by the climate in which there was 'intense heat and want of water'.¹⁰⁵ As Peter Burroughs has stated, West Africa was viewed as a 'graveyard' for British soldiers and 'service there equivalent to a death sentence'.¹⁰⁶ The difficult environment was worsened by the actions of the enemy, as highlighted by Marshall:

nearly every night the bivouacs were deluged with rain; it was comparatively seldom that the troops were sufficiently fortunate to sleep in towns, for if the last town attacked during the day was not set on fire by shell fire of the attacking party, it was frequently burnt by the enemy on being driven out, so as to leave no shelter for the troops.¹⁰⁷

Foulkes also criticised the abilities of the West India Regiment, stating that 'they looked well in their picturesque uniform, but they were made of poor fighting material', furthermore, they were 'untrained in bush fighting'.¹⁰⁸

The British campaign was logistically challenging and the military had great difficulties providing constant supplies to the troops. As the military report for Karene stated for February, 'It is as much as we can do to send up even a few days supply at a time, which means incessant convoy duty with heavy casualties each way and no troops

¹⁰² 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', WO32/7623.

¹⁰³ Marshall, Appendix D, 'Report of the Karene Expeditionary Force 1898', TNA WO32/7630.

¹⁰⁴ Foulkes, 4/1, LHMA.

¹⁰⁵ 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', WO32/7623.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Burroughs, 'The Human Cost of Imperial Defence in the Early Victorian Age', *Victorian Studies*, 24:1 (1980), 14. See also: A. K. Slessor, 'A Subaltern in the Bush', *Macmillan's Magazine*, (1900), 241-53.

¹⁰⁷ Chalmers Report Part II, 621.

¹⁰⁸ Foulkes, 4/1, LHMA.

consequently available for actual operations against Bai Bureh'.¹⁰⁹ In April 1898 Cardew stated that much of the troops' time had been taken up with supplies and 'the true objective, which is Bai Bureh and his territory, has been neglected'.¹¹⁰ A great number of carriers were required, however, conditions were particularly harsh for the carriers who were employed locally and who were not only targeted by Bai Bureh's men, but were also not cared for adequately by the Regiment. Records describe how there were 'Problems of not being able to cook rice on board for the carriers' and that they went 25 hours without water, with the report suggesting 'inhuman conduct'.¹¹¹ So bad were the conditions that it was stated in one report that: 'No more [carriers] can be obtained and the desertion or defection of those at present employed might lead to a disaster'.¹¹² The carriers were also left open to attack as 'operations were mainly confined to the provisioning of Karene, 25 miles from Port Lokko, and convoys with large numbers of carriers were constantly passing between the two stations'.¹¹³ However, on Marshall's arrival at the beginning of April, British tactics were changed with regards to provisioning and the British campaign was turned around: 'Intermediate bases were established between the villages and fortified ... and in them ammunition and supplies were accumulated, so that columns could set out and return to them unencumbered by long lines of carriers'.¹¹⁴ A further tactic was introduced in the form of flying columns which 'were sent out from the centres [and] which took the enemy by surprise and inflicted serious casualties on them for the first time'.¹¹⁵ Central to the role of these flying columns was the decimation of the surrounding area. During Major Buck's command of the flying column the tactics used were acknowledged thus:

the operations at Karene appear to have been confined to making expeditions with small parties to destroy neighbouring towns and villages which had given shelter to the insurgents, these operations took place on the 10th, 11th, 12th [March], and the troops were unmolested except on the last day when they were fired on as they advanced to Rotshing on the Little Skarcies [sic], and 4 carriers were wounded.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Appendix D, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

¹¹⁰ Cardew to Chamberlain, 2 April 1898, CO879/55.

¹¹¹ 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

¹¹² Appendix C, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

¹¹³ Woodgate's Report, 9 January 1899, TNA CO267/445.

¹¹⁴ Foulkes 4/1, LHMA.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Cardew to Chamberlain, 24 March 1898, CO267/437.

While the indigenous resistance sought to hinder the flying column by firing the surrounding grass, Buck's men also undertook this tactic and he stated that 'We set fire to grass [and] to leeward side of the path we were following'.¹¹⁷ Buck makes clear the destruction that ensued as a result of these tactics: 'They gave us sufficient space to form up the column 860 without danger of being burnt out. ... At this time whole country was in aflame for about a mile all round. Tried to make a start about 4, but found the road impassable owing to the fire. So laagered in open on burnt plain.' Conditions were difficult for the men under Buck and both 'Men and carriers [were] much distressed owing to great scarcity of water'.¹¹⁸ With regards to the work of the flying column, Marshall claimed 'that everything has been done in the Kassi country which a flying column can do. The country has been traversed through and through and Bai Bureh has absolutely no town or scarcely any "fakais" [bush camps]'.¹¹⁹

At the end of April further violence erupted in the South of the Protectorate and 'Within a week the whole country was practically up in armed resistance'.¹²⁰ However, the violence in the South was markedly different and the Mende tribe carried out a series of murders of British and American subjects, predominantly missionaries, as well as Africans in European dress, attacking the Creole population in particular.¹²¹ Disturbing accounts emerged of acts of violence targeting 'European' elements of society, and the victims included men, women and children; estimates regarding the number of fatalities range from 300 to 1,000 people.¹²² Although, the District Surgeon, Dr Berkley claimed that 'The women, as a rule, were not killed, and in many cases became the means of bringing to justice the murderers'.¹²³ It has been argued, however, that despite the dissimilarities between the two campaigns, 'the underlying causes of the two risings were the same'.¹²⁴ Cardew was of the opinion that if the initial revolt in the North had 'not been protracted, the [Mende] rising would probably not have taken place',¹²⁵ arguing that Bai Bureh's successes had provided them with 'encouragement'.¹²⁶ The chiefs in the Bandajuma District had also refused to pay the

¹¹⁷ Buck to Cardew, 17 March 1898, CO267/437.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Cited in Cardew to Chamberlain, 27 May 1898, CO267/438. For an explanation of 'fakai' see Crowder and Denzer, 'Bai Bureh', 210.

¹²⁰ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 146.

¹²¹ Known as Krio in Sierra Leone: Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone*.

¹²² Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 589.

¹²³ Dr Berkeley to Colonial Secretary, Enclosure 1 in No. 216, CO879/55.

¹²⁴ Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 61-62.

¹²⁵ Cited in Chalmers Report Part I, 103.

¹²⁶ Cardew to Chamberlain, 9 June 1898, CO879/55.

tax in January 1898 and ‘offered armed resistance’ and Cardew had received a report from District Commissioner C. E. Carr during this time, which stated: ‘Unless a firm attitude shown now movement will gather force and state of affairs become serious’.¹²⁷ Cardew therefore recommended sending out a company of troops to the area,

for I believe if we show force now we shall have no difficulty in the future, whereas if we let the natives once think that the Government is vacillating we shall have a very troublesome time before us and probably loss of life, but this, I do not apprehend if we send now some troops, the news of it will be carried all over the Protectorate and it will have a great moral effect, and will make them realise that the Government is in earnest.¹²⁸

It has been argued that ‘The Mende war had a peculiarly brutal, indiscriminate, and xenophobic character, which contrasts dramatically with the Bai Bureh war in the north’.¹²⁹ As Cardew claimed, ‘The Timinis have conducted their war in a fairly humane and civilised manner, and, except in a few cases, not committed acts of murder. But the [Mende] have spared no one: all aliens on whom they have laid their hands have been butchered’.¹³⁰ Although the District Commissioner of the Sherbro Islands T. J. Alldridge noted that, ‘The smallest rumour of warlike description brought in was immediately magnified and distorted until it struck absolute terror into the people’.¹³¹ Although the Mende rising was different in nature, their motives were essentially the same. The Mende attempted to fight the British in open warfare,¹³² and casualty numbers were therefore assumed to be high.¹³³ The Mende did not offer an organised, systematic attack but rather spontaneous attacks upon ‘unsuspecting opponents’,¹³⁴ which then ‘degenerated into a series of uncoordinated attacks’.¹³⁵

As Bai Bureh’s forces continued to frustrate British attempts to bring the rising under control, the British resorted to a policy of scorched earth in which they systematically burnt down towns, villages, food stores and crops,¹³⁶ regardless of

¹²⁷ Cardew to Chamberlain, received 17 January 1898, CO267/437. See also Cardew to Chamberlain, 3 May 1898, CO879/55.

¹²⁸ Cardew to Chamberlain, received 17 January 1898, CO267/437.

¹²⁹ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 147.

¹³⁰ Cardew to Chamberlain, 28 May 1898, CO267/438.

¹³¹ Alldridge, *The Sherbro*, 325, 330-31.

¹³² A. P. Kup, *Sierra Leone: A Concise History* (Vancouver: David & Charles, 1975), 187.

¹³³ A. B. C. Sibthorpe, *The History of Sierra Leone*, 4th edn (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 129.

¹³⁴ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 572.

¹³⁵ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 155.

¹³⁶ Crowder, ‘Introduction’, 16; Wallis, *Our West African Empire*, 81.

whether the inhabitants put up resistance against the British; looting was also standard practice in this procedure.¹³⁷ For example, Sharpe told Chalmers that as a column marched on the town of Mapolonta, ‘the carriers broke loose and began looting the houses’.¹³⁸ Major Donovan was killed trying to rescue one of his hammock boys who ran into the town of Kabantama to loot and was killed by the enemy.¹³⁹ The British military reports provided endless lists of the villages that they had burnt down as the forces traversed the country, for example: ‘Maj. Stansfield’s column since arrival at Karene had destroyed without opposition Mabanna, Maboma, Mabunto, Bantuto, Sandugu, Magbolonto and Rochain’.¹⁴⁰ Buck received orders that certain villages were to be ‘razed to the ground’, although it was also stated that, ‘Of course you must use your own discretion as to necessity of destruction of towns’.¹⁴¹ The orders also stipulated that: ‘Any prisoners are to be brought here for disposal by the [District Commissioner]’.¹⁴² As Marshall’s field report made clear, during his time in command he went out of his way to destroy the surrounding area: ‘Leaving convoy in Romula I started out at daybreak to destroy surrounding [fakais]. Burning 2 returning to Romula about 9am’.¹⁴³ Marshall alleged that the destruction of towns and villages was a necessity, arguing that ‘if you left any towns and villages near the camp you were always being fired into’. However, Marshall revealed his true motivation as he was questioned by Chalmers in his investigation: when asked specifically whether his aim was to destroy the towns and Marshall replied: ‘Certainly; to make an example of it, and intimidate the other states’.¹⁴⁴ With regards to looting, Sharpe stated that: ‘What was looted was burned. We endeavoured to discover every rice store and burnt it. Of course there was a certain amount of organised looting for supplies’.¹⁴⁵ In these ways, the local population was forced into a state of submission and left to fend for themselves in an area wrought by devastation. As the British gained control over the area, it was stated in the field report that throughout the march the troops had ‘Found all towns empty’ and on arriving at a town where the inhabitants were present, they ‘Drove people out of

¹³⁷ Wallis, *Our West African Empire*, 169-70.

¹³⁸ Chalmers Report Part II, 223.

¹³⁹ Marshall to Cardew, 20 April 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Karene Report on Recent Operations’, WO32/7623.

¹⁴¹ ‘Karene Expedition: Staff Diary’, WO32/7624.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ ‘Karene Diary of Events 4 April to 7 May 1898’, TNA WO32/7625.

¹⁴⁴ Chalmers Report Part II, 342.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 228.

Rochain who had commenced the rebuilding of houses which were destroyed'.¹⁴⁶ As early as February it was stated that 'The rest of the Kassi country is in a state of revolt, the whole of the people being in the bush'.¹⁴⁷ Accounts of the campaign have made clear that in their encounters with the local population the British were met with fear, rather than opposition: Cardew stated that Marshall had reported that 'the natives though much frightened appeared to be animated by no hostile intention'.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, Marshall also described that on arrival at Gbinti the locals 'came to meet me as ordered but on my arrival they ran away'.¹⁴⁹ Norris described how he would approach villagers with a white flag, 'to try and bring friendly people back to villages'.¹⁵⁰

Michael Crowder and LaRay Denzer have claimed that 'Cardew was very alarmed by the systematic burning of villages and towns. If villages and towns were to be burned, he urged that they be carefully selected and limited to Bai Bureh's chief towns'.¹⁵¹ The targeting of his towns was certainly adhered to and any area or buildings, which could be linked to Bai Bureh were immediately destroyed, for example:

Marched thence to Robellung one of [Bai Bureh's] chief towns, and burnt it, thence moved forward to the banks of the Little Scarcies – driving the enemy across the river and shelled the town of Rokomal on the opposite bank *in which large numbers had taken refuge*; it was set on fire.¹⁵²

In response to Cardew's apprehension, Buck argued that 'events necessitated the destruction of the principal towns of Bai Bureh and of all villages where armed people were met. The whole of his country has risen, and I see no other way of punishing the offenders than by destroying their towns, though it may seem hard on the women and children'.¹⁵³ On being asked about the 'objective of the operations', Sharpe later stated that 'The impression that I had was, that being unable to arrest [Bai Bureh], we destroyed his country, and that of other Chiefs also whom we were unable to arrest'.¹⁵⁴ However, Sharpe maintained that 'the commander did not go through peaceful country

¹⁴⁶ 'Karene Diary of Events 4 April to 7 May 1898', WO32/7625.

¹⁴⁷ Tarbet to Colonial Secretary, 19 February 1898, CO267/437.

¹⁴⁸ Cardew to Chamberlain, 27 April 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁴⁹ Marshall to Cardew, 26 April 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁵⁰ Norris to Cardew, 9 March 1898, CO267/437.

¹⁵¹ Denzer and Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 205.

¹⁵² Emphasis added: 'Karene Report of Operations 14 April to 24 April 1898', WO32/7626.

¹⁵³ Cited in LaRay Denzer, 'A Diary of Bai Bureh's War: Part I: February 1st—April 1st: Bai Bureh Holds the Initiative', *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series 23, (1968), 59.

¹⁵⁴ Chalmers Report Part II, 222.

burning revengefully, but every road was stockaded, and we were fired on from many of the towns'.¹⁵⁵ However, the field reports of the operations clearly state that numerous towns were destroyed when no opposition was met. Furthermore, Chalmers posed the question: 'Would it be correct to suppose that the whole of the inhabited places in the district [of Karene] were destroyed?' Sharpe replied: 'I think there were a few left which we could not find; but practically the whole are destroyed: that was our object'.¹⁵⁶ According to Chalmers' official report the result of the British operations in the Timini region,

was, up to the time the Imperial troops were withdrawn at the beginning of the last rainy season, as affecting the natives, the laying waste of a country of about thirty miles' radius round Karene, and the destruction of 97 towns and villages, having an aggregate population of over 44,000. The number of killed and wounded, and of aged persons, women, and children, who suffered indirectly, is not known.¹⁵⁷

Hence, it is evident that the general population was made to suffer for the uprising. It was also alleged for example that in burning the town of Mafouri, 'a woman who was sick inside one of the houses perished'.¹⁵⁸ A further issue that affected the general population was that of food supplies; Tabet acknowledged before the end of February that 'there was a serious food shortage due to the rice supply being cut off because people had deserted their villages and abandoned their farms'.¹⁵⁹ Chalmers also recognised repeatedly throughout his report that the population would suffer into 1899 as the war had led the people to abandon their homes and had thus not cultivated the land.¹⁶⁰ Santigi Keareh, one of the Port Lokko chiefs arrested at the beginning of the conflict stated after eight months of hard labour in which they had to 'break stones', 'All our towns are ruined ... Nothing remains, the rice and all is burnt up'.¹⁶¹ Discontent regarding the treatment of the chiefs continued throughout the conflict and already in March British-employed messengers reported that 'every one they had met

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 222.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 228.

¹⁵⁷ Chalmers Report Part I, 40.

¹⁵⁸ According to Murana Carimoo's evidence: Chalmers Report Part II, 100, see also, 272.

¹⁵⁹ Denzer, 'Diary: Part I', 48; the following month in Port Lokko, Tabet also acknowledged that 'It was impossible to get rice from the villages around which are all deserted', Tabet to Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1898, CO267/437.

¹⁶⁰ See for example: Chalmers Report Part II, 96.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 294-95.

begged for the release of the imprisoned Port Lokko chiefs', and that the people wanted to return and continue their occupations, 'I therefore reported to the Governor that in my opinion if this was done, it would not only be a gracious act, but would lead to an early pacification of the country'.¹⁶² However, it was not until September 1898 that Cardew announced to Chamberlain that the Port Lokko chiefs were to be released on payment of the outstanding tax amount of £95 15s.¹⁶³ Military records also convey that the harsh treatment of the chiefs by the British, which had begun with the collection of the tax, continued into the war:

Told the king and chief that as I was not at all satisfied they were not siding with Bai Bureh that on the march I intended to place them in front of the advanced guard so that if I was attacked they would probably be the first to be shot.¹⁶⁴

Although, it was later stated in the report that the chiefs would be placed in the main body of the advance, it is nevertheless clear that the chiefs were treated with great contempt.

A further consequence of the war, according to Norris, was that discharged carriers would 'ravish women, steal the root crops, and loot houses, the bad feeling caused thereby being most harmful to the country'.¹⁶⁵ A field report also included the need to investigate claims of rape by a member of the West India Regiment: rather than go through the proper channels, Norris decided he would 'enquire into the matter myself' and concluded thus: 'Investigated charge of rape which was unsupported by evidence and incompatible with medical testimony. Case dismissed.'¹⁶⁶ Norris nevertheless attempted to reassure the local population, stating: 'I however gave complainant to understand that had the charge been proved severe punishment would have been awarded, and then told her to let people in town understand that they would receive every protection'.¹⁶⁷

Throughout the conflict there was a great disparity between the capabilities of the British Army and the indigenous fighters as was clear at the town of Romula where Marshall reported that 'great opposition was experienced' and hence 'It was found

¹⁶² 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', WO32/7623.

¹⁶³ Cardew to Chamberlain, 14 September 1898, CO879/55.

¹⁶⁴ 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

¹⁶⁵ Chalmers Report Part II, 624.

¹⁶⁶ 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

necessary to shell and set fire to the town in the rear of the enemy's position, before the enemy could be driven out. A large number of rifles were used by the enemy, but the bullets whistled harmlessly overhead'. The report continues: 'At last the enemy were driven from their stockades and from the town with considerable loss, and as the country on the far side of the town was comparatively open, were pursued with greater loss for some considerable distance'.¹⁶⁸ At the beginning of March, the troops – under Major W. B. Stansfield – arrived in Port Lokko to support Norris' troops, who had been under fire. As *The Times*' correspondent described, the area and resistance were soon destroyed:

The village, being situated on the side of a hill, offered an excellent target, and, as practically no rain had fallen in this district for some months, it was ablaze in about a quarter of an hour. Immediately the firing began the inhabitants beat a hasty retreat, and it is probable that there was little, if any, loss of life. The work of destruction was practically completed before darkness fell, but the village continued to burn intermittently during the night. On the following morning (Sunday, March 6) it was seen that the entire village was destroyed with the exception of the chief's hut, and the razing of this to the ground was reserved for the soldiers after the boats should have left. Not a sign of a native was to be seen.¹⁶⁹

As the report for this period conveys, the local inhabitants were highly disturbed by this attack, which led to 'heavy loss of life', with many wounded and from which '[m]any people had fled in terror'.¹⁷⁰ The British military sought a variety of ways to gain the upper hand, for example, Foulkes made hand grenades out of cigarette tins.¹⁷¹ Historians have estimated the number of casualties of the British forces as: 'the lives of six officers (including deaths from disease) and twelve men, with thirteen officers, seventy-three men (including Frontiers) severely wounded, and carriers estimated 137',¹⁷² however, there has been no attempt to estimate the casualties of the indigenous population. It has been argued that the lack of figures for the enemy dead was a result of

¹⁶⁸ Chalmers Report Part II, 619.

¹⁶⁹ 'The Disturbances in Sierra Leone', *The Times*, 9 April 1898.

¹⁷⁰ 'Karene Report on Recent Operations', WO32/7623.

¹⁷¹ Craig-Brown, 22 March 1898, IWM.

¹⁷² Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 587.

the practice of the wounded and dead being taken as they took flight,¹⁷³ but there are numerous examples of the British discovering the many bodies of the dead and dying upon victory and the field reports from the campaign do sometimes provide the number of casualties.¹⁷⁴

Through scorched earth tactics the British campaign eventually gained the upper hand in the conflict and successfully defeated the ‘insurgents’ through a war of attrition.¹⁷⁵ By June the British authorities appeared to have the situation under control, although the campaign had to be postponed due to the onset of the rainy season. It has been argued that at this time, ‘Hunger and prospects of famine the following year damped the ardour and spirits of the leaders and war boys and many faded away from the devastated area’.¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, Chalmers supplied evidence in his report that ‘Bai Bureh made repeated overtures for a termination of the war; once in March, another through the Rev. Mr. Elba’ and again in October 1898 indirectly to Chalmers himself.¹⁷⁷ These attempts were in vain and in October, the ‘hunt’ for Bai Bureh was resumed.¹⁷⁸ For the British, there could be no end to the military campaign until Bai Bureh was captured and punitive measures would continue in the Protectorate until this aim was achieved; as Marshall stated, ‘I hope that Bai Bureh’s powers of resistance are completely broken but he will always be a disturbing element till he is caught’.¹⁷⁹ As he was sought, the small detachments of the West India Regiment were ‘fired on occasionally from stockades—two soldiers killed, nine wounded—destroying the remaining villages, until November the [12th] when at last [Bai Bureh] was taken’.¹⁸⁰ Bai Forki, the Paramount Chief of Port Lokko and an alleged ally of Bai Bureh’s, was

¹⁷³ C. Braithwaite Wallis, *The Advance of Our West African Empire* (London: Unwin, 1903), 94; Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 565; Chalmers Report Part II, 96.

¹⁷⁴ Wallis, *Our West African Empire*, 149; see for example: ‘Karene Report on Recent Operations’, WO32/7623.

¹⁷⁵ Kenneth C. Wylie, *The Political Kingdoms of the Temne: Temne Government in Sierra Leone 1825-1910* (New York: Africana Publishing, 1977), 154.

¹⁷⁶ Douglas W. Scotland, ‘Notes on Bai Bureh, of 1898 Fame’, *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series 5 (1955), 16.

¹⁷⁷ Chalmers Report Part I, 39; see Elba’s testimony in: Chalmers Report Part II, 328-30. LaRay Denzer, ‘A Diary of the Bai Bureh War: Part II: April 2nd to June 20th, 1898 – British Strategy and Counter-Offensive’, *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series 24, (1969), 55; also discussed in Cardew to Chamberlain, 19 April 1898, CO879/55.

¹⁷⁸ Carleton, 7 October 1898, IWM.

¹⁷⁹ Cited in Cardew to Chamberlain, 27 May 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁸⁰ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 590; Fyfe gave the date incorrectly as 16 November: Crowder and Denzer, ‘Bai Bureh’, 209, n165. As Captain N. J. Goodwyn’s Report states, Bai Bureh was ‘formally handed over’ on 12 November: 13 November 1898, TNA CO267/441.

also amongst the ‘three principal insurgents’ sought by the British.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, at the end of April, Bai Forki’s towns and villages to the east of Port Lokko were ‘punished’.¹⁸² Marshall declared at this time to Cardew that within the district of Port Lokko, ‘All towns except Romasundu and Kamen burnt’.¹⁸³ As Bai Forki continued to be sought in May, Carleton found the chief’s abandoned home and described the destruction that he undertook: ‘I selected anything worth taking from his wardrobe and belongings, made the remainder into a pile and burnt them and his house’. Not only did the troops destroy the chief’s house, but they also went on to the ‘work of burning all towns and killing all inhabitants who resisted us’.¹⁸⁴ Carleton was instructed to move on before the end of operations, but as the military report states, ‘Captain Carleton’s operations ... were successful and Bai Forki, all his followers apparently having dispersed, surrendered to the District Commissioner. Captain Carleton’s loss was but one man wounded.’¹⁸⁵ Marshall believed that these actions would ‘have had a widespread and wholesome effect’.¹⁸⁶

Some of the troops in the campaign had a distinct lack of knowledge regarding the background to the conflict; Craig-Brown was part of the West India Regiment and arrived into Sierra Leone at the end of January as discontent was mounting in the North. Craig-Brown wrote home to his mother, explaining the situation thus: ‘The government here started a hut-tax lately on the supposition that to pay it the occupant would have to work occasionally, [which] was considered highly desirable’.¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, he states that the ‘natives’ ‘don’t seem to see it in the same light, for when the frontier police came to collect the taxed they got angry and tried to bullying the force [sic]’.¹⁸⁸ Carleton’s correspondence conveys that he failed to differentiate between the military campaign in the North and the sporadic violence in the South; the Mende conflict clearly left an impression on the British troops due to the brutal manner in which several missionaries were killed, and Carleton concluded that ‘Wounded sick and prisoners I would kill after what I saw’.¹⁸⁹ Carleton was involved in the campaign throughout the Protectorate and his attitude was clearly affected by events in the South and the two

¹⁸¹ ‘Field Operation on the West Coast of Africa Sierra Leone’, TNA WO32/7632. Bai Forki had also been arbitrarily arrested prior to the war by the Frontier Police, see: Chalmers Report Part II, 200.

¹⁸² Cardew to Chamberlain, 27 May 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁸³ Marshall to Cardew, 22 April 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁸⁴ Carleton, 30 November 1898, IWM.

¹⁸⁵ Woodgate’s Report, 9 January 1899, CO267/445.

¹⁸⁶ Cardew to Chamberlain, 28 May 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁸⁷ Craig-Brown, 26 February 1898, IWM.

¹⁸⁸ Craig-Brown, 27 April 1898, IWM.

¹⁸⁹ Carleton, 1 June 1898, IWM.

British campaigns increasingly turned into one battle to bring the country under control. Carleton felt justified in carrying out brutal methods of retribution and he described the Army's tactics in Taiama in a letter to his father thus:

They rushed after them killing every man they came across. The women and children were spared but every other soul caught was killed and right glad I was of it. In all I supposed about 200. There were no wounded brought in and no prisoners with one or two very rare exceptions. The place was now in our hands and we proceeded to burn all the villages except the one with the double stockade which we reserved for our own use.¹⁹⁰

The corpses were later thrown into the river. This is a rare admission in the case of Sierra Leone that the practice of burning villages was accompanied by the killing of the enemy men that came into the hands of the British troops. This fact demonstrates the significance of the differing nature between the conflicts in the North and in the South and that massacres of this nature were informed by the sporadic targeting of civilians in the South by the Mende. Interestingly, while Carleton wrote to both his father and sister directly after these events, it is only to his father that he recollects the violence that was involved in the campaign. In contrast, Fairclough's description of these events to Chalmers was very vague: 'we found [the area] strongly stockaded. It composed of eight towns. Finally we drove them out and destroyed all the eight towns except one, where we slept that night'.¹⁹¹ Woodgate's report was similarly vague: 'with the loss of 3 killed and 5 wounded ... the insurgents retreated towards Mano leaving a considerable number of dead'.¹⁹² He also acknowledged that the attack on Taiama was followed by a day of 'pursuit of those in retreat'.¹⁹³ The challenges of documenting British colonial violence are highlighted in this case, as official colonial sources conceal the extent of the violence inflicted and the fact that 'no quarter' was offered in this instance to captured and wounded troops. Carleton's account of his time in the Protectorate demonstrates his indifference or disgust towards the native population; for example, in one battle a man was shot in the foot: 'Poor devil, he had to march about fifteen miles that day with his hands tied behind him and a nasty hole in his foot. He was one of the villainous looking type of native [sic] I had ever seen and I had no compassion for him'.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Fairclough, Chalmers Report Part II, 285.

¹⁹² Cardew to Chamberlain, 28 May 1898, CO267/438.

¹⁹³ Woodgate's Report, 9 January 1899, CO267/445.

When the man's health did not improve, rather than provide medical attention, he was turned out of the British camp in order to die: 'He would have died I expect within 24 hours after being released.' Carleton further stated that 'My heart is hardened against these people and I know that nothing is bad for them', thereby demonstrating the rationale which enabled him to take part in extreme violence.¹⁹⁴

As Denzer has stated, in the North, victory had been achieved through the destruction of Bai Bureh's town and 'the forces of "civilisation" had demonstrated their worst aspect'.¹⁹⁵ This destruction was also continued throughout the South against the Mende. It is interesting that despite the significantly different conflicts in the North and South, British military responses throughout the country do not appear to have differed greatly. The main difference was that those involved in the Temne conflict in the North did not face the death penalty, while many Mende were accused of murder and were executed. In March 1898 Cardew had instructed Sharpe that if 'life has been taken by [Bai Bureh's] order whether of Frontier Police or others ... he should be tried for the capital offence'.¹⁹⁶ However, it seems that Chamberlain's influence led to a more moderate approach in this regard; Cardew had requested from Chamberlain 'authority to enact Ordinance trial of insurgent bands for capital punishment by Special Commission',¹⁹⁷ however, Chamberlain responded clearly to this request, stating: 'Capital punishment will not be allowed for any cause less than murder', and insisted that, 'Corporal punishment must not be inflicted on account of refusal to pay hut tax, as I consider that it would be illegal to inflict corporal punishment under existing Ordinances'.¹⁹⁸ Despite the severe punishment of the five chiefs in Port Lokko, Cardew responded that there 'has not been a single case of corporal punishment on account of refusal to pay hut tax, and will not be'.¹⁹⁹ While in this example Chamberlain represented a more moderate approach, it was not always the case that politicians were in favour of less extreme methods than the man on the spot.²⁰⁰

By June, Cardew had acknowledged that the Temne and the Mende should receive different punishments,²⁰¹ although he did suggest that Bai Bureh might be tried for treason, 'so obliging the Colonial Office to consider, what had never been clearly

¹⁹⁴ Carleton, 30 November 1898, IWM.

¹⁹⁵ Denzer, 'Sierra Leone-Bai Bureh', 261-62.

¹⁹⁶ Cardew cited in Denzer, 'Diary: Part I', 54.

¹⁹⁷ Cardew to Chamberlain, received 21 April 1898, CO879/55.

¹⁹⁸ Chamberlain to Cardew, 23 April 1898, CO879/55.

¹⁹⁹ Cardew to Chamberlain, received 25 April 1898, CO879/55.

²⁰⁰ See chapter 5 for further discussion.

²⁰¹ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 151.

defined, the legal status of the Protectorate and its inhabitants'. It was ultimately concluded that treason could not have been committed as the Protectorate was established under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, and Bai Bureh thus remained 'foreign'; in the end though, he was never actually tried.²⁰² As Fyfe has highlighted, the authorities looked for a swift conclusion to the war and to this end the Colonial Office sent Deputy-Judge G. A. Bonner from England to travel around the country with a panel of assessors to try any capital cases. However, no counsel for the defence was present and the whole process was clearly flawed. There were 96 confirmed hangings – although Cardew only reported 83 – and the rest were imprisoned.²⁰³ Three chiefs, including Bai Bureh were deported to the Gold Coast. It was the case, however, that Cardew expressed his desire to focus official punishment for the uprisings on the 'ringleaders'.²⁰⁴ It was believed that strong measures were necessary 'or there will be difficulties in keeping the natives in subjection, and troubles will be in store for the future'.²⁰⁵

A further development in the pacification of the Protectorate was the 'punitive expeditions', which began after the rainy season in November as the conflict drew to a close and continued until April 1899. During these expeditions, 'Four thousand troops would be marched almost simultaneously in six companies from different points, and would pass through the whole of the *Hinterland*'.²⁰⁶ The columns traversed the countryside leaving behind devastation everywhere they went and included the burning of towns, which had already been deserted and clearly the objective was collective punishment for the unrest, particularly considering that the conflict was all but over. Cardew ordered this 're-establishment of authority' thus: 'I propose that about five columns of such strength as O/C Troops may consider suitable should start next November from such points as [Port Lokko], Songo Town, and Bonthe, and completely traverse the Protectorate'.²⁰⁷ These columns included '995 troops, under fifty-six officers, with 4,295 carriers'.²⁰⁸ Cardew further recommended that 'boat expeditions

²⁰² Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 590; Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 95. Similar arguments were made in the case of the Boer War, see: Keith Surridge, 'An Example to be Followed or a Warning to be Avoided? The British, Boers, and Guerrilla Warfare, 1900–1902', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 613.

²⁰³ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 588–89.

²⁰⁴ Cardew to Chamberlain, 9 June 1898, CO879/55.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *The Times*, 16 September 1898.

²⁰⁷ Cardew to Chamberlain, 23 July 1898, CO879/55; Abraham, *Mende Government*, 152.

²⁰⁸ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 591.

should be sent up the rivers and creeks'.²⁰⁹ For the most part, the unrest had already been over for some time; as Cardew reported, Woodgate inspected the Karene area at the beginning of August in which he states that there were 'reports that Bai Forki's warboys were mustering for an attack on Port Lokko [which] resulted in an insignificant raid on the outskirts of that town by a few insurgents', although Cardew also acknowledged that they 'were said to have been impelled to this act by hunger' and that 'one of the insurgents was shot by a friendly native and the rest were dispersed'.²¹⁰ As the field report for this period makes clear, the military expeditions were carried out for 'punitive purposes' and it was stated that Bonthe would be targeted due to the fact that the district had not 'been thoroughly traversed in the earlier stages of the operations'; the report then concludes that 'These columns met with no opposition and no casualties were reported'.²¹¹

Clearly, Cardew anticipated little indigenous resistance and did not expect the expeditions to take more than three months, believing the chances of opposition to be 'very doubtful'.²¹² Cardew was motivated by a desire to reassert British authority and conduct a policy of collective retribution; he also wanted the population living in remote areas to witness the might of the British Empire as 'the natives have had no evidence of the power and resources of Her Majesty's Government other than the presence of isolated posts here and there, consisting of three or four men of the Frontier Police, and of small patrols from the same force passing occasionally through their country'.²¹³ Cardew admitted that 'We, in fact, had been holding the Protectorate with the proverbial "corporal's guard", and, as has happened again and again in our previous Colonial history, when something was done which the natives did not like they rose, and the country had to be *conquered*'.²¹⁴ These examples of 'British power' are often absent from studies of the war in Sierra Leone, which generally conclude with Bai Bureh's capture.²¹⁵

In December 1898 Chalmers spoke out against 'Further military expeditions or demonstrations', stating that 'the whole scheme is bad; the country is being sunk in an

²⁰⁹ Cardew to Chamberlain, 23 July 1898, CO879/55.

²¹⁰ Cardew to Chamberlain, 6 August 1898, CO879/55.

²¹¹ 'Field Operation', WO32/7632.

²¹² Cardew to Chamberlain, 23 September 1898, CO879/55.

²¹³ Cardew to Chamberlain, 23 July 1898, CO879/55. On punishment and punitive expeditions see, Chris Ballard, 'Swift Injustice: The Expedition of Imperial Punishment', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 18:1 (2017).

²¹⁴ Chalmers Report Part I, 103: emphasis added.

²¹⁵ For example: Crowder, 'Bai Bureh'; Denzer, 'Diary: Part II'.

abyss of debt to carry out a mistaken policy²¹⁶ and in January 1899 he emphasised that the people wanted peace and Chalmers recommended in his report that ‘all punitive expeditions should cease. Enough has been done for punishment’. He goes on to argue that ‘The continuance of arrests, prosecutions, even military promenades, have the effect of unsettling and terrorising...’²¹⁷ Chalmers gives economic reasons for stopping the practice, but also acknowledges that such actions ‘will yet leave feelings of distrust and hatred which will make the work of governing in future far more difficult than heretofore’.²¹⁸ In preparation for the punitive expeditions even the chiefs were expected to play their part: ‘To supply the columns and ease as far as possible the cost of transport, instructions have been issued to the native chiefs concerned, to have rice stored in certain quantities at the following points ... the rice will be received in lieu of house tax’.²¹⁹ After Karene was brought back under control in the summer of 1898, Cardew still argued that further British violence was deemed necessary so ‘that the insurgents should confess themselves thoroughly subjugated before terms are granted to them’.²²⁰

The Aborigines’ Protection Society (APS) was outraged by British actions in Sierra Leone, and highlighted the legacy of ‘reckless slaughter’ that had already taken place under Hay, Cardew’s predecessor.²²¹ The article demonstrates that the burning of villages was already common British practice in Sierra Leone.²²² Cardew’s policies are also criticised, as well as the longstanding abuses of the Frontier Police, which Bourne describes as ‘terrorism’.²²³ However, this criticism appears to have had no effect on the running of the campaign; the APS article appeared in August 1898, but the nature of the campaign did not change, as demonstrated by the punitive expeditions. As in the case of Perak, the colonial violence in Sierra Leone led to debates in the metropole regarding the role of administrators. In particular, the levels of power that the Ordinance granted the new District Commissioners were criticised, with particular reference to the highly inexperienced men who took these jobs, with ‘far more power than they could be relied

²¹⁶ Chalmers to Colonial Office, 5 December 1898, CO879/55.

²¹⁷ Chalmers Report Part I, 75.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

²¹⁹ Cardew to Chamberlain, 23 September 1898, CO879/55.

²²⁰ Cardew to Chamberlain, 16 June 1898, CO879/55.

²²¹ Bourne discusses the infamous case of Captain R. E. Copland Crawford: H. R. Fox Bourne, ‘The Sierra Leone Troubles’, *Fortnightly Review* (1898), 220-21. See, Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 480-83.

²²² Bourne, ‘The Sierra Leone Troubles’, 221.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 229.

upon to use discreetly'.²²⁴ Cardew defended the choices made regarding the Frontier Police and the District Commissioners stating that 'military men' were 'more fitted from their training and habits of command to administer justice and bring the natives under control'.²²⁵ Hargreaves highlighted that as the administration was unwilling to employ Creoles to undertake these roles, they were left with young and inexperienced men.²²⁶ As Fyfe has argued, Britain introduced 'racial rule' into British West Africa from 1887 onwards; as he states, 'authority was to be grounded on a simple racial principle—white gives orders, black obeys'.²²⁷ Bourne's article also made claims that 'Hundreds of natives have been shot down, many more hundreds have died of starvation'.²²⁸ There has been no further historical investigation into these claims, the article having been dismissed by one historian as 'an intemperate indictment of government policy in Sierra Leone, based largely on distorted reports from the Freetown press'.²²⁹ However, given the level of destruction throughout the country and the fact that all cultivation ceased throughout the disturbed areas during the conflict, it is quite conceivable that there were many inhabitants who succumbed to starvation. Also, the article's discussion of other aspects of the conflict corresponds with various accounts of the rising. There was some further criticism of the British government from various international commentators and several national newspapers denounced the government for 'whitewashing a discreditable scandal'.²³⁰ Also, during the conflict the irony of the British destruction of the country was not lost on the press; as the *Daily Telegraph* stated: 'So far as we are informed, most of the huts on which he [the Governor] intends to collect the debts have been burnt down, if not by the people themselves, by the soldiers'.²³¹

Mary Kingsley was particularly critical of the Government's role in Sierra Leone and argued that the tax was obnoxious to the native population: 'One of the root principles of African law is that the thing that you pay any one a regular fee for is a thing that is not your own – it is a thing belonging to the person to who you pay the

²²⁴ Ibid., 225.

²²⁵ Cardew to Chamberlain, 20 September 1898, CO879/55.

²²⁶ Hargreaves, 'Sierra Leone Protectorate', 64.

²²⁷ Fyfe, '1787-1887-1987', 414.

²²⁸ Bourne, 'The Sierra Leone Troubles', 228-29.

²²⁹ Hargreaves, 'Sierra Leone Protectorate', 74.

²³⁰ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 600.

²³¹ Cited in Denzer and Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 206.

fee'.²³² Morel also criticised Government policy regarding Sierra Leone and particularly the 'autocratic power' of the civilian and military men on the spot. As a counter to this power, Morel emphasised the importance of 'independent criticism', which 'so long as it is legitimate, should be exercised by the public at home'.²³³ Morel blamed the Government and Cardew in particular for the outbreak of the war, further stating that in British-occupied West Africa, 'Punitive expedition follows punitive expedition'.²³⁴

As in the case of the Perak War, Stanley of Alderley once again questioned the actions of British colonists on the ground in the case of Sierra Leone and in the House of Lords he argued against claims of a 'moral justification' for intervening in the Protectorate. However, Lord Selborne responded by condemning Stanley for his critique of troop conduct, arguing that 'Under circumstances of great climatic difficulties, of complete isolation in many cases, and in dealing with absolutely savage tribes, on the whole the officers who go out from this country show marvellous patience, great tact, and great humanity'.²³⁵ However, in the House of Commons the events of the conflict were not presented in such a positive light:

first, the tax was to be imposed upon the miserable inhabitants—people who were to receive the blessings of English rule and civilisation; secondly, there was the enormous cost of collection; and thirdly, war was to be waged against the people, and their huts destroyed. A more criminal policy could not be carried out, if, instead of Sir Frederick [sic] Cardew, a Governor had been selected from Colney Hatch.²³⁶

Michael Davitt continued to state his hopes that 'the Secretary of State for the Colonies will take some steps to try and have this trouble settled without having these unfortunate people mowed down by Maxim guns ... [and] to avert the scenes with which we are now only too familiar in these petty wars and expeditions on the West Coast of Africa'.²³⁷

²³² Cited in Deborah Birkett, 'West Africa's Mary Kingsley', *History Today*, 37:5 (1987), 15. See Matthew Nathan, 'Some Reminiscences of Mary Kingsley', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 7:25 (1907), 29. On Kingsley's viewpoint see also Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 548.

²³³ Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 13.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14, 19.

²³⁵ HL Deb 16 May 1899, vol. 71, cc689-720.

²³⁶ Michael Davitt, HC Deb 9 May 1899, vol. 57, cc660-820.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

The nature of the methods utilised by the British military was conveyed clearly in the British press, along with an emphasis on the challenges of colonial warfare. For example, *The Times* stated that:

In the bush it will always be difficult to get on even terms with the natives, poorly armed though they are. Of course it is always open to the soldiers to burn the villages they meet with on the line of the march (as, indeed, they did between Robat and Port Lokko), but in that case there will be no huts left upon which to levy a tax.²³⁸

However, the newspaper also emphasised the need for the punitive expeditions to ‘capture and “smash” Bai Bureh’, and argued the difficulty of dealing with ‘men of the Bai Bureh type, who are constantly starting up, and, by the aid either of religious fanaticism or of a warlike personality, contrive to acquire a large following, it is practically impossible to deal satisfactorily’.²³⁹ Hence, the conflict was typically viewed as a result of the ‘nature’ of the ‘native’.

The British undertook an approach in Sierra Leone of ‘divide and rule’, which can be seen not only in the use of the Frontier Police, but also in the creation of the Protectorate itself. As Fyfe has argued: ‘White was divided from black, Colony from Protectorate, tribe (everyone was officially assigned to a “tribe”) from tribe, chiefdom from chiefdom’.²⁴⁰ He goes on to state that ‘Constitutional and legal anomalies separated the Protectorate from the Colony’, which meant that inhabitants of the Protectorate were now technically foreigners in the Colony.²⁴¹ The Creole population – including all recaptives – had been declared British subjects in 1853.²⁴² Scholars have highlighted the antagonistic relationship between the Colony and the Protectorate,²⁴³ resentment had intensified in the Protectorate regarding the house tax as a result of the fact that the Colony was exempt.²⁴⁴ The role of the Frontier Police in this strategy of divide and rule is also clear, as Hargreaves explains:

²³⁸ ‘The Disturbances in Sierra Leone’, *The Times*, 9 April 1898.

²³⁹ ‘The Sierra Leone Rising’, *The Times*, 19 October 1898.

²⁴⁰ Fyfe, ‘1787-1887-1987’, 416.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 417.

²⁴² Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone*, 6.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6; see Abraham, *Mende Government*, 146-47; Kup, *Sierra Leone*, 187; Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 58; Wai, *Epistemologies*.

²⁴⁴ Crowder, ‘Bai Bureh’, 67.

Most of its rank and file were Protectorate men recruited in Freetown; all these, presumably, had in some way become dissatisfied with tribal society, and some were malefactors or runaway slaves. The dispersal of the force in small detachments, sometimes of a corporal and two men, made abuses easy to practise and hard to detect. Charges of extortion, looting, rape, and brutality were common, and continued even after Cardew, in his early days, had made provision for better supervision by officers.²⁴⁵

Employing security forces from rival areas was a common tactic used by the British throughout the Empire. Cardew had stated to Bosworth in Norris' presence 'that it was entirely against his policy setting one tribe against another', although it was then pointed out to the Governor 'that this had been the invariable custom in former campaigns'.²⁴⁶

Cardew's role in the war is illustrative of British colonial practices more generally and highlights the importance of individuals to the colonial process. Cardew played an integral role in the outbreak of the war due to his determination to enforce the Ordinance and his lack of flexibility in the face of opposition. Cardew displayed great arrogance and prejudice towards the indigenous population, with a superiority complex typical of the administrators of the British Empire. Cardew's time in South Africa as a soldier has been highlighted as decisive to his experience and later conduct in Sierra Leone, as well as being influenced by Wolseley, whose policy towards native populations has been described as 'Divide and refrain from Ruling'.²⁴⁷ It has been argued that Cardew's approach which was 'superior and paternalistic and contemptuous of African elites was conditioned by the racial climate of *fin de siècle* South Africa'.²⁴⁸ Cardew seems to have made no genuine attempts to communicate with the population and continually blamed them for the hostilities; as Denzer has pointed out, even four months into the war Cardew continued to blame the violence on the Temne's alleged propensity for slavery and their aversion to the 'methods of civilisation'.²⁴⁹ He justified the devastation wrought by the British forces as a result of Bai Bureh's 'resistance to Her Majesty's troops'.²⁵⁰ In the aftermath of the conflict, Harry L. Stephen defended

²⁴⁵ Hargreaves, 'Sierra Leone Protectorate', 64.

²⁴⁶ Appendix B, 'Karene Expedition: Staff Diary', WO32/7624.

²⁴⁷ Gustav H. K. Deveneaux, 'Sierra Leone and South Africa', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 57:4 (1987), 575.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 575.

²⁴⁹ Denzer, 'Sierra Leone-Bai Bureh', 243-44.

²⁵⁰ Chalmers Report Part I, 99.

Cardew, concluding that ‘no one can doubt that [his] chief aim is to lift the Protectorate out of the welter of slavery and violence in which it has existed as long as we have known anything about it’.²⁵¹

That Cardew and his policies were to blame was certainly the conclusion reached by Chalmers. However, before Chalmers’ enquiry was even finished, Cardew had convinced the Government that the tax was not to blame, and should not be abolished. Selborne, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, supported Cardew and wrote on 11 May: ‘the hut tax is not the sole or even the primary cause of the present disturbance. It is the resentment of the savage at the encroachments of civilisation’.²⁵² Chalmers, however, concluded that ‘If I could have found that the insurrection was the result of an inevitable conflict between ancient barbarism and an advancing civilisation, I would willingly have taken this view’.²⁵³ Hence, while holding Cardew responsible for the outbreak of the war, Chalmers also viewed the events within a dichotomy of the ‘civilised’ and the ‘barbaric’, stating that the ‘native’ was ‘only just emerging from barbarism’ and ‘[i]n many respects he is but a grown-up child, and requires the Government to think and act for him’.²⁵⁴ Although, Chalmers does acknowledge that ‘there is, even amongst some English officers, a confused, unacknowledged idea that different methods of treatment will do for people with dark skins than would be suitable for white people’.²⁵⁵ The imposition of the tax was subsequently continued without event; the people had ‘learnt their lesson’ in dealing with the British Empire.²⁵⁶ One observer stated that the rising was inevitable, as ‘[i]n the history of nations the power of the sword must be felt first’.²⁵⁷ This article also alludes to the ‘punitive expeditions’, which took place in the aftermath of the disturbances, although it states that ‘it was determined to consolidate the victory by a *peaceful demonstration* of the power of the white man’.²⁵⁸

Cardew defended his policies in response to the Chalmers Report and he justified the role of the Frontier Police, arguing that an approach of ‘moral suasion and peace palavers, and of advising chiefs to be good children and giving them presents to

²⁵¹ Stephen, ‘The Sierra Leone Disturbances’, 481.

²⁵² Cited in Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 73.

²⁵³ Chalmers Report Part I, 75.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁵⁶ Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 601.

²⁵⁷ By One Who Was There, ‘The Sierra Leone Protectorate Expedition’, 534.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 535: emphasis added.

make up their quarrels' was insufficient.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, Cardew justified the harsh measures undertaken by the District Commissioners and the Frontier Police in the collection of the tax, claiming that these measures were necessary as a result of the fact that they were dealing with people who were 'practically savages' and stated, 'I fail to see what other course the District Commissioners could have adopted under the circumstances than that of repression'.²⁶⁰ Despite the devastation caused by the rising throughout the country, Cardew remained unrepentant and continued to assert that the events had been to the country's benefit: 'Deplorable as have been the sufferings of the insurgents during the recent disturbances, severe as has been their punishment in the numbers that have been killed in the fighting that has ensued on their rising, the present condition of the Protectorate will, notwithstanding, compare favourably with that of 1894'.²⁶¹

In the aftermath of the war, Cardew attempted to paint a picture of tranquillity and by 17 January 1899, Cardew declared that peace had been restored and that

the natives are returning to their towns and villages and cultivating their lands, that they have accepted the house-tax as an accomplished fact, and that I am informed from every direction they are paying it readily wherever it has been imposed.²⁶²

However, Matthew Nathan, who acted on Cardew's behalf while he wrote up his report in England, 'saw large devastated areas and wondered whether the inhabitants, even if willing, could raise the tax-money'.²⁶³ Fyfe has argued that a 'facade of peace and order' followed the war in which Frontier Police abuses continued with impunity.²⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Chalmers missed an opportunity to genuinely investigate the reasons behind the outbreak of the conflict: as Fyfe has highlighted, 'in his anxiety to discredit the government, [he] spoilt his own case by accepting evidence unsifted'.²⁶⁵ It is clear that whilst the house tax may have sparked the unrest, it was 'more than just a protest against a particularly obnoxious feature of colonial rule'.²⁶⁶ Chalmers' report was ultimately ignored and arguably buried; Cardew's policies and the Government's

²⁵⁹ Chalmers Report Part I, 90.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 95.

²⁶¹ Cardew to Chamberlain, 20 September 1898, CO879/55.

²⁶² Cardew to Chamberlain, 17 January 1899, CO267/445.

²⁶³ Cited in Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 595.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 606.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 597.

²⁶⁶ Crowder, 'Bai Bureh', 61.

actions were defended. The enforcement of the tax was continued; Cardew argued to Chamberlain of ‘how impossible it will be to carry on the administration of this Government either without it or a large annual grant in aid from the Imperial Exchequer’, an argument that would have gone a long way to convince Chamberlain to keep the tax in place.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, Cardew continued to argue that withdrawing the tax would not only be detrimental to the colonisation process in the Protectorate but also to future attempts to impose a tax throughout the British Colonies on the West Coast of Africa.²⁶⁸ Rather than repeal the tax in the wake of the war, Cardew argued the need to extend it further throughout the region, including the Colony;²⁶⁹ this extension was needed, he argued, ‘for [the Protectorate’s] administration but also to pay off eventually the heavy expenses entailed by the rebellion’.²⁷⁰ In any case, the enforcement of the tax continued and the displays of strength, which the British undertook throughout the interior, had their intended effect and the indigenous population realised that for now they would have to accept a British colonial presence.

Unfortunately, Chalmers returned from Sierra Leone in poor health and died on 5 August 1899, thus unable to defend his report. Delays in the report’s publication had already been utilised to hold-up political discussions regarding the war.²⁷¹ Chalmers’ wife, J. A. Chalmers, highlighted that a political debate on the report was deliberately suppressed and she argued that while Chalmers provided the report in its entirety prior to the prorogation of Parliament, ‘it was presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies without evidence and documents, but along with the criticisms of the Governor of Sierra Leone’, further stating that ‘Only in September, when Parliament was dispersed and the affairs of the Transvaal were exciting an acute public interest, were the evidence and documents ... put within reach of members of Parliament, and of the public’.²⁷² Clearly, Chamberlain had already decided to back Cardew at Chalmers’ expense. While the report was in no way an investigation into the nature of British tactics throughout the country, it nevertheless highlights the brutality of the British campaign and the rationale of the British officers for utilising this force. The report

²⁶⁷ Cardew to Chamberlain, 15 December 1898, CO267/441.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ The tax was extended to the Colony in 1900: Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 80.

²⁷⁰ Cardew to Chamberlain, 28 May 1898, CO267/438. As Henk Wesseling highlights, it was typical that the ‘colonised had to pay for their own conquest’: ‘Colonial Wars and Armed Peace, 1870-1914: A Reconnaissance’, *Itinerario*, 5:2 (1981), 57. The Perak War was also paid out of the country’s own revenue, as noted above.

²⁷¹ HL Deb 16 May 1899, vol. 71, cc689-720.

²⁷² J. A. Chalmers, ‘In Defence of Sir David Chalmers’, *The Nineteenth Century* (1900), 485.

therefore remains a key document in our understanding the nature of this British military campaign.

Contemporary accounts reveal the racial prejudices of the colonists, for example Lt. C. Braithwaite Wallis presents British rule in the area as motivated by ‘moral duty’. Wallis also emphasised intertribal wars which ‘caused the land to run red with blood’, as well as the dominance of secret societies in the country, particularly the Poro²⁷³ and described the country as a ‘land reeking with fetish and superstition’.²⁷⁴ He contrasted the present situation with the previous years in which there was a ‘total lack of all civilised law and order’.²⁷⁵ For Alldridge it was incomprehensible that the people could not want British rule, as opposed to the ‘tyranny’ of the chiefs²⁷⁶ and argued that ‘the rebellion did not at all represent the feelings of the masses’.²⁷⁷ Hence, British expansion and the establishment of the Protectorate were presented as a ‘moral duty’ and were further justified by the British utilisation of the issue of slavery. Although, Chalmers pointed out in his report that Cardew had stated in 1895 that ‘slave traffic has practically ceased within the Protectorate’.²⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Cardew argued that the rising was ‘a reversion to the old order of things, such as fetish customs and slave-dealing and raiding’.²⁷⁹ However, it is clear that the key issue for British intervention was the detrimental economic effects of the slave raids, rather than any moral obligation.²⁸⁰ Further undermining Cardew’s claims regarding the British suppression of slavery, as Hargreaves has highlighted, domestic slavery remained lawful until 1928.²⁸¹ Fyfe states that Cardew ‘did not risk antagonising chiefs irretrievably by abolishing domestic slavery, as originally intended. The Protectorate Ordinances merely allowed slaves to buy their freedom for £4 (£2 for a child), and declared that slavery would not be recognised by law. Masters could not legally retain slaves against their will, but were not made to free them’.²⁸² Nevertheless, as Fyfe has argued, by proclaiming the war to be a fight against those who wanted to maintain the slave trade ‘it became much more

²⁷³ Wallis, *Our West African Empire*, 1.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁷⁵ Alldridge, *The Sherbro*, 6; Crowder has also argued that the Mende revolt was orchestrated by the Poro in ‘Bai Bureh’, 61.

²⁷⁶ Alldridge, *The Sherbro*, 332.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 335.

²⁷⁸ Cited in Chalmers, ‘In Defence’, 488.

²⁷⁹ Cardew cited in Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 57.

²⁸⁰ Abraham, *Mende Government*, 121.

²⁸¹ Hargreaves, ‘Sierra Leone Protectorate’, 57.

²⁸² Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone*, 550.

difficult for Cardew's opponents to decry his policy on humanitarian grounds'.²⁸³ As Esme Cleall argues, 'Slavery operated as a key signifier for imperial wrongs, racism and violence in British imperial discourse'. After the abolition of slavery, the issue remained an emotive one in Britain. At the same time as the conflict in Sierra Leone these issues were being debated in the metropole regarding the 'punitive indenture' of Bechuana 'rebels', including women and children. This conflict was also the result, in part, of an imposed hut tax.²⁸⁴ Contemporary accounts of the conflict demonstrate clearly the doctrine of the 'civilising mission' which was embedded in the British Empire. A despatch from Fairclough, which was controversially reproduced in *The Times* prior to the completion of Chalmers' own investigation, argued that the rising was a result of 'the growing desire of the native chiefs to throw off English rule with the civilising influences which accompany it', also emphasising the natives' propensity for human sacrifice and cannibalism.²⁸⁵

As discussed in chapter 1, colonial warfare entailed colonial 'standards of warfare' mixed with superior weaponry, the ability to conduct long-term military campaigns, and the ability of the British to call on large number of troops from across the Empire. These factors meant that in most cases indigenous opponents could do little more than delay the inevitable in the fight against the colonists.²⁸⁶ The war in the Sierra Leone Protectorate was certainly fought by the population as 'a last struggle to preserve their independence, a final rejection of the imperial rule which had come upon them so gradually that few recognised it for what it was'.²⁸⁷ As Crowder has highlighted, there was a sense of fatalism in the attacks of indigenous populations on the colonisers;²⁸⁸ it was only a matter of time before brutal British military tactics forced them into submission. In this case, the British wreaked havoc and destruction across the country, fighting a campaign not just against the 'insurgents' but also against the population as a whole – tactics of guerrilla warfare typically result in a blurring of lines between

²⁸³ Ibid., 581.

²⁸⁴ Esme Cleall, "'In Defiance of the Highest Principles of Justice, Principles of Righteousness": The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897-1900', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40:4 (2012), 605.

²⁸⁵ 'The Recent Disturbances in Sierra Leone', *The Times*, 25 October 1898; for criticism of the publication of this report see: Chalmers, 'In Defence', 488 and Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to Colonial Office, 16 November 1898, CO879/55.

²⁸⁶ See Crowder, 'West African Resistance', 16.

²⁸⁷ Wylie, *The Political Kingdoms of the Temne*, 153.

²⁸⁸ Crowder, 'West African Resistance', 15.

combatants and civilians.²⁸⁹ The effects of the British methods of violence have been much neglected in the historiography – although the investigation undertaken by Chalmers is revealing with regards to the effects of these tactics. While Denzer’s summary of events based on official correspondence acknowledges the destruction of villages, despite a lack of opposition, this fact is stated but not explored.²⁹⁰ Although, Denzer does acknowledge that Cardew expressed his own alarm regarding the use of these tactics, as discussed above.²⁹¹

The contradictory nature of the British Empire and its approach to colonial rule is made clear by British claims of indigenous ‘barbarity’ in juxtaposition with the ‘civilised’ colonisers; the British military campaign demonstrates both the use of such dichotomies to justify colonial policies and how meaningless such categories are. Mark Levene has also highlighted this contradictory nature, arguing that in colonial wars European powers tried to keep reports of their own killing ‘off the map’, whilst highlighting the atrocities of the ‘insurgents’, and thus ‘the whole profile of one’s actions could be justified to the outside world – as indeed to oneself – as rational, legitimate and civilised’.²⁹² Contradictions are also apparent in the British approach to law and order in the country, the legality of the Protectorate and the highly questionable trials that were conducted at the end of the war; these issues were a common theme throughout the Empire, as discussed in chapter 1. Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons for example that ‘229 natives were tried; of these 77 were undefended, of whom 62 were convicted, and of these 33 were executed’; as justification for this situation he claimed that ‘local practitioners were unwilling to be engaged and it was found impossible to provide for the defence in all cases’.²⁹³ The colonial authorities also introduced ‘The Insurgents’ Temporary Detention Ordinance’ in 1898, which enabled ‘the Governor by a simple order to cause the arrest and detention in prison of any person within the Colony or Protectorate without any charge being made against him, and without evidence so long as the Governor sees fit’.²⁹⁴ As the Ordinance stated,

²⁸⁹ As noted by Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki, ‘The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps (1868–1902)’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:3 (2011), 419.

²⁹⁰ See: Denzer, ‘Diary: Part I’.

²⁹¹ See also *ibid.*, 58.

²⁹² Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 274.

²⁹³ HC Deb 18 May 1899, vol. 71, cc903-1014.

²⁹⁴ Chalmers Report Part I, 8.

All persons ... in any way concerned in the arrest of any persons who were engaged in such rebellion or reasonably suspected thereof or have been instrumental in their detention and imprisonment are hereby indemnified and held harmless for anything done by them in the arrest, detention, and imprisonment, and no action at law or otherwise shall be maintained for their having been so arrested, detained, and imprisoned, and no Writ of Habeas Corpus shall be issued on his or her behalf.²⁹⁵

The ordinance also extended to cases of arrest and detention *prior* to the passing of the Ordinance, thereby confirming that the colonists acted with impunity.²⁹⁶ Cardew was reluctant to withdraw this policy, despite Chalmers' recommendation to do so in his report. Chalmers argued against the Ordinance and stated the need to keep 'in accordance with clearly and firmly defined lines of justice'.²⁹⁷ That martial law was declared in the Protectorate was not unusual; this tactic was used throughout the British Empire 'for the military governance of civilian life'.²⁹⁸ As Tom Lloyd has argued, the context of the second half of the nineteenth century was key in enabling British colonists to 'reshape' the discourse and utilisation of martial law; in this regard the context of the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865 was a key event.²⁹⁹

As stated above, previous punitive expeditions had taken place in the country at the behest of the colonists and the reaction to the revolt in 1898 can therefore be seen as part of a wider pattern of British colonial violence that had already been utilised in Sierra Leone on a smaller scale. Bourne argued that 'many minor disturbances and much reckless slaughter, [led] to the very serious and widespread risings that have now brought Sierra Leone to the verge of ruin'.³⁰⁰ The role of the men on the spot in such violence was debated; already in 1882 one commentator acknowledged that the inexperience of British officials was a central problem in antagonising the local population: 'Their usual term of office is so short that they have no time to learn the peculiarities of the neighbouring tribes and of British relations with them with that mastery of detail which alone could fit them to regulate such matters'. The article

²⁹⁵ F. F. Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Council, CO879/55. On indemnity acts and the imposition of martial law see: Townshend, 'Martial Law', 177.

²⁹⁶ Enclosure 2 in No. 119, 'Attorney General's Report', CO879/55.

²⁹⁷ Chalmers Report Part I, 77. For issues regarding the implementation and removal of 'emergency' laws see: Townshend, 'Martial Law', 167-95.

²⁹⁸ Tom Lloyd, 'States of Exception? Sovereignty and Counter-Insurgency in British India, Ireland and Kenya circa 1810—1960' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009), 111.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 111. This issue will be discussed further in chapter 5.

³⁰⁰ Bourne, 'The Sierra Leone Troubles', 220.

continued to argue that the resulting antagonisms of this approach led ‘too often [to] risings, which have to be put down with bloodshed and burnings’.³⁰¹ Smaller punitive expeditions had already formed part of the relationship between Britain and the interior of Sierra Leone, particularly in the 1880s, but the scale of the British operation in the Hut Tax War would overshadow them all.³⁰²

The Hut Tax War would not be the last time that a British military campaign was frustrated by the guerrilla tactics of an enemy and it has been highlighted that the methods used against Horatio Herbert Kitchener’s military campaign in the Boer War (1899-1902) led him to ‘become increasingly frustrated with the Boers’ guerrilla tactics and duly “concentrated” native civilians into camps in order to deprive the enemy combatants of shelter in support’.³⁰³ Similarly, martial law would also be declared in this case and the offences were more detailed and included: ‘treasonable or seditious acts and words, or acts and words tending to excite disaffection, disloyalty or Distrust of the Government’.³⁰⁴ In the case of the campaign against the inhabitants within Bai Bureh’s district of Karene, a direct targeting of the local population was not possible due to the fact that local inhabitants generally fled their villages before the British arrived; however, the people were targeted indirectly through the destruction of their villages and provisions. As Denzer states for example: ‘The villages of Robarring, Robin, and Manis—all having assisted and sheltered warboys—were destroyed and burned without resistance’.³⁰⁵ It was however stated in Marshall’s report that troops proceeded in one instance to ‘visit those towns near the mainroad which afforded shelter to the “war-boys” who attacked the convoys. Every village was cleared, luckily without any casualties on our side, though the enemy were not driven out without some trouble’.³⁰⁶

In consideration of the effects of guerrilla warfare on a European colonial power, Callwell acknowledged that European technological prowess lost its effectiveness in the face of such tactics;³⁰⁷ as stated above, the British in Sierra Leone

³⁰¹ ‘Our Policy in West Africa’, *The Times*, 26 December 1882, cited in *Sierra Leone: Further Correspondence Respecting the Proceedings at the Jong River in May 1882*, C.3597 (1883), 31.

³⁰² See Enclosure 1, C.3597; Abraham, *Mende Government*, 71-73.

³⁰³ Donald Bloxham et al., ‘Europe in the World: Systems and Cultures of Violence’, in Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19. See also: Surridge, ‘An Example to be Followed’.

³⁰⁴ Army orders as cited in Townshend, ‘Martial Law’, 178.

³⁰⁵ Denzer, ‘Diary: Part I’, 55.

³⁰⁶ Chalmers Report Part II, 619-20.

³⁰⁷ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 91. In the case of Wilhelmine Germany’s colonial conflicts see: Trutz von Trotha, “‘The Fellows Can Just Starve’: On Wars of “Pacification” in the African Colonies of Imperial

also had to adapt their tactics in order to defeat Bai Bureh and his men. That British weapons could prove ineffective is also clear from a field report for the Karene District, which stated:

The constant sweeping of the horizon with rifle fire does much more harm than good. It has no effect on the enemy and consequently gives him confidence, discloses your position, probably inflicts untold misery on innocent people, prevents them coming in who might wish to make submission, and absolutely precludes the possibility of your opponent being taught a severe lesson.³⁰⁸

As Craig-Brown highlights, these tactics were used thus: ‘Empty villages were tested by firing volleys thro’ them to drive out any enemy lurking amongst the huts’.³⁰⁹ These tactics left the British short on ammunition and Norris complained with regards to this ‘wasted’ and ‘unnecessary expenditure of ammunition’ or ‘uncontrolled firing’.³¹⁰ An ill-defined enemy was typical in colonial warfare and Denzer has argued that ‘Bai Bureh’s methods taught the British a lesson in guerrilla warfare and were the inspiration of several treatises on “bush” warfare’.³¹¹ One of these works was *Hints for a Bush Campaign* by Lt.-Col. M. F. Montanaro. He argued the merits for the destruction of indigenous towns when faced with defeat by the enemy and argued that ‘As when fighting the tribes on the North-West frontier of India, so in West Africa it is often necessary to punish the enemy by destroying his towns and villages’.³¹² Callwell also updated *Small Wars* to incorporate lessons from the Sierra Leone campaign, as well as tactics of bush warfare more broadly, highlighting the expenditure of ammunition and the challenges of being fired at in the bush, as well as the tactic of setting fire to bushes.³¹³

The events in Sierra Leone were part of a wider pattern of British colonial violence and should be considered within the context of current debates regarding the

Germany and the Concept of “Total War”, in Manfred F. Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1999), 433. For more on the relationship between guerrilla warfare and mass killing see: Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, ““Draining the Sea”: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare”, *International Organization*, 58:2 (2004), 375-407.

³⁰⁸ ‘Karene Expedition: Staff Diary’, WO32/7624.

³⁰⁹ Craig-Brown, 22 March 1898, IWM.

³¹⁰ ‘Karene Report on Recent Operations’, WO32/7623; Cardew to Chamberlain, 24 March 1898, CO267/437.

³¹¹ Denzer, ‘Diary: Part I’, 39.

³¹² A. F. Montanaro, *Hints for a Bush Campaign* (London: Sands, 1901), 35.

³¹³ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 371-72; also on the Sierra Leone campaign: 142, 351, 363.

nature of colonial violence. Firsthand accounts of the conflict convey that the troops viewed their opponents as ‘illegitimate’, based on the lack of a formal army and this viewpoint contributed to a blurring of the lines regarding combatant and noncombatant targets. Furthermore, the actions of a few in the South of the Protectorate and the killing of missionaries in particular contributed to the impression on the part of the troops that their opponents throughout the country were ‘fair game’. Contemporary analysis of the campaign in Sierra Leone demonstrates the presence of deeply embedded prejudice and a sense of superiority and must be viewed within the wider context of British colonial warfare and an increased willingness to resort to more extreme violence to suppress opposition to British rule in the colonies.³¹⁴ The British clearly had a catalogue of techniques that they could and would utilise if necessary.³¹⁵ As the case of Bai Bureh demonstrates, British assumptions and prejudices led the administrators to condemn the chiefs before violence had even occurred. During this conflict there seems to have been a pattern in which the British authorities provoked the local population, which then led to retaliation, and was followed by condemnation and used to justify brutal suppression by the British – this is a pattern that can be identified in other cases of British colonial violence, including the Perak War.

While historians have focused on the background to the war and the true reasons for the rising, paying particular attention to Bai Bureh and his war tactics, there has been a failure to examine Britain’s own brutal military campaign. There is also a lack of assessment regarding contemporary British accounts of the conflict and how they fit with British colonial policies and attitudes more generally.³¹⁶ Daniel Magaziner has highlighted the problem of primary sources in the aftermath of the conflict, arguing that ‘They discounted what seemed strange, what seemed not to fit their preconceived explanations for native unrest. They not only replicated contemporary debates in their first drafts of history, but in many ways hid alternative drafts from future historians’.³¹⁷ Magaziner argues that we can approach the sources anew, ‘prepared to reconstruct

³¹⁴ As Levene has discussed, European colonists were at their most violent when their authority was perceived to be under threat: *Rise of the West*, 47.

³¹⁵ This catalogue would soon include ‘concentration’, see: Jonas Kreienbaum, ‘Deadly Learning? Concentration Camps in Colonial Wars Around 1900’, in Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870-1930* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 219-35.

³¹⁶ Ian Herson’s chapter on the Hut Tax War sets the poll tax riots under Margaret Thatcher in Britain within the context of the conflict; Herson provides a descriptive overview of the war, adopting the ‘tone of a reporter’ and does not provide footnotes: *Britain’s Forgotten Wars: Colonial Campaigns of the 19th Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 2003), ch 28.

³¹⁷ Daniel R. Magaziner, ‘Removing the Blinders and Adjusting the View: A Case Study from Early Colonial Sierra Leone’, *History in Africa*, 34 (2007), 172.

accounts empty of prejudice, to allow the rising and its actors to speak in their own debates, not those of their conquerors'.³¹⁸ This chapter is based on a reassessment of the official documents and correspondence held at the National Archives, as well as the Chalmers Report on the disturbances and Cardew's response; the latter two documents were clearly flawed and subjective, but they nevertheless prove useful to this research. The present study is indebted to key works on Sierra Leone, which have been referred to throughout this chapter. However, the focus here has been a consideration of the escalation of the violence on the part of the British Army and the extent to which methods were dictated by events and the actions of the men on the ground. It is the case that there is a lack of sources from an indigenous perspective on the war – although Chalmers' collection of witness testimonies provides us with some evidence. Nevertheless, the colonial records are indicative of British concerns of the time and they therefore leave us with little reference to the wider effects of the war on the general population; for example, the British records show no interest in how the people rebuilt their lives in the wake of the devastation of whole areas, nor the numbers that were starving in the war's aftermath, many of whom had to flee from their villages throughout the conflict and live in the bush. This chapter considers representations of the war in the British press, as well as published first hand accounts. Accounts written by soldiers, including private correspondence, provide new evidence that sheds further light on the nature of the British military campaign and the ways in which British troops sought to justify the devastation that ensued throughout the country. While primary sources written from a British perspective represent only one perspective, they nevertheless further our knowledge and understanding of the events surrounding the brutal suppression. Indeed, British perspectives are integral to a study of the nature of the British military campaign and the extent to which this war can be seen as part of a wider pattern of colonial violence throughout the Empire.

Conclusion

Overall, the British tactics utilised in this case were very similar to those in Perak and the destruction of the local area was key in both conflicts. The British were unable to deliver a 'crushing defeat' against Bai Bureh and were forced to fight the enemy in the bush, against snipers and an enemy that refused to engage in open battle.³¹⁹ The

³¹⁸ Ibid., 188.

³¹⁹ See Callwell, *Small Wars*.

‘decisive’ action against Bai Bureh and his men came in the form of punitive expeditions, which served as a ‘theatrics of military power’ and allowed the system to continue more or less as planned, with the Ordinance in tact.³²⁰ At times, the violence in the Protectorate escalated in the face of significant indigenous opposition as well as the context of events in the South of the Protectorate and the murder of European missionaries for example. However, this conflict was marked by widespread destruction. In Wolseley’s *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, the need to inflict punishment in the face of ‘savage’ opponents was emphasised, but ‘the burning of villages containing nothing of value’ was advised against. He argued that villages could be easily rebuilt and such a tactic merely enrages without inflicting due punishment. As an alternative, Wolseley advised that ‘a raid into territory of a hostile tribe just at the season when their crops are ripe can inflict serious loss by the destruction of their corn...’³²¹ Similarly, Callwell stated that the destruction of villages should be avoided and that the best way to bring ‘foes to reason is by rifle and sword, for they understand this mode of warfare and respect it’. However, Callwell admitted that circumstances did not always permit open warfare and sometimes villages and crops must be destroyed.³²² Such was the case in Sierra Leone. The British beat Bai Bureh through tactics of attrition and destruction, based on the actions of flying columns, which traversed the country, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.³²³ The principle of collective punishment was accepted particularly in terms of the destruction of all areas associated with the chief – while Cardew may have expressed ‘alarm’ regarding the destruction of villages, clearly he took no action to reverse these tactics, and Chalmers’ report clearly conveys the scale of the devastation throughout the Protectorate. This conflict highlights the many challenges that empires faced in suppressing ‘irregular’ opponents and reflects the concerns of Callwell regarding difficult conditions for European troops in the colonies – West Africa, and Sierra Leone in particular, was known as the ‘white man’s grave’.³²⁴

In a manner similar to Clarke, Jervois and Birch in the case of Perak, Cardew’s arrogant manner and racial prejudices created a situation in which opposition became

³²⁰ Ballard, ‘Swift Injustice’.

³²¹ Garnet Wolseley, *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, 5th edn, (London: Macmillan, 1886 [1869]), 414.

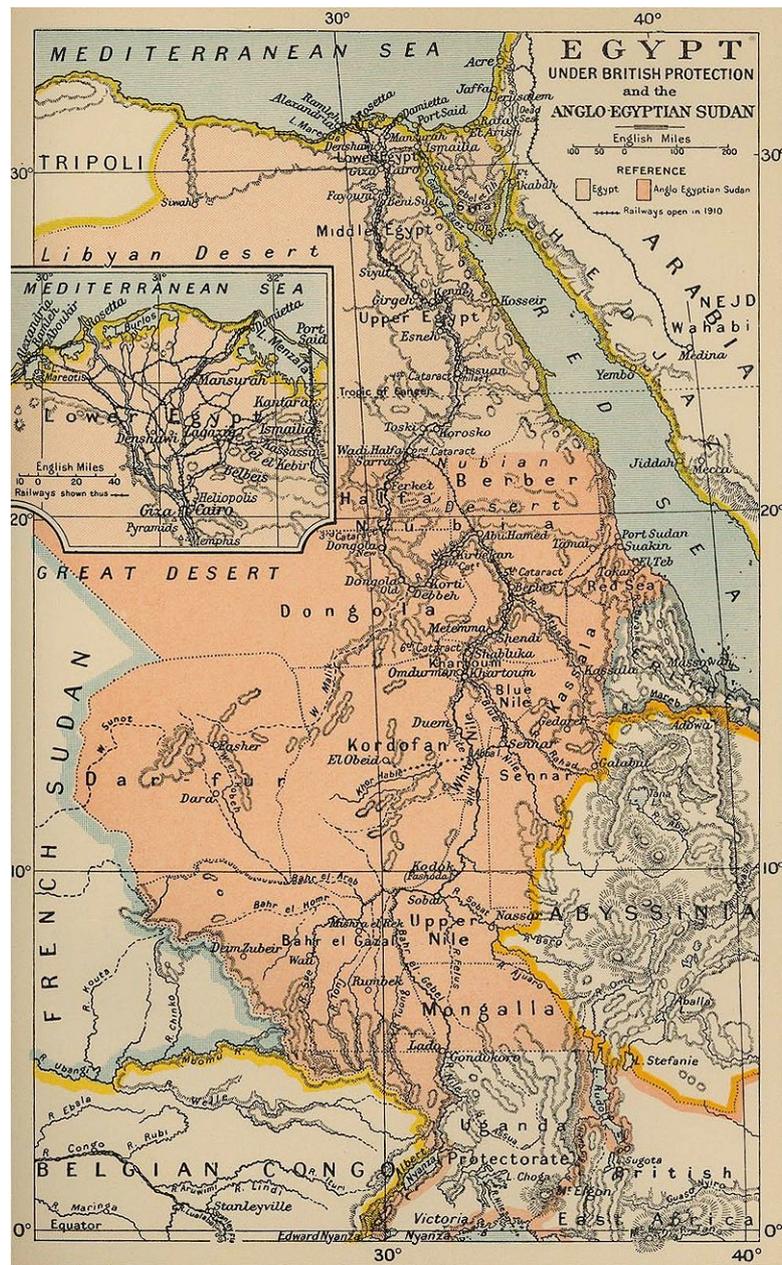
³²² Callwell, *Small Wars*, 41.

³²³ See *ibid.*, 142.

³²⁴ Philip D. Curtin, ‘The End of the “White Man’s Grave”? Nineteenth-Century Mortality in West Africa’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 21:1 (1990), 63-88.

unavoidable. The events that led to the war are essential to understanding the nature of the violence when it broke out. Cardew refused to negotiate the terms of the Protectorate Ordinance with local leaders, who initially conveyed their objections peacefully in the form of petitions. The role of the Frontier Police demonstrates the ways in which violence was already inherent to the system, prior to the establishment of the Protectorate and punitive expeditions had been undertaken throughout the century. The Colonial Office had voiced concerns regarding Cardew's approach and did not want him to antagonise the local leaders; this advice was ignored, however: no action was taken to limit Cardew's approach and the military campaign once it was underway. Cardew persistently blamed the 'natives' for the violence and, after indigenous resistance was shown, the British priority remained the demonstration of the strength of the British Empire and the extension of its rule.

Map of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan



Source: Wikimedia Commons. Accessed 18 July 2016.

Chapter 4

The British Reconquest of the Sudan, 1896-99

*That a new and better Sudan will be raised up over the ashes of Gordon, and all those brave officers and men who have perished in the loyal performance of their duty, is the fervent hope of every well-wisher for the prosperity of Egypt.*¹

*Now and then I caught in a man's eye the curious gleam which comes from the joy of shedding blood—that mysterious impulse which, despite all the veneer of civilisation, still holds its own in a man's nature, whether he is killing rats with a terrier, rejoicing in a prize fight, playing a salmon, or potting Dervishes. It was a fine day, and we had all come out to kill something. Call it what you like, the experience is a big factor in the joy of living.*²

The reconquest of the Sudan by Anglo-Egyptian forces came after the Mahdists had successfully kept the British out of the country for over a decade, having established power in 1885 under the Mahdi, Muhammed Ahmad.³ Previous studies of the war have been carried out with particular focus on the final major clash of the campaign, the Battle of Omdurman and the features specific to Horatio Herbert Kitchener's military tactics as Sirdar (commander-in-chief) of the Egyptian Army. Whilst historians have highlighted issues of controversy including the highly contentious practices of killing the enemy wounded or leaving them for dead, there has been little systematic study of the brutalities of this campaign. Historians have considered Britain's successes during the reconquest in terms of the Anglo-Egyptian campaign's exploitation of huge British technological advantages and Kitchener's brutal utilisation of the famine conditions in the country throughout the period to some extent, but there has been little attempt to place these events within the context of a wider pattern of British colonial violence.

¹ F. R. Wingate cited in P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898: A Study of its Origins, Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1970 [1958]), 224.

² Ernest N. Bennett, *The Downfall of the Dervishes or The Avenging of Gordon: Being a Personal Narrative of the Final Soudan Campaign of 1898* (London: Methuen, 1899), 161. See also: Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq*, rev. edn (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004 [1975]), 43.

³ For the history of the Mahdia see: Holt, *Mahdist State*.

Although Kitchener and the Anglo-Egyptian forces were the subject of interest and debate in the wake of the Battle of Omdurman, historians have paid relatively little attention to the conduct of the Anglo-Egyptian forces under Kitchener during the reconquest of the Sudan and its aftermath. However, reports soon emerged from the front of the alleged mass slaughter of the wounded, the looting of the Mahdist capital, as well as the destruction of the Mahdi's tomb; central to these claims was an article written by Ernest Bennett, a war correspondent present at the final battle.⁴ As M. W. Daly has highlighted, Kitchener “categorically” denied in February 1899 that he had ordered or allowed the Mahdist wounded to be massacred, that his troops had carried out such a massacre, that Omdurman was looted, and that civilian fugitives in the city were deliberately fired upon’. However, as Daly concludes, there is evidence to support all of these claims, excluding the latter.⁵ As G. W. Steevens, a war correspondent present in Omdurman stated: ‘It was not a battle, but an execution’;⁶ this is clear if one considers the human cost of this one battle: the official figures state that 11,000 Mahdists were killed and over 16,000 seriously wounded – although the number of actual fatalities would have been significantly higher due to the neglect and killing of the wounded;⁷ in contrast, Anglo-Egyptian forces lost just 48 men and 382 were wounded.⁸ However, as P. M. Holt has emphasised, whilst the extent of the bloodshed led to criticism in Britain, the war still had overall support.⁹ Military historians in particular have highlighted aspects specific to Kitchener's campaign such as the importance of new technology to the conflict. Technological developments which were central to Kitchener's victory include: the use of telegrams; the newest developments in weaponry; steamers; as well as Kitchener's impressive Sudan Military Railway, which he pursued in defiance of the advice he received from railway engineers who described his plans as ‘foolhardy’, but was subsequently described as ‘the deadliest weapon’ to be

⁴ Ernest N. Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, *Contemporary Review*, 75 (1899), 24-25.

⁵ M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1898-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3; see: Kitchener, 1 February 1899, Despatches from Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Egypt Respecting the Conduct of the British and Egyptian Troops After the Battle of Omdurman (1899), TNA FO633/68.

⁶ G. W. Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1898), 264; 'Isamat Hasan Zulfo, *Karari: The Sudanese Account of the Battle of Omdurman*, trans. Peter Clark (Bath: Warne, 1980), 305.

⁷ See: Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 2-3.

⁸ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 240.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 240.

used against the Mahdists.¹⁰ By July 1898, the Sudan Military Railway covered 285 miles from Wadi Halfa to Atbara.¹¹

Since the death of General Charles Gordon at Khartoum in 1885 at the hands of the Mahdists, there had been continued support in Britain to avenge his death; V. G. Kiernan described Gordon's death as giving 'a generation of Englishmen an emotional symbol of civilisation stabbed by savagery'.¹² These strong feelings were heightened by propaganda primarily conducted by F. R. Wingate, 'the chief source for gathering news about the Sudan' and 'chief propagandist for its reconquest'.¹³ Not only was Wingate the Director of Military Intelligence of the Egyptian Army, he also translated and edited European prisoner accounts of the Mahdist regime. These accounts, which were 'unrelieved descriptions of bloodshed and oppression', fuelled the perception of the Mahdia as a brutal, barbaric regime with bestial and savage tales, which were undoubtedly exaggerated.¹⁴ However, it is clear that atrocities against the local population did take place, notably at Metemmeh in 1897, where almost the entire community was massacred, after local resistance to the Mahdia was shown.¹⁵ As Kiernan highlighted, Mahdism 'was indeed very far from angelical, but Europe treated it as purely diabolical, one more witches' brew of African primitivism and Muslim fanaticism'.¹⁶ British war propaganda encouraged the perception of the Sudanese as a 'savage race'; these prejudices were only exacerbated by the famine conditions suffered by the population. Rudolf Slatin, who was held captive by the Mahdists for eleven years, provided a dire account of the starvation in Omdurman: 'I saw three almost naked women ... they were squatting round a quite young donkey ... they had torn open its body with their teeth, and were devouring its intestines, whilst the poor animal was still

¹⁰ E. W. C. Sandes, *The Royal Engineers in Egypt and the Sudan* (Chatham: Institute of Royal Engineers, Mackays, 1937), 192; Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, 22; Edward M. Spiers, 'Introduction: The Reconquest Reappraised', in Spiers (ed.), *Sudan: The Reconquest Reappraised* (Oxford: Frank Cass, 1998), 3.

¹¹ Edward Spiers, 'The Late Victorian Army 1868-1914', in David Chandler and Ian Beckett (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003 [1994]), 206.

¹² V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: Black Man, Yellow Man, and White Man in the Age of Empire* (London: The Cresset Library, 1988 [1969]), 216.

¹³ Byron Farwell, *Prisoners of the Mahdi* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 296; Wingate's 'trilogy' consists of: Father J. Ohrwalder, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp 1882-1892*, edited by F. R. Wingate (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1892); Rudolf C. Slatin, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan: A Personal Narrative of Fighting and Serving the Dervishes, 1879-1895*, trans. F. R. Wingate (London: Arnold, 1896); F. R. Wingate, *Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan* (London: Macmillan, 1891).

¹⁴ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 224.

¹⁵ See for example: A. B. Theobald, *The Mahdiyya: A History of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1881-1899* (London: Longmans, 1951), 214; Henry S. L. Alford and W. Dennistoun Sword, *The Egyptian Sudan: Its Loss and Recovery* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 161-62; for an account of the devastation left behind see: Franks, 9 April 1898, *Sudan Archive, University of Durham Library* (hereafter: *SAD*) 403/2.

¹⁶ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 216.

breathing'. Slatin goes on to convey his disgust at these 'maniacs'.¹⁷ As Holt has stated, these works 'should be regarded primarily as war-propaganda'.¹⁸ With regard to the movement under the Khalifa 'Abdallahi Muhammad (the Mahdi's replacement after his death in 1885), Holt states that 'there was a constructive side to his reign, which has received little attention from writers whose gaze has been focused upon picturesque horrors and atrocities which our grandfathers believed were committed only by barbarians'.¹⁹

The reconquest campaign began in 1896 with the Dongola Expedition, although the key battles did not take place until 1898; the Battle of the Atbara on Good Friday (8 April 1898) was a telling precursor of the devastation that was to result five months later in Omdurman. Participants at the Atbara recollected Kitchener's orders prior to the battle and his words were recalled by Lt. A. Unsworth: 'The Sirdar wishes to impress on the minds of the men two words, when in front of the zariba "Remember Gordon". He says the enemy in front of you are Gordon's murderers'. Unsworth goes on to state: 'You should have seen the look of determination on the mens [sic] faces when these words were read. It augered ill for Fuzz Wuzzy [sic]'.²⁰ Various accounts have described how Kitchener explained the terms under which the enemy could surrender, emphasising the 'Throwing down [of] arms, and shouting "Aman" (peace)',²¹ however, it is clear that this order was not always adhered to. As one soldier described: 'When we were on the march I could hear the troops saying that they would make sure that every Dervisher [sic] they passed, they would make sure that he was dead before leaving them, and they kept their word. But it was a horrible sight to see the dead women, men and children. It made my blood run cold for a short time, but I soon got warmed up'.²² Major-General G. M. Franks also stated that 'the few left alive tried to quit and were shot down, it was hot work I can assure you'.²³ That only a limited number of retreating enemy soldiers were taken prisoner is also made clear by Major-General Granville Egerton as he described an incident which occurred in the months after the battle:

¹⁷ Slatin, *Fire and Sword*, 273; see also: Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), 136.

¹⁸ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 273.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5. See also Peter Clark, 'The Battle of Omdurman in the Context of Sudanese History', in Spiers (ed.), *Sudan*, 202; Richard Toye, *Churchill's Empire: The World that Made Him and the World He Made* (Macmillan, 2011), Kindle edition.

²⁰ Unsworth, 16 April 1898, SAD/233/5.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Private George Teigh in John Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries 1898: Eyewitness Accounts of the Legendary Campaign* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 1998), 85.

²³ Franks, 9 April 1898, SAD/403/2. See also Henry Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting: A Centenary Review of the Sudan Campaigns 1883-1899* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986), 200.

a young native boy suddenly rushed at me making tremendous protestations and threw himself at my feet. On an interpreter being sent for it turned out that he was a lad whom I had had made a prisoner at the Atbara. There were not many prisoners at the Atbara fight, and I supposed he was disproportionately grateful.²⁴

Further tactics used by the Anglo-Egyptian troops included setting alight huts filled with enemy troops, in order to force the enemy out into the open, or to be otherwise burnt alive, as a result: ‘Some of the enemy ran out and were shot down; others perished in the houses. The method was drastic, but it saved many casualties among our own men.’²⁵ Franks also confirmed that ‘the cotton clothes of some of the killed and wounded Dervishes had caught and they were horribly burnt’.²⁶ The chaos of the battle is made clear by descriptions of the battle’s aftermath: ‘Dead dervishes, donkeys, ponies, camels and in places women and children lay dead and wounded in indescribable confusion – the smell was a bit like a slaughter house.’²⁷ Furthermore, it was stated that ‘the so-called humane conduct of the Englishman’ was in evidence ‘who except in a very few occasions, where officers were on the spot to prevent it, spared nothing except the animals’.²⁸ Indeed, it has been claimed that during the first phase of the battle ‘it was almost impossible to take prisoners’.²⁹ Some troops expressed their horror at the carnage they witnessed and took part in: ‘I collapsed with a headache and consequently didn’t go over the field after, but I think the sight of those rifle pits full of writhing bodies and frightful wounded as we passed over them didn’t invite a second visit.’³⁰ However, other men were notably unmoved by the scenes that they witnessed. Unsworth stated for example that the ‘sight of the mutilated bodies had no more effect on me than the sight of a wounded fly would have’³¹ and justified the killing of the wounded thus:

The wounded, are, if anything, more dangerous than the non-wounded.
They are 10 times more cunning. I daresay you have read about their tricks

²⁴ Granville Egerton, *With the 72nd Highlanders in the Sudan Campaign*, reprinted from ‘The Green Howards’ Gazette’ (London: Eden Fisher, 1909), 26.

²⁵ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 197.

²⁶ Franks, 9 April 1898, SAD/403/2.

²⁷ Lt. Samuel FitzGibbon Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 87; see also: Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 200.

²⁸ Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 87.

²⁹ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 217, n2.

³⁰ Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 88.

³¹ Unsworth, 16 April 1898, SAD/233/5.

shamming dead etc. Several of our fellows received their wounds from supposedly dead men. We were all warned about their cunning before the battle, and told to make sure that a man was dead before we passed him. We obeyed: and it was as well we did so.³²

It is clear that the killing of the wounded was part of a larger practice within the campaign and those who were involved felt little remorse; accounts of the battle suggest that many troops did not recognise their enemies as fellow human beings. This dehumanisation of the indigenous population, and the enemy in particular, is in evidence in accounts of the campaign. Indeed, Unsworth describes the experience in the battle as ‘exhilarating’ and claimed that his own behaviour was ‘cool, and callous, and took as deliberate aim, and was as careful to unload my rifle when rising off the knee, as if I had been on a field day on the Fox Hills at home’.³³

While the victory at the Atbara was publicly portrayed as a success, privately, criticisms were raised regarding the tactics chosen by those in charge and one participant subsequently described the conflict as a ‘chaotic dogfight’.³⁴ Most participants in the battle tended to criticise the commanding officer of the 1st British Brigade, Major-General William Gatacre, who is said to have conducted the battle in a manner of ‘improvisation’.³⁵ Gatacre was an unpopular and controversial figure amongst his men and was awarded the nickname ‘Back-acher’.³⁶ The results of Gatacre’s tactics were described thus: ‘What followed was utter chaos – as we had foreseen, all of us Infantry men, the Camerons were not going to stand and wait, they broke in with us, and the interior of the Zareeba became a confused mob of mixed soldiery, wild with excitement, and firing in all directions’.³⁷ Firsthand accounts of the battle suggest that a period of ‘free reign’ took place and it has been stated that ‘Both British and Egyptian Army officers temporarily lost control of their men who rampaged through the Mahdist camp venting their blood-lust indiscriminately’.³⁸ The battle was subsequently described as taking ‘less than half an hour of actual fighting, against a horde of half-starved and ill-armed savages’.³⁹ With reference to enemy losses Egerton

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Egerton, Memorandum, SAD/477/8.

³⁵ Ibid. See also Edward M. Spiers, ‘Campaigning under Kitchener’, in Spiers (ed.), *Sudan*, 62.

³⁶ Egerton, Memorandum, SAD/477/8. Spiers, ‘Campaigning under Kitchener’, 49.

³⁷ Egerton, Memorandum, SAD/477/8.

³⁸ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 200.

³⁹ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 219.

stated, ‘The ditch behind the zareba bushes was literally brimful—there is no other word for it—with dead and dying men, showing the accuracy of the Camerons’ fire....’⁴⁰ The boost to morale for the Anglo-Egyptian campaign was described as ‘greater than that of any event since the fall of Khartoum in 1885’.⁴¹ The British victory did come at a price; casualties on the Anglo-Egyptian side were predominantly Sudanese with 57 killed and 386 wounded compared to the British brigade’s 26 killed and 99 wounded, of a force of some 13,000; the injuries suffered in this battle were particularly horrific.⁴² Egerton highlighted the poor conditions for the British wounded in the battle’s aftermath:

I went down to the British field hospital, passing the native hospital, with its crowd of wounded men, on the way. It is here that the seamy, horrible, senseless side of war comes home to you, and I shall never forget the sight of those poor fellows lying spread over the desert wherever a little shade could be found amongst the mimosa bushes.⁴³

Whilst the Battle of the Atbara proved devastating for the Mahdist forces, the slaughter of the Battle of Omdurman on 2 September 1898 would overshadow the previous conflict: the casualties at the Atbara are thought to have been 3,000 killed on the enemy’s side; the number of wounded is a matter of contention, however, but Holt has estimated a figure of 4,000: this issue will be discussed further below.⁴⁴ In comparison, as stated above, 11,000 of the Khalifa’s army were killed and 16,000 wounded in Omdurman. It should therefore come as no surprise that ‘[i]n this massacre, rather than battle, 3500 shells and half a million bullets were fired by the invaders’.⁴⁵ Contemporary accounts of the aftermath of Omdurman describe the enemy wounded lying unaided on the battlefield, waiting to die. Winston Churchill, who was present in Omdurman both as a war correspondent for the *Morning Post* and as a soldier, was horrified by the consequences of Kitchener’s policies and described the struggle of the wounded to reach the river, many of whom had lost limbs, and recounted how he had witnessed survivors still fighting death a week after the battle: ‘there were still a few

⁴⁰ Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 15.

⁴¹ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 219.

⁴² Spiers, ‘Campaigning under Kitchener’, 61; see: Hunter, 14 October 1898, SAD/964/4; Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 16-17.

⁴³ Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 17-18.

⁴⁴ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 238.

⁴⁵ V. G. Kiernan, *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960* (London: Fontana and Leicester University Press, 1982), 80.

wounded who had neither died nor crawled away, but continued to suffer'.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Churchill criticised Kitchener's failure to reissue the order given prior to the Battle of the Atbara that the enemy wounded should be spared.⁴⁷ Churchill's claims regarding the neglect of the enemy wounded are confirmed by Medical Officer Major Adamson's description of his departure from Omdurman several days after the battle: 'The voyage is a horrible memory, at least the first day of it, for all along the river edge were dead or wounded dervishes, great vultures tearing at the corpses or waiting patiently for the wounded to die.'⁴⁸ Wingate reported that 'those who were too severely wounded to move from the battlefield were carried into the town by their relatives or friends and tended to in their own homes'.⁴⁹ Wingate justified this neglect of the wounded claiming that it would have been 'manifestly far beyond the capabilities of the military field hospitals' to care for so many wounded.⁵⁰ Henry Keown-Boyd has also argued that economic considerations and lack of personnel were 'the nub of the matter' and states that the 'expedition's budget had not allowed for any such contingency and to that extent the Sirdar did not bear the ultimate responsibility'.⁵¹ Furthermore, whilst he states that 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Kitchener was indifferent to the fate of the wounded', he argues that this indifference was directed 'not only to the enemy wounded'⁵² and accuses Kitchener of a 'disregard for the comfort and well-being of his own men'.⁵³ Keown-Boyd therefore argues that 'in many instances the most merciful treatment [the enemy] could expect would be a bullet or a swift thrust of the bayonet'.⁵⁴ In attempting to comprehend the role of ordinary soldiers in extreme violence it is therefore important to consider the immense suffering of the rank-and-file in colonial campaigns. The conditions could be extreme and it appears that the British authorities did little to alleviate such situations. As Peter Burroughs has highlighted regarding 'the balance sheet of imperialism' it was '[a]s much a record of callous indifference to human suffering, incompetence in high places, and the wanton waste of

⁴⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *The River War: An Historical Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan*, vol. II (London: Longman's Green, 1899), 225.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 195. Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 3. Churchill was certainly not a supporter of Kitchener's, see: Toye, *Churchill's Empire*.

⁴⁸ Cited in Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 241.

⁴⁹ *Sudan Intelligence Report* (hereafter: *SIR*) 60, 25 May to 31 December 1898, appendix 19b, SAD.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* In contrast, after the Khalifa was killed in November 1899, Wingate was at pains to report that the officers were 'indefatigable in attending to the dervish wounded', Wingate to Kitchener, 25 November 1899, TNA WO32/6143.

⁵¹ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 241.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 240.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

expendable cannon fodder as of bravery and honour, glory and self-sacrifice',⁵⁵ and therefore Kitchener's apparent indifference to the suffering of his own men and the enemy wounded is less surprising.

Regarding the killing of the enemy wounded it is evident from accounts of the conflict that there were incidents in which the enemy wounded did attack Anglo-Egyptian troops and G. F. Clayton stated: 'the wounded would stick a spear into you if you were not careful'.⁵⁶ However, as Bennett argued in his controversial article, 'the actual instances in which our men have been injured by wounded Dervishes are, after all, extremely few in number, and in any case it does not seem fair, because of occasional acts of treachery on the part of individuals, to decree the slaughter of the wounded indiscriminately.'⁵⁷ Furthermore, Bennett argued that the past behaviour of British troops in the Sudan was partially accountable for the violent actions of the wounded and stated that 'The wounded Dervish has become dangerous because he fully expects to be killed'.⁵⁸ In any case, such isolated incidents have little to do with the neglect of the wounded over a period of days, leaving them to die unaided in their thousands; it is clear that the killing and neglect of the wounded was not merely a matter of necessity and whilst General Neville Lyttelton claimed that the bayoneting of the wounded 'had to be done', he admitted that 'some of the men thoroughly enjoyed this sort of work'.⁵⁹ Adolf von Tiedemann, the German military attaché, was present at the battle and described the horrific injuries suffered by the enemy troops, as well as the killing of the wounded, although he also defended Kitchener's campaign. Clearly 'lessons' regarding colonial warfare could also be gained in this way and Tiedemann's failure to condemn the actions suggests a consensus regarding the treatment of the enemy in and after battle.⁶⁰ The indifference that British troops showed towards the wounded is evident in contemporary accounts of the battle; an example is an incident recalled by Lyttelton as he revisited the battlefield a few days after the Battle of Omdurman:

I rode over the battlefield, a grisly sight. I saw two wounded Arabs who had been shot through both thighs and unable to walk. They were propelling

⁵⁵ Peter Burroughs, 'The Human Cost of Imperial Defence in the Early Victorian Age', *Victorian Studies*, 24:1 (1980), 8.

⁵⁶ Clayton, 7 September 1898, SAD/942/7.

⁵⁷ Bennett, 'After Omdurman', 21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁹ Lyttelton cited in Spiers, 'Campaigning under Kitchener', 73.

⁶⁰ Adolf von Tiedemann, *Mit Lord Kitchener gegen den Mahdi* (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1906), 159-62.

themselves along the ground in a sitting position with short sticks and left a conspicuous track in the sand. A day or two later after I came across the two just arriving in our lines, I should say nearly 3 miles from where I had first seen them.⁶¹

It is curious that the enemy wounded were not helped after the British wounded had been attended to and accounts of the battle's aftermath convey that British troops were able to revisit the battlefield over a number of days; nevertheless, it is clear that there was no concerted attempt to alleviate the horrendous suffering of the enemy wounded. Captain D. W. Churcher conveys a rare admission of failure in this regard: 'The General and some of our officers rode over the battlefield this morning and say its [sic] a most awful sight, as there are a lot of men not dead yet, and the dead are in heaps. I saw quite enough on the 2nd and have no wish to go again, *but I do think they might either have the wounded brought in or killed*'.⁶² As Bennett stated, 'the military surgeons were so numerous and the hospital arrangements so excellent that surely some help might have been afforded to the wounded wretches lying about the desert four miles away, after our comparatively trifling number of wounded had been carefully attended to.'⁶³ However, this was not the case and British forces were swiftly withdrawn in the aftermath of Omdurman and a permanent garrison of a mere 250 men was subsequently set up.⁶⁴ The motivation for the conduct of the Anglo-Egyptian troops needs further consideration; in the aftermath of the fighting, where thousands lay wounded, the fact that the British 'simply turned their backs and marched away' may be explained by the effects of British propaganda, which were made clear by Churchill: 'the unmeasured terms in which the Dervishes had been described in the newspapers, and the idea which had been laboriously circulated, of "avenging Gordon", had inflamed [the soldiers'] passions, and had led them to believe that it was quite correct to regard their enemy as vermin - unfit to live'.⁶⁵ Gordon's death has been described as a 'shock to racial pride' in Britain.⁶⁶ There is no doubt that the memory of Gordon and the effectiveness with which his

⁶¹ Neville Lyttelton, *Eighty Years: Soldiering, Politics, Games* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 195. Medical officers nevertheless took the time to inspect the corpses for signs of injury from the dum-dum bullets: Kim A. Wagner, 'A Scattering of Death: Violence and the Colonial Rule of Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency', *History Workshop Journal* (forthcoming 2018), 11.

⁶² Diary of Captain D. W. Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM: emphasis added.

⁶³ Bennett, 'After Omdurman', 26.

⁶⁴ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 105.

⁶⁵ Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa 1830-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 177. Churchill, *River War*, vol. II, 196.

⁶⁶ Zulfo, *Karari*, 50.

'revenge' was impressed upon the troops had an impact on the actions of the British soldiers involved.

As mentioned above, at the forefront of the controversy regarding this battle was Bennett's article, in which he made various accusations at Kitchener for the military conduct during the reconquest. With regards to the practice of killing the enemy wounded he wrote, 'Any man who, after the killing and wounding of 26,000 Dervishes with the total loss to his own side of 500 casualties all told, was still unsatisfied and lusted after the blood of wounded men must be little better than a brute beast.'⁶⁷ One soldier's denial of Bennett's claims presented a rather peculiar argument; after stating that Bennett's claims were 'clap-trap' he continued: 'I regret very much that we have not nearly exterminated all the Baggaras [tribesmen], only, unfortunately, they are endowed by Nature with strong knees, and many escaped.'⁶⁸ Further controversy was created by Kitchener, who once again displayed his ruthless attitude with regard to his treatment of the Mahdi's tomb which was targeted for destruction and the remains, except for the skull, thrown into the river. Kitchener's orders caused so much controversy at the time that he was obliged to write directly to Queen Victoria explaining his actions, although as Daly has argued, 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the arguments of safety and expediency were hastily contrived to answer unexpected criticism in Britain.'⁶⁹ General Hunter assessed the situation thus:

The Mahdi's tomb was a splendid target and was hit in the centre of the dome at the third round. It is beautifully built of red brick and lime, and took some demolition. *You are at liberty to assign any cause you please to its removal. We may say that so long as it stood it was a menace to our rule and an inducement to a revival of fanaticism. We may say that in its semi-demolished state it was a danger to life and limb. Anyhow so long as it stood it was a conspicuous memorial to celebrate the Victory of the Savage over us, and now that it ceases to exist our disgrace may be forgotten.*⁷⁰

Despite some public criticism of Kitchener, those who served under him were generally positive; Captain Alfred Edward Hubbard for example was highly complimentary regarding Kitchener and his campaign and stated that 'I do not suppose that a better

⁶⁷ Bennett, 'After Omdurman', 25.

⁶⁸ 'Omdurman. Charge of Killing the Wounded. Letters of Denial', *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 January 1899.

⁶⁹ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 5.

⁷⁰ Hunter, 'Sudan Campaign May-Oct 1898', SAD/964/4: emphasis added.

organised campaign has ever been known in the history of warfare – Everything was carefully thought out and plan laid with the greatest prudence and forethought and with consummate skill....⁷¹ However, such declarations of order conceal the realities of the battle and contradict the events of the day, for example regarding the ‘military folly’ of the charge of the 21st Lancers, which has arguably endured as the dominant image of the battle.⁷²

Bennett’s article also raised the issue of the proceedings on the night after the battle, which he described thus: ‘All that night Soudanese troops roamed at large about the city. All night long shots were being fired. What precisely happened nobody will ever know’.⁷³ However, little attention has been paid to the actual events. It has been stated that whilst the ‘rest of the Army settled down along the roadways through the suburbs’, in the aftermath of the battle, ‘only Maxwell’s Brigade remained in the great enclosure to complete the establishment of law and order’.⁷⁴ Egerton described the chaos that ensued: ‘We bivouacked amongst the suburbs ... and the shooting all round was incessant, probably looting and a general repayment of old scores’, and he continues that ‘[t]hey captured four big Baggara Emirs next day, all severely wounded from the fight and shot them the next morning’.⁷⁵ Egerton’s account conveys the anarchy that resulted throughout the evening after the battle:

The noises, the screams of agony and terror, the shouting and the constant discharge of rifles and whistling of bullets in the city purlieus on either side of our bivouacs were somewhat disconcerting, but came no nearer, and apparently meant no harm to us.⁷⁶

Egerton explained these events as being a result of ‘semi-savage blacks [who] had come home again flushed with victory borne upon the tide of the Anglo-Egyptian success, and much hidden wealth was unearthed and many an old score was paid off in these moonlight hours’.⁷⁷ Lt. R. N. Smyth stated: ‘I believe the Sudanese raided and

⁷¹ Hubbard cited in Peter Harrington and Frederic A. Sharf (eds), *Omdurman 1898: The Eye-Witnesses Speak – The British Conquest of the Sudan as Described by Participants in Letters, Diaries, Photos, and Drawings* (London: Greenhill Books, 1998), 70, 72.

⁷² Ronald M. Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune: Sudanese Soldiers and the River War 1896-1898* (Oxford: James Currey, 2011), 162.

⁷³ Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, 28.

⁷⁴ E.G. Sarsfield-Hall, ‘Notes For a Lecture on the 1898 Expedition and the Battle of Omdurman’, SAD/477/8.

⁷⁵ Egerton, 9 September 1898, SAD/477/8.

⁷⁶ Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 45.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

slaughtered the night after the battle to a great extent. I am very glad. If I had my way every man we captured on the battle field should have been shot at once then and there, cold blood or not. If you had seen the condition of our dead you would have said the same.⁷⁸ However, these events were not only a result of the actions of the Sudanese troops and Colonel John Maxwell himself admitted his involvement in individual killings in private correspondence with Wingate almost ten years after the occurrence: ‘I have always considered a dead fanatic as the only one of his sort to extend any sympathy to – I am very sorry for them when dead! For this reason I quietly made away with a bunch of Emirs after Omdurman and I was very sorry for them after all was over’.⁷⁹ Thus, it is clear that the Sudanese soldiers were not only permitted by the British forces to carry out acts of revenge on the local population, they were actively encouraged and British troops, including their own commander, took part. The evidence also suggests that the British forces deliberately targeted the Emirs; the Battle of the Atbara resulted in the deaths of all the Khalifa’s Emirs, aside from the elusive Osman Digna, whose role in the battle was limited and who once again escaped.⁸⁰ As Ronald Lamothe has argued, Sudanese soldiers of the Egyptian army could also be motivated by vengeance as many of them had previously been enslaved by Baggara tribe members or had been captured by the Mahdists and forced to fight for the Khalifa; now that they had been captured by the Anglo-Egyptian forces they were able to ‘avenge’ the “social death” they [had] suffered via the Baggara’.⁸¹ Although, as Lamothe highlights, Sudanese soldiers enlisted into the Egyptian army prior to 1903 were also recruited ‘for life or until medically unfit for further service’.⁸²

Based upon considerations of the conduct of Anglo-Egyptian troops in both the battles at the Atbara and in Omdurman it is clear that similar tactics were undertaken in each instance and included the killing and neglect of the wounded, as well as the killing of enemy troops who were attempting to surrender. Bennett argued in his article that whilst the deaths of 3,000 Mahdists were announced after the Battle of the Atbara, there was ‘practically no mention of the wounded’. This he links with the assertion that ‘It is, of course, an open secret that in all our Soudan battles the enemy’s wounded have been killed. The practice has, ever since the days of Tel-el-Kebir, become traditional in

⁷⁸ Smyth, 4 September 1898, SAD/533/6.

⁷⁹ Maxwell to Wingate, 24 May 1908, SAD/282/5; see also: Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 4.

⁸⁰ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 227. For a list of the Emirs killed in Omdurman see: SIR 60, appendix 19b.

⁸¹ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 147.

⁸² The ‘Handbook of the Egyptian Army’ cited in *ibid.*, 32.

Soudanese warfare'.⁸³ Lt. Samuel Cox noted in his diary in the aftermath of the Atbara that the 'enemy's losses are estimated at 8,000 to 9,000, mostly killed, as they asked no quarter, and few prisoners were taken'.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, Holt provides the figure of 4,000 wounded, but does not divulge how he arrives at this figure. Claims that the wounded at the Atbara were systematically killed were publicly disputed by Gatacre in particular, who described the 'good feeling' that was apparent in the aftermath of the battle between the wounded prisoners and the men in the British camp.⁸⁵ Keown-Boyd has also claimed that whilst there was no official count of the enemy dead, this does not represent a cover up as the dead in Omdurman were 'meticulously counted'.⁸⁶ However, the failure to count the wounded at the Atbara does seem curious and eye-witness accounts make clear that the actual events regarding the treatment of the wounded and those willing to surrender does deviate from the official version. It has been claimed by 'Ismat Hasan Zulfo that Kitchener sought deliberately to conceal the number of dead, fearing a backlash as a result of the Armenian massacres and also wanted to ensure that as many Mahdist troops as possible be killed to prevent them from regrouping in Omdurman.⁸⁷ Keown-Boyd has claimed that some of the Mahdist wounded, 'perhaps the luckier ones, were shot or bayoneted by the advancing troops' and goes on to state that there 'was nothing unusual about that and it had indeed been customary on both sides since the earliest days of the Mahdist revolt'.⁸⁸ However, it is difficult to find accounts of the killing of the Anglo-Egyptian wounded by Mahdist forces; one example is Private Thomas Edwards' recollections of the Battle of Tamai, which took place on 13 March 1884. Edwards stated that 'A dozen of them [enemy troops] just round me were engaged in spearing every wounded man of ours they came across'.⁸⁹ It is nevertheless clear that prisoners of war were taken, as Egerton highlighted for example, 'Indeed, we had serving in the ranks at Omdurman some hundreds of men who had been taken prisoners at the Atbara in the previous April'.⁹⁰ As Lamothe has highlighted, these men were 'swiftly incorporated into the Sudanese battalions they had just met in

⁸³ Bennett, 'After Omdurman', 20.

⁸⁴ Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 95.

⁸⁵ W. Gatacre, 'After the Atbara and Omdurman', *Contemporary Review*, 75 (1899), 301.

⁸⁶ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 202.

⁸⁷ Zulfo, *Karari*, 80, n4.

⁸⁸ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 240.

⁸⁹ Cited in Frank Emery (ed.), *Marching Over Africa: Letters from Victorian Soldiers* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986), 138; however, this was the only firsthand account that I could find regarding the killing of wounded Anglo-Egyptian troops by Mahdist troops.

⁹⁰ Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 44.

battle'.⁹¹ And at Omdurman there were also an alleged 38,000 enemy soldiers who were taken prisoner by the British, further adding to the post-battle chaos and as Churcher described: 'There are thousands of dervish prisoners in a large enclosure close by, and the whole town is full of wounded men'.⁹²

Firsthand accounts indicate that the Anglo-Egyptian practices being used throughout 1898 in the Sudan were already part of a pattern of violence, which had been apparent in earlier battles between the Anglo-Egyptian forces and the Mahdists; for example, as the following account suggests in reference to the Battle of Abu Klea on 17 January 1885, which was part of the Gordon Relief Expedition:

The square had been rushed and broken, and some of the fuzzi-wuzzies had penetrated it as far as the centre, but not one of them who went in got out. All were shot and bayoneted. Some feigned death and came to life again when they saw a chance of rising for a moment and killing a British soldier. No mercy was shown to them.⁹³

However, Private William Burge still expressed his relief that the enemy troops who had managed to escape 'were allowed to go in peace'.⁹⁴ However, Lt. Percy Marling described how, on the morning after the battle, he was part of a column that journeyed back to the water wells and states that 'We repassed the battlefield on our right, where our dead were still lying unburied, and came across a lot of wounded [Mahdist soldiers] whom we shot at once'; the column then returned to the camp for breakfast.⁹⁵ The extreme nature of this military campaign was clear from the beginning of the Dongola expedition which began on 7 June 1896 at the Battle of Firket, a key battle in the British occupation of Dongola; as one participant stated, Kitchener's 'object was not merely to drive the Dervish forces from [Firket]. For a purpose so limited a much smaller force than he had concentrated at Akasha would have sufficed. He meant to thoroughly break up, destroy, and make prisoners of [Emir] Hammuda's force'.⁹⁶ As further confirmation of the uncompromising approach that was to be taken at the beginning of the Dongola

⁹¹ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 58.

⁹² See: *SIR* 60, appendix 45; Steven Serels, 'Feasting on Famines: Food Insecurity and the Making of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1883-1956' (unpublished PhD thesis, McGill University, 2012), 190. Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM.

⁹³ Private William Burge cited in Ian Knight (ed.), *Marching to the Drums: Eyewitness Accounts of War from the Kabul Massacre to the Siege of Mafikeng* (London: Greenhill Books, 1999), 226.

⁹⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 226.

⁹⁵ Cited in Emery, *Marching Over Africa*, 144.

⁹⁶ A. Hilliard Atteridge, *Towards Khartoum: The Story of the Soudan War of 1896* (London: A. D. Innes, 1897), 181.

campaign, Prime Minister Lord Salisbury suggested to Lord Cromer, Consul-General of Egypt, that ‘with search lights and a maxim gun you could prevent an enemy’s camp from supplying itself with water from the river – and so starve it out’.⁹⁷ Major Farley recollected that fighting during the Dongola campaign was also conducted in an uncompromising manner as ‘no quarter [was] given or asked’ and that ‘many of them were only waiting the opportunity to surrender, an [sic] as they came out with hands in the air, they were duly put in the bag’.⁹⁸ It has been described how ‘Hut after hut had to be cleared out at the point of the bayonet, and the nature of the resistance is shown by the fact that 80 Baggara corpses were found, after the battle, in one hut alone.’⁹⁹ A. Hilliard Atteridge, a correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle*, described the fate of enemy soldiers at Firket who had tried to take ‘refuge on an island, from which a party of Sudanese were dislodging them’ and ‘Shots on the opposite shore told that our Friendlies were hunting down those who had crossed the Nile’.¹⁰⁰ Escapees from the battle were persistently pursued, in accordance with Kitchener’s aims for this campaign and [t]he river bank and the border of the desert were strewn for miles with their dead’.¹⁰¹ Atteridge justified the actions of the expedition in Firket, claiming that ‘it must be remembered that this was not a case of villagers defending their homes’, and that it was ‘really a camp of brigands’;¹⁰² although he later conceded that a small number of women and children were amongst the dead and wounded.¹⁰³ Atteridge also claimed that Surgeon-Captain Hunter went to the aid of the enemy wounded, although such acts of compassion appear to have been rare.¹⁰⁴ A further practice that was conducted throughout this campaign was the burning of villages, which was also an integral component of British colonial warfare generally.¹⁰⁵ In late 1897, Hunter wrote to Kitchener to inform him that on the return march to Berber he would be separating from the others to ‘burn [the] mosque, Digna’s houses and half the town and join the column later’.¹⁰⁶ It has also been claimed that during the Dongola campaign, ‘The forts at

⁹⁷ Salisbury to Cromer, 20 March 1896, TNA FO633/114.

⁹⁸ Farley, ‘Recollections of the Dongola Expedition’, SAD/304/2.

⁹⁹ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 164.

¹⁰⁰ Atteridge, *Towards Khartoum*, 211.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁰⁵ *SIR* 56, 6 October to 12 November 1898. Major-General Graham burned the village of Tamai in 1884 and 1885. See: Emery, *Marching Over Africa*, 139, 159 and Holt, *Mahdist State*, 86.

¹⁰⁶ Hunter to Kitchener, 2 November 1897, SAD/964/3.

Shendy were destroyed, and the place burnt.’¹⁰⁷ Churcher described how after Mahmud Ahmed (the Khalifa’s nephew and principal general)¹⁰⁸ had left his headquarters in Shendy, prior to the battle at the Atbara, ‘the 18th Batt: Egyptian Infantry went up in gunboats and practically destroyed the place and burnt all Mahmoud’s stores’.¹⁰⁹

Further brutality within the Dongola campaign is conveyed by the selectivity with which prisoners were taken, one account states that ‘500 of the less desperate characters’ were taken prisoner; in addition, at least 40 Emirs were ‘among the slain’.¹¹⁰ Lt. Alford and Lt. Sword described the surrender of Mahdist troops thus: ‘most of the enemy had no fight left in them, in token of which they advanced holding up both hands over the head, and indicating by every means in their power that they were peaceably inclined’. Whilst these troops were put through ‘an examination before the Intelligence Staff’, ‘the Baggara who were routed out of the scrub resisted desperately; and as they persisted that Allah was on their side ... and attempted to demonstrate the fact on their hearers, there was no alternative but to put them *hors de combat*’.¹¹¹ With regards to the enemy wounded, it has been claimed that many were brought in from the battlefield, but the extent of British hospitality has been disputed: ‘we read in the papers that “it was a pleasant sight to see the English officers giving up their tents to the wounded Dervishes, and sitting in the sun whilst the latter were having their wounds dressed”’ and concluded that ‘It made us angry to read such nonsense’, although they then claimed that ‘the enemy were attended to in our hospital with as much care as our own wounded received’.¹¹²

In considering the motivations behind such a brutal approach to this campaign one must consider the conditions for the troops, for which Gatacre in particular seems to have been responsible in the lead-up to both the Atbara and Omdurman battles. Lt. Ronald Forbes Meiklejohn described that Gatacre’s approach, which included ‘barely articulate and alarmist speeches to the troops’¹¹³ made the men ‘thoroughly jumpy’ and claimed that his methods were responsible for an incident in the run up to the Atbara battle in which two men were bayoneted as a result of the overreaction of those on guard to a donkey wandering into the zariba in the middle of the night.¹¹⁴ Throughout

¹⁰⁷ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 206.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁰⁹ Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM.

¹¹⁰ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 164-65.

¹¹¹ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 138.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹¹³ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 193.

¹¹⁴ Lt. Ronald Forbes Meiklejohn in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 65-66.

the ‘long hot summer’ of 1898 the British awaited the rise of the river to proceed with their final advance and Gatacre insisted upon the troops sleeping fully dressed and being ready for battle at any moment, and this included incessant ‘night alarms’ in the early hours,¹¹⁵ coupled with boredom, tedious drills, fatigues and marches throughout the day.¹¹⁶ The conditions for the troops were worsened further by Gatacre’s insistence that it be ‘a tee-total expedition’.¹¹⁷ Such difficult circumstances were heightened by the temperatures that the troops had to endure and, as Cox reported: ‘Very hot in the day, reporters not allowed to send temperatures home to papers, yesterday it was 115° in the shade.’¹¹⁸ Moreover, many soldiers suffered from dysentery and enteric fever throughout the summer leading to more deaths on the Anglo-Egyptian side than the Battle of the Atbara.¹¹⁹ Clayton described the frustration that resulted from Gatacre’s tactics and stated that as a result, ‘... everyone is longing to get at Mahmoud and smash him ... It is very trying continually sleeping in ones clothes, especially ones boots, and we shall all be very glad to stop it [sic].’¹²⁰

Whilst in retrospect, the victory of the Anglo-Egyptian campaign may appear to have been inevitable, this was certainly not the case, despite Kiernan’s assertion that ‘Perhaps an anachronistic kingdom, incapable of further development, could only end like this, in a sort of heroic suicide’;¹²¹ the troops were only too aware that the numerically superior Mahdia could prove victorious, in the correct circumstances. The Anglo-Egyptian forces had suffered a series of humiliating defeats against the Mahdists, notably the massacre of the Hicks Expedition in 1883, as well as the death of Gordon.¹²² As Robert Lethbridge of the Northumberland Fusiliers later contemplated, if the Khalifa had attacked at night,

our superiority of weapons would have counted for little and brute strength alone would have told, I don’t like to think what the result would have been. As it was, he did just what we wanted and attacked us at day-break and you know how we welcomed them.¹²³

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁶ Spiers, ‘Campaigning under Kitchener’, 75.

¹¹⁷ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 190.

¹¹⁸ Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 81.

¹¹⁹ Spiers, ‘Campaigning under Kitchener’, 63.

¹²⁰ Clayton, 29 March 1898, SAD/942/7.

¹²¹ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 80.

¹²² See for example: Holt, *Mahdist State*, 69-73.

¹²³ Lethbridge, 16 April 1898, SAD/873/7.

Or as Hunter condescendingly put it in the aftermath of Omdurman: ‘The tactics of the enemy have helped us. Poor devils, they tried to draw conclusions and they nearly hit the right one’.¹²⁴ It was the thought of military action that kept the troops going. For example, Kitchener’s announcement of his intention to attack in April 1898 was met with a positive response:

Only those who have experienced the hardships and privations of a campaign, can understand the almost electrical effect that an announcement of this description has on the troops. To feel that the campaign is nothing but a dreary course of incessant discomforts, without any apparent compensation, is wearying to body and mind.¹²⁵

The change to the troops’ morale was described as ‘magical’.¹²⁶ Thus, the hardships suffered by the troops awaiting battle were to make them even more anxious for action, as Unsworth states: ‘each man resolved to make the Khalifa pay dearly, when he met him, for all the discomfort he had caused us, no matter how indirectly’.¹²⁷ The fear that one would miss out on military action was often conveyed in letters home: for example, Captain S. Astell described his discontent regarding rumours of starvation amongst the Mahdist troops at the beginning of the campaign, although only insofar as this fact affected the chances of a thorough victory against the enemy: ‘We are growing weary, horrible rumours coming in that the Dervishes are starving, their allies deserting, so they may cave in and then we shall have borne the burden & heat of the day for nought’.¹²⁸ Such trying conditions were typical in colonial warfare and the following chapter discusses their contribution to the extreme nature of colonial campaigns.

The practice of looting, which was carried out by Anglo-Egyptian forces in the aftermath of the reconquest, also led to controversy. Looting appears to have been standard practice amongst the British in the Sudan, as indeed across the Empire, and even the resultant horrors of the Atbara conflict did not deter troops from returning to the battlefield, as H. P. Creagh-Osborne noted the following day: ‘Went into zariba to loot in [the] afternoon - a horrible sight.’¹²⁹ Eyewitness accounts also demonstrate that it was the norm for war correspondents to partake in the looting of enemy corpses. Hunter

¹²⁴ Hunter, 14 October 1898, SAD/964/4.

¹²⁵ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 210-11.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 210-11.

¹²⁷ Unsworth, 6 September 1898, SAD/233/5.

¹²⁸ Captain S. Astell, ‘Diary of Dongola Expedition 1896’, SRM BV/121.

¹²⁹ Creagh-Osborne, *Diary Extracts*, SAD/643/1.

recounted an incident in which a wounded enemy soldier ‘jumped up among some press correspondents, and camp followers who were looting the dead’.¹³⁰ Hunter also expressed his annoyance that whilst most British troops camped on the outskirts of the town on the night after the Battle of Omdurman, ‘The cunning beggars, the blacks did nothing but loot the prettiest girls and best trophies to be had’.¹³¹ Furthermore, Farley recalled that war correspondents during the Dongola Expedition in 1896 were ‘well up with the fighting line and reaped a rich harvest in the way of loot’, later commenting that the correspondents had, again, gone ‘a looting’.¹³² Carleton, who would go on to fight in Sierra Leone, was also present at Dongola and wrote home to his sister: ‘I am sorry to tell you I have not secured as much loot as I would have liked ... there is an order that all loot is to be handed in’.¹³³ Hunter expressed the troops’ delight in the aftermath of the Battle of Omdurman and demonstrates the relationship between looting and further violence thus:

we could now enjoy ourselves like boys raving in a sack yard. And we did have an afternoon, poking into houses, in and out of narrow alleys, kicking down doors, forcing gateways, chasing devils all over the place, most surrendered, but we had to kill some 300 or 400.¹³⁴

Hunter thus reveals both the extent of the looting which took place and suggests the terror that was experienced by the local population in the wake of their ‘liberation’. As Bennett stated: ‘the ignorant villagers who were compelled to hand over their food to soldiers already abundantly supplied with all manner of stores could scarcely be expected to fully appreciate the blessings of British “protection.”’¹³⁵ Clearly, looting was standard practice on the part of the Anglo-Egyptian forces and it accompanied their victories across the country.¹³⁶

As the victors entered Omdurman in the after of the battle in 1898, they were met by a city of desperate inhabitants due to food shortages; Steven Serels has argued that the swift victory at Omdurman was due in part to the ‘failure of the grain market’

¹³⁰ Hunter, ‘Sudan Campaign May-Oct 1898’, SAD/964/3.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Farley, ‘Recollections of the Dongola Expedition’, SAD/304/2.

¹³³ Private Papers of Brigadier General F. M. Carleton DSO, Documents.20718, 11 June 1896, IWM; see also: Carleton, 19 June 1896, IWM.

¹³⁴ Hunter, ‘Sudan Campaign May-Oct 1898’, SAD/964/3.

¹³⁵ Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, 27.

¹³⁶ For looting in the aftermath of the Battle of the Atbara see: Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 101.

which brought famine, weakening both the Mahdist state and indigenous resistance to the Anglo-Egyptian campaign.¹³⁷ That conditions were dire in the area is conveyed by Churcher's encounter with a woman on the outskirts of Khartoum, prior to the Battle of Omdurman:

so I rode up and found a woman looking fearfully emaciated with a dried up empty water skin, so I called up my groom and told him to give her water out of my water bottle he was carrying, and she simply lapped it down; the water soon revived her and I found out she had escaped from Kerreri near Khartoum and both her husband and son had been killed, but she had managed to run away.¹³⁸

Most commentators conveyed their disgust on arrival into Omdurman and Egerton described the city as 'the conglomeration of mud huts, foul alleys, squalor and noisome smells'.¹³⁹ However, unlike many other soldiers, Churcher also took the time to address the condition of the local population and described that a regiment had just left and in their wake:

the ground [the regiment] occupied is covered in people, mostly women and children, grubbing for fragments of biscuits or any other food that the men may have left, and devouring it on the spot. They actually dig up the cookhouse refuse pits after they have been filled in, and gnaw the old bones. ... even now there are crowds of emaciated looking creatures with hardly any clothes on, searching among the dust and stones for fragments. It makes one perfectly sick to see it, but one cannot do anything as we have only just enough food for ourselves.¹⁴⁰

However, on the evening after the Battle of Omdurman, British accounts contrast with the miseries suffered by the local population; for example, Hunter described how he was given 'a mug of soup and a mug of the best champagne', after which, he 'slept till dawn like a top, after one of the best days I have ever passed'.¹⁴¹ Churcher claimed that the local population initially welcomed the British into Omdurman: 'At 5.00pm we started again, the 2nd Brigade leading and marched right through the town of

¹³⁷ Serels, 'Feasting on Famines', 179.

¹³⁸ Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM.

¹³⁹ Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 43.

¹⁴⁰ Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM.

¹⁴¹ Hunter, 14 October 1898, SAD/964/4.

Omdurman and all the natives cat-called and cheered us and pressed our legs, poor beggars, they were nearly all slaves and no doubt jolly glad to see us'.¹⁴² However, further misery was to come and Zulfo has argued that Kitchener's orders which permitted the troops to plunder the Khalifa's grain stores and houses soon became confused and were extended to the homes of the general population and he even states that deaths resulted as people tried in vain to defend their properties.¹⁴³ In contrast, Babikr Badri claimed that the opening up of the Khalifa's grain stores to the general population saved many Sudanese lives.¹⁴⁴

Firsthand accounts of the Battle of Omdurman make clear that troops observed the first moments of combat with fascination and contemporaries such as Bennet Burleigh described the conflict as 'one of the most picturesque battles of the century',¹⁴⁵ although such descriptions hide the reality of the resulting carnage. Many participants described the spectacle of the battle, for example, Franks stated:

When one saw the whole enormous army marching straight onto us it gave a sort of indescribable thrill through one – a sort of mixture of excitement, admiration and awe. There is something in the very sight of such an overwhelming mass of men, miles and miles of men in masses that is extraordinarily awe inspiring.¹⁴⁶

Some troops also expressed admiration regarding the bravery of their enemy and Unsworth describes an incident in which a Mahdist leader 'managed to get within 500 yards of the zariba before he was shot down. He seemed to bear a charmed life and every one near me was so impressed by his valour' and he concludes by stating: 'I was sorry to see him fall for he was a brave man and no doubt had he reached the zariba he would have been treated with every consideration by our troops';¹⁴⁷ although, Unsworth's descriptions elsewhere demonstrate an indifference to the suffering of the thousands of dead and wounded enemy soldiers. Alford and Sword were only able to

¹⁴² Churcher: 1978-04-53, NAM.

¹⁴³ Zulfo, *Karari*, 236.

¹⁴⁴ See: Serels, 'Feasting on Famines', 4.

¹⁴⁵ Bennet Burleigh, *The Khartoum Campaign: A Special Correspondent's View of the Reconquest of the Sudan by British and Egyptian Forces under Kitchener-1898* (London: Leonaur, 2008 [London: Chapman and Hall, 1899]), 107.

¹⁴⁶ Franks, 5 September 1898, SAD/403/2. See also Egerton, *72nd Highlanders*, 32.

¹⁴⁷ Unsworth, 6 September 1898, SAD/233/5, see also: Diary of Lt Edward Douglas Loch, NAM 1994-12-249.

articulate their admiration for the enemy through racist assumptions typical of the time: 'It is sad to think that men with such innate pluck should be such brutes'.¹⁴⁸

In his assessment of the Battle of Omdurman, Byron Farwell concluded that 'cool efficiency had triumphed over hot religious fanaticism'.¹⁴⁹ Such a representation of the reconquest and the use of modern weaponry seeks to encourage the 'civilised' versus 'barbaric' dichotomy which was central to Britain's violent and destructive imperial project. This dichotomy was also used by participants to try and understand their own feelings and reactions to these events: 'One's feelings are really quite unusual at such a time, and I take it all the old primeval savage blood left in our highly civilised bodies is asserting itself a bit.'¹⁵⁰ The dialectic of 'civilisation' increasing 'barbarism' in the Sudan was also expressed by Kiernan in reference to Kitchener's treatment of the Mahdi's tomb: 'Civilisation was learning something from barbarism, as well as the other way about'.¹⁵¹ That Western 'civilisation' remained on the precipice between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' was a common belief within the context of social Darwinism.¹⁵² Joanna Bourke argues that the dichotomisation of the 'civilised' versus 'barbaric' in the context of warfare can be seen as part of an attempt to 'encourage the fiction that the people being killed were not "really" human'.¹⁵³ Trutz von Trotha has stated within the context of colonial and 'total' warfare that 'Because of the strict ethnocentric opposition between "us" and "them", the opponent tends morally to be no longer considered a member of the human race'. Furthermore, this indifference of the invading army to the suffering of the 'enemy', then 'naturally' extends to the vanquished population as a whole.¹⁵⁴ The unfavourable views of the British soldiers towards the Mahdists were conveyed by Carleton, who demonstrated a typical lack of compassion for the enemy in a letter home to his sister during the Dongola campaign: 'I have got a bad sore throat which I am convinced has been brought on by dead dervish. The worst time of day to smell them is at meals', further speculating: 'I wonder if all

¹⁴⁸ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 90-91.

¹⁴⁹ Farwell, *Prisoners of the Mahdi*, 310.

¹⁵⁰ Franks, 9 April 1898, SAD/403/2.

¹⁵¹ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 216.

¹⁵² See also: Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁵³ Joanna Bourke, 'Barbarisation vs Civilisation in Time of War', in George Kassimeris (ed.), *The Barbarisation of Warfare* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 27-32.

¹⁵⁴ Trutz von Trotha, "'The Fellows Can Just Starve": On Wars of "Pacification" in the African Colonies of Imperial Germany and the Concept of "Total War"', in Manfred F. Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1999), 416-20.

dead people smell as bad as dead dervish. I fancy not'.¹⁵⁵ Carleton went on to express similar disgust towards the 'savage' enemy in Sierra Leone, as discussed in the previous chapter.

When one reads accounts of the effects of British war tactics it is quite clear that they were anything but 'civilised'; 'cold' British technology essentially turned the warfare into a one-sided massacre. As Bennett states: 'Anyone who has seen the effects of shell fire – bodies ripped open, jaws torn off, and kindred horrors – may find it difficult to differentiate very markedly between accursed usages inseparable from every system of warfare, civilised and barbarous alike.'¹⁵⁶ Churchill, who was highly critical of Kitchener in particular and the methods used by the Anglo-Egyptian forces more generally, described the opening scenes of the battle thus: 'bullets were shearing through flesh, smashing and splintering bone; blood spouted from terrible wounds; valiant men were struggling on through a hell of whistling metal, exploding shells, and spurting dust – suffering, despairing, dying'.¹⁵⁷ The idea of the Mahdist 'fanatic' was clearly a political tool used to justify the campaign, as soon became evident on the battlefield; as Edward Spiers has highlighted: 'The more perceptive recognised that this was not an unruly mass of fanatics, but an organised army'.¹⁵⁸ Representations of the war as cold and distant through modern technology are significant and typical of a broader pattern of Eurocentrism that emphasises the 'civilised' methods of Western powers in comparison to 'savage' African tribes; thus underplaying the real nature of modern warfare. Churchill summed up the conflict thus: as 'probably the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over Barbarians'.¹⁵⁹ Steevens provided a revealing portrayal of the Battle of the Atbara:

in one superb sweep, near 12,000 men moved forward towards the enemy. All England and all Egypt, and the flower of the black lands beyond, Birmingham and the West Highlands, the half-regenerated children of the earth's earliest civilisation, and grinning savages from the uttermost swamps of Equatoria, muscle and machinery, lord and larrikin, Balliol and

¹⁵⁵ Carleton, 19 June 1896, IWM.

¹⁵⁶ Bennett, 'After Omdurman', 25.

¹⁵⁷ Churchill, *River War*, vol. II, 119.

¹⁵⁸ Spiers, 'Campaigning under Kitchener', 69.

¹⁵⁹ Churchill, *River War*, vol. II, 164.

Board School, the Sirdar's brain and the camel's back—all welded into one, the awful war machine went forward into action.¹⁶⁰

Steevens' description suggests that the Anglo-Egyptian army represented a bringing together of 'civilised' and 'savage' warfare; Kiernan described the methods undertaken by the Mahdists in the form of '[m]ass charges', as 'the final spasms of a dying order': as Kiernan highlighted, such tactics were finally laid to rest as a result of their devastating results in World War I.¹⁶¹ Vinay Lal highlights, within a discussion on colonialism and genocide, the importance of the 'immense disparities of power' and emphasises the British Empire's 'disequilibrium in military strength' against colonial opponents, arguing that 'The loving lyricism with which Churchill describes the battle of Omdurman ... should obscure neither the terrible tedium experienced by Kitchener's men nor the moral lessons drawn from this conflict by European observers'. This 'tedium' Lal links with the bureaucratisation of killing in reference to the work of Hannah Arendt, and states that 'the moral distancing that takes place when pulling the trigger and the filing of papers become tasks akin to one another'.¹⁶² However, such a view, comparing the slaughter of Omdurman with the role of *Schreibtischtäter* underplays the importance of the realities of face-to-face killing. The latter was very much a part of the reconquest campaign (as well as the Holocaust), and also featured in the final battle at Omdurman, notably as a result of the 'gallant but reckless charge' of the 21st Lancers, which 'accounted for nearly half of the Anglo-Egyptian fatalities at Omdurman'.¹⁶³ The importance of face-to-face killing within modern European warfare has been reemphasised by Joanna Bourke who argues the need to 'put the killing back into military history'.¹⁶⁴ As Eric Weitz has also highlighted, new technologies 'by no means eliminated face-to-face brutality'.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, 142; Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 143.

¹⁶¹ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 183.

¹⁶² Vinay Lal, 'The Concentration Camp and Development: The Past and Future of Genocide', in A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2007), 131-32; Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

¹⁶³ R. Melvin, foreword to Edward M. Spiers, 'Wars of Intervention: A Case Study - The Reconquest of the Sudan 1896-99', *Strategic and Combat Studies Institute*, 32 (1998), 5.

¹⁶⁴ Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London: Basic Books, 2000 [1999]), 2. See also: James McMillan, 'War', in Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 56.

¹⁶⁵ Eric D. Weitz, 'The Modernity of Genocides: War, Race, and Revolution in the Twentieth Century', in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 55.

Scholars have previously highlighted contradictory aspects of the British Empire, emphasising the ideological nature of such European categorisations as ‘civilised’ and ‘barbaric’.¹⁶⁶ As Kiernan has argued, the central justification of European colonialism, the ‘civilising mission’, represented ‘a feeling that expansion ought to have some ideal purpose, a goal beyond sordid greed’.¹⁶⁷ However the ‘civilising mission’ was based upon the premise that ‘Whatever a white man did must in some grotesque fashion be “civilised”’.¹⁶⁸ That the British soldiers perceived their role as a wider part of this ‘mission’ is clear from the accounts of participants in the reconquest; for example, as conveyed by Unsworth’s concluding remarks regarding the Battle of Omdurman:

It was a great day and I do not think I ever saw so much happiness and so much misery all together – for we released thousands and thousands of people but also we killed and wounded thousands and thousands of these horrid cruel Baggaras and now perhaps there will be a long peace for this miserable country which is in these parts nothing but an immense tangled jungle full of wild beasts.¹⁶⁹

British soldiers were able to comprehend their role in mass slaughter as a ‘necessity’ and this belief was informed by their understanding of the ‘barbarity’ of the ‘natives’. As E. W. C. Sandes argued: ‘Vast territories were thereby re-opened to the benefits of peace, civilisation and good government’, however, his following statement was more to the point: ‘The death of Charles Gordon was avenged, and British prestige reinstated’.¹⁷⁰ One participant in Omdurman justified his role in the slaughter thus: ‘Well, I think it has been a war in a righteous cause, as the barbarities of these Dervishes put your pet Armenian Atrocities quite in the shade.’¹⁷¹ The case of the reconquest demonstrates the contradictory nature of European colonial conflicts and the selectivity of the colonial invaders, which Kiernan fittingly calls ‘the peculiar imperial

¹⁶⁶ See for example: Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁶⁷ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 23.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 24. For more see: Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the ‘West’ and the Civilizing Mission*, German Historical Institute London: The 2005 Annual Lecture (London: German Historical Institute, 2006), 7.

¹⁶⁹ Unsworth, 13 September 1898, SAD/233/5.

¹⁷⁰ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 271.

¹⁷¹ Lethbridge, SAD/873/7. On the Armenian massacres of 1894-6 see: Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 [2005]), 51-57.

squint'.¹⁷² The hypocrisy with which Europeans labelled the 'civilised' and the 'savage' was in evidence during the reconquest and the methods used by the British clearly contradicted their justifications for invading the country in the first place, as their conduct was anything but 'civilising'. As Bourke argues, 'The words "civilisation and barbarism" were the great watchwords of the nineteenth century ... the barbaric has taken up residence in the house of the civilised. Indeed, it never left it.'¹⁷³

In order to understand the brutal policies directed at both the Mahdists and Sudanese civilians one has to turn to the racial prejudices and superiority complexes prevalent in Britain and throughout its Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. Racism was highly important to justifications for British imperialism and was clearly utilised during the campaign. Such racism extended to war correspondents, for example Burleigh, in a classic, easily-replicated assertion, stated, 'Your Arab is picturesque but poisonous' and concludes, 'He dislikes steady, hard work, is a dreamer with a deeply religious tinge, but all the same cruel and remorseless in the pursuit of any object'.¹⁷⁴ Prejudices are also evident in the accounts of many soldiers and correspondents who could not hide their disgust at what awaited them in the aftermath of the Battle of Omdurman. As one soldier recounts: 'the accursed place was left to fester and fry in its own filth and lust and blood. The reek of its abomination steamed up to heaven to justify us of our vengeance'.¹⁷⁵ As Daly has highlighted: 'That a sprawling and populous city, hours after its bombardment and occupation by an invading army, host to thousands of the wounded and dying who had escaped the carnage of the battlefield, should offend the aesthetic and moral senses of war correspondents may be surprising.'¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, many accounts expressed both disgust and fascination regarding the indigenous peoples; particularly targeting the female population. For example, as Farley travelled through the country, he commented that 'all along the waters [sic] edge raced a horde of half-demented women, completely naked except for a girdle of "boot-lace fringe" and ululuing us frantically'.¹⁷⁷ Alford and Sword summarised the female population of Dongola as being 'appallingly hideous', whilst

¹⁷² Kiernan, *European Empires*, 166; Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 275.

¹⁷³ Bourke, 'Barbarisation vs Civilisation', 37.

¹⁷⁴ Burleigh, *The Khartoum Campaign*, 84.

¹⁷⁵ Steevens, *With Kitchener to Khartum*, 309; Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 6.

¹⁷⁶ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 6-7.

¹⁷⁷ Farley, 'Recollections of the Dongola Expedition', SAD/304/2.

considering the male population ‘exceptionally handsome’.¹⁷⁸ With regards to their fellow troops, it was stated that:

One regiment of blacks was bivouacking opposite the spot where our boats were moored, so that we had ample opportunity of studying them. They were just like children, with their incessant chatter, in their honest simplicity and love of fun.¹⁷⁹

As Gustav Jahoda has highlighted, the preoccupation with these themes was typical of a wider European racism in the nineteenth century and perceptions of the indigenous peoples of the colonies and this thinking contributed to the invading troops’ ability to distinguish themselves from the indigenous populations and prevent them from being viewed as fellow human beings.¹⁸⁰ Alex Hinton argues that debates regarding the ‘savage nature’ of the indigenous populations were presented through ‘stage theory, which posited “savages” at the bottom of the hierarchy leading to “civilisation”’. Within this way of thinking, ‘the “civilised” were responsible for helping these “child-like”, “uncultivated”, “irrational” beings to “progress”’.¹⁸¹ As Hinton states, this hierarchy led to a series of binary oppositions, which ‘buttressed colonial policies that, while aimed primarily at economic exploitation and territorial aggrandisement, could be legitimated in terms of the “white man’s burden”’;¹⁸² thus upholding the logic of European imperialism and its self-assigned ‘civilising mission’. One aspect of racial categorising was the advocacy throughout the British Empire of ‘martial races’ and as Lamothe argues, informed by this way of thinking, the British often viewed Sudanese soldiers as preferable to Egyptian soldiers; looking to the future, Wingate viewed the Sudanese as a ‘martial race’ and saw the Sudanese battalions as having great potential for employment throughout the British Empire.¹⁸³ These racial categories were also encouraged by military figures key to the British imperial project, including Wolseley, whose career spanned the Indian Mutiny and warfare against the Zulus and Ashanti, the annexation of

¹⁷⁸ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 144-45.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁸⁰ See Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), particularly chs 7 and 11.

¹⁸¹ Alex Hinton, ‘Savages, Subjects, and Sovereigns: Conjunctions of Modernity, Genocide, and Colonialism’, in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn, 2010 [2008]), 443.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 443-44.

¹⁸³ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 11, 27.

Egypt after Tel-el-Kebir and then to the Sudan in an attempt to relieve Gordon.¹⁸⁴ In his article ‘The Negro as a Soldier’, Wolseley argued that

the natural instinct of the savage from the interior of Africa went far to make up for his want of intelligence as a soldier. The instinct of some breeds of dogs—the setter, pointer, and retriever—renders it easy to teach them their special work, which other species, though equally intelligent, cannot be effectively taught.¹⁸⁵

Key figures such as Wolseley, Gatacre and Kitchener who were present throughout the British colonial campaign in the Sudan represented a link between this and other campaigns. Such individuals are important regarding our understanding of a wider pattern of colonial violence throughout the Empire and their role in the continuance and development of British colonial brutality needs further investigation.

The British military clearly had a general contempt for the country and its inhabitants, although as Lamothe has argued, relations between British and Sudanese troops were marked by a complex dynamic, which ‘rather than being non-existent or exclusively racist, [was] marked by both respect and disdain’.¹⁸⁶ However, special attention was paid to the Baggara tribesmen who were seen as ‘fierce, war-like, vicious and treacherous’¹⁸⁷ and were described by Wingate as the ‘Red Indians of the Sudan’.¹⁸⁸ Franks stated in relation to the enemy having been pursued into the desert:

I don’t see how the infantry can possible escape [sic], and I fancy those who don’t die will drift in and give themselves up. Except of course the [Baggara], who for an excellent reason are not at all likely to come in. A [Baggara] is looked upon as equivalent to a mad dog out here. He is the man who has laid desolate and de-populated all this country which was once prosperous and full of people ... Destroyed and ruined those districts and butchered men, women and children and revelled in horrors of the most awful description. *So he carries his own death warrant in his name.*¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 19; Adrian Preston (ed.), *In Relief of Gordon: Lord Wolseley’s Campaign Journal of the Khartoum Relief Expedition, 1884-1885* (London: Hutchinson, 1967); Spiers, ‘The Late Victorian Army’, 191.

¹⁸⁵ Garnet Wolseley, ‘The Negro as a Soldier’, *Fortnightly Review*, 44 (1888), 689.

¹⁸⁶ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 3.

¹⁸⁷ Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 161.

¹⁸⁸ Wingate cited in *ibid.*, 161.

¹⁸⁹ Franks, 9 April 1898, SAD/403/2: emphasis added.

This viewpoint appears to have been shared by many Sudanese soldiers, as *The Times* correspondent E. F. Knight argued, ‘They hate the Baggara, for very good reasons, and were they not carefully kept in hand would give the men of that tribe no quarter, and would kill the wounded outright, regarding them, and rightly so, as noxious reptiles’.¹⁹⁰ Franks made it quite clear that whilst the Baggara could not expect mercy if they tried to surrender, the ‘Blacks’ would be welcomed as they ‘make very fine soldiers in our Black regiments. We had a lot of Firkah captives fighting gallantly for us yesterday’.¹⁹¹ Acts of revenge seem to have been encouraged and condoned by the British; Keown-Boyd claims that during an attack prior to the Atbara battle on 25 March, troops were despatched to attack Mahmud’s headquarters at Shendy ‘the object being not only to destroy the place and its small garrison but to hamper Mahmud’s line of retreat and further demoralise his army by capturing their women and other belongings’.¹⁹² In the aftermath of Omdurman, Lethbridge claimed that ‘There was no resistance to speak of in the town, because part of the army had rushed back to the town during the night and the Yaalins [sic] amongst them, seeing the way the fight was going, turned and slaughtered the Baggaras and other Dervishes’.¹⁹³ The British were keen to exploit local tensions in their utilisation of divide and rule strategies. Not only were Sudanese soldiers recruited into the Egyptian army because they were ‘widely regarded as the best fighting material in the region’, it was also the case that ‘they had come to represent a military gain or loss in a zero-sum game taking place between the Egyptian Army and Mahdist forces’.¹⁹⁴

A further demonstration of the inconsistent approach of British colonialism can be found in Britain’s experimentation with new and controversial weaponry during the reconquest, including the use of lyddite shells,¹⁹⁵ which proved to be devastatingly effective, particularly against the basic weapons of spears and ill-maintained rifles of the Mahdists. As Burleigh stated, ‘there was to be a new cartridge case for the Omdurman campaign’, which was known as the ‘man-stopper’.¹⁹⁶ The contradictory nature of British colonial policies is made clear by the use of dum-dum bullets and the

¹⁹⁰ E. F. Knight, *Letters from the Sudan* (London: Macmillan, 1897), 135; Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 58.

¹⁹¹ Franks, 9 April 1898, SAD/403/2.

¹⁹² Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 193.

¹⁹³ Lethbridge, 4 September 1898, SAD/873/7.

¹⁹⁴ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 27.

¹⁹⁵ See: Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 462, n3.

¹⁹⁶ Burleigh, *The Khartoum Campaign*, 22.

debates which ensued; explosive bullets had already been banned as a result of the St. Petersburg Declaration in 1868, a decision that was justified on the grounds that

... the progress of civilisation should have the effect of alleviating, as much as possible, the calamities of war; that the only legitimate object which States should endeavour to accomplish during war is to weaken the military force of the enemy; that for this purpose, it is sufficient to disable the greatest number of men; that this object would be exceeded by the employment of arms which uselessly aggravate the sufferings of disabled men, or render their death inevitable.¹⁹⁷

The use of these bullets, it was concluded, was contrary to ‘the laws of humanity’.¹⁹⁸ However, in the aftermath of the Chitral conflict in 1895, British authorities advocated the use of explosive bullets in colonial warfare. This usage was justified in Britain with typically racist arguments regarding the ‘nature’ of ‘savages’, as Spiers explains: ‘The enemies whom Britain encountered were not armies from the European countries who had signed the St. Petersburg Declaration, but “fanatical natives”, “savages”, and “barbarians”’.¹⁹⁹ It seems that concerns regarding this deviation from the declaration had more to do with fears that explosive bullets would later be used in European warfare, rather than any moral objection to their utilisation in the colonies.²⁰⁰ For example, whilst Professor Friedrich von Esmarch expressed his horror regarding the effects of these bullets, he conceded that their use might be excusable in a war with ‘fanatical barbarians’.²⁰¹ Furthermore, justifications for the use of the illegal bullets turned to racist arguments such as the following: ‘Civilised man is much more susceptible to injury than savages ... the savage, like the tiger, is not so impressionable, and will go on fighting even when desperately wounded’.²⁰² Such arguments were typical at the time and can be seen as part of the ‘scientific’ racism of the latter half of the nineteenth century, which appeared to be given credence through endorsements by

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 160.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Edward M. Spiers, ‘The Use of the Dum Dum Bullet in Colonial Warfare’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 4:1 (1975), 7; this continues to be standard argument, as made clear by George Kassimeris, ‘The Barbarisation of Warfare: A User’s Manual’, in Kassimeris (ed.), *The Barbarisation of Warfare*, 17.

²⁰⁰ Spiers, ‘Dum Dum Bullet’, 7-8. See also, Wagner, ‘Scattering of Death’, 9-10.

²⁰¹ See Spiers, ‘Dum Dum Bullet’, 8.

²⁰² Surgeon Major-General J. B. Hamilton cited in Spiers, ‘Dum Dum Bullet’, 7. See also, Bennett, *Downfall of the Dervishes*, 228-29

members of the medical profession. As Mark Levene describes, the British were successful in their objections to the criminalisation of the bullets at the Hague Convention in 1899, based on the heretofore mentioned argument that ordinary bullets were inadequate in a colonial context; evidently the British saw their one-sided victory in the Sudan as justification for the use of this brutal means of warfare.²⁰³ As Kiernan put it, they were left 'to be used against wild animals or wild men.'²⁰⁴ To be sure, Gatacre was so intent on utilising the effects of explosive bullets against the Mahdists that he ordered his men to file the tips off their ammunition to give them the same effect as a dum-dum bullet, as Meiklejohn recalled: 'The General [Gatacre] says that our bullets have not got sufficient "stopping power" for savages, so we are to file off the tops to make them expand'²⁰⁵ and as one soldier concluded: 'we have just finished the last box to-day; so that is 300 boxes of Dum Dums for Fuzzy Wuzzy to stomach'.²⁰⁶

The concept of 'civilised warfare' is important to our understanding of the prejudice with which the British engaged in colonial wars; such conflicts were underpinned by imperial ideology which presented the indigenous population as 'barbaric' and 'inferior' and thus not subject to the same 'standards' of European warfare; hence the development of weaponry purely designed for use in the colonies.²⁰⁷ As Alex Bellamy explains, 'societies had to fulfil the "standards of civilisation" in order to enjoy the protection of civilised rules. If they did not, they fell outside the moral order'.²⁰⁸ Geoffrey Best has argued that there was an expectation that the 'progress of civilisation' would lead to 'less inhumanity in warfare'. However, this optimism was unfounded and 'From St Petersburg to The Hague it was downhill all the way'.²⁰⁹ The use of explosive bullets highlights the different standard between colonial warfare and 'civilised' European wars.²¹⁰ The distinction that the British troops made between

²⁰³ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 266; Spiers, 'Dum Dum Bullet', 6. It has also been claimed that 'the Germans used dum-dum bullets in order to terrorise their [colonial] opponents psychologically', see: von Trotha, 'The Fellows Can Just Starve', 433.

²⁰⁴ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 157.

²⁰⁵ Meiklejohn in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 34. Gatacre would also go on to fight in the Boer War, as did many men involved in the Sudan campaign.

²⁰⁶ Cited in Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2004), 145.

²⁰⁷ David Killingray, 'Colonial Warfare in West Africa, 1870-1914', in J. A. de Moor and H. L. Wesseling (eds), *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 155.

²⁰⁸ Alex J. Bellamy, 'Mass Killing and the Politics of Legitimacy: Empire and the Ideology of Selective Extermination', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 58:2 (2012), 165.

²⁰⁹ Best, *Humanity in Warfare*, 160.

²¹⁰ See Bellamy, 'Mass Killing'.

themselves and the ‘natives’ is in evidence both in the tactics they used, and throughout their diaries and correspondence.

Bennett discussed the moral basis of Kitchener’s military tactics and considered the extent to which British military exploits were subject to international law. Bennett argued that Britain remained morally bound to laws such as the Geneva Convention of 1864, which included the protection of the enemy wounded, even if imperial wars were not being fought against signatories of the legislation.²¹¹ In the context of the Zulu War, Mark Lieven has demonstrated how ‘genocide came close to being adopted as official policy’ by the British, in the face of defeat.²¹² Lieven’s article shows how practices such as the killing of wounded enemy soldiers were already being used extensively and considers the development of these practices as part of ‘the logic of European imperialism’.²¹³ In relation to the contravention of official standards of warfare, Bennett stated:

To assert that because Dervishes or Zulus never signed the Geneva Convention or the *Projet* of the Brussels Conference we are at liberty to pillage their villages after surrender or to kill their unarmed wounded is simply monstrous.²¹⁴

Interestingly however, Bennett privately sought to remove himself from the article in a letter dated 2 March 1899 to Slatin. Bennett explained that he had been approached ‘by one of our greatest international lawyers and a prominent member of our House of Commons to write an article on the conditions of warfare which exist in conflict’ and stated that his ‘only wish was to indicate how absurd it was to make international rules about warfare which none of the nations of Europe even keep’²¹⁵ and that ‘[t]he whole drift of the article has been to a great extent misunderstood and misrepresented’.²¹⁶ Bennett’s private withdrawal from an article so strong in content is peculiar; however, it does not appear that he tried to distance himself from the article publicly and his book published the same year also supports the views which were articulated in his article; he

²¹¹ Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, 18-33. Britain’s actions in the Sudan certainly contravened the Institute of International Law’s *The Laws of War on Land* (Oxford: Institute of International Law, 1880): <https://www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/140?OpenDocument>. Accessed 21 April 2016.

²¹² Michael Lieven, ‘“Butchering the Brutes All Over the Place”: Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879’, *History*, 18 (1999), 630.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 614.

²¹⁴ Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, 19.

²¹⁵ Bennett to Slatin, 2 March 1899, SAD/432/100.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

argued in reference to the massacre of the enemy wounded that, 'It is worth remembering, too, that the mutilation of the human body is not the exclusive monopoly of barbaric peoples'.²¹⁷ Whilst Bennett was certainly more sympathetic than most contemporary observers, he too expressed contradictory views regarding British colonial warfare. On the one hand, Bennett had the prescience to state that,

Sorrow is the same the world over and the terrific carnage of the day's fighting had taken away the bread-winner and protector from thousands of poor homes in the Sudan, and doomed many a household to starvation.²¹⁸

On the other hand, he justified the reconquest thus 'Mahdism has vanished, never to return, and once more the arms of Great Britain have advanced the cause of civilisation and "made for righteousness" in the history of the century'.²¹⁹ Regardless of Bennett's possible regrets with reference to his publications, there is clearly evidence to support key aspects of his claims and the debate that ensued proved instructive. For example, Charles à Court responded to the article, stating that it was 'a confused jumble of hearsay evidence, upon which no one would hang a dog, mixed up with twaddle concerning international law, which has nothing to do with a savage tribe which was neither a nation nor had any law'.²²⁰ For some, the idea of indigenous populations in the colonies being protected by the same laws as Europeans was incomprehensible. Burleigh, who was also present at the battle as a war correspondent, strongly refuted Bennett's claims regarding the slaughter of the wounded, as well as the occurrence of looting in the battle's aftermath. Burleigh argued that 'To set up a pretext that such monsters are entitled to the grace and consideration of the most humane laws, is to beggar commonsense and yap intolerable humbug', and continues 'Yet British self-respect was such, Mr Bennett to the contrary notwithstanding, that the Dervishes were treated as men, and not as wild beasts'.²²¹

Historians have previously identified the exploitation of the famine conditions of the local population in the country as early as the 1880s on military and political grounds; famine conditions were created in the country by the drought and low Nile of 1888²²² and Holt has made clear the political importance of the ensuing famine. Holt

²¹⁷ Bennett, *Downfall of the Dervishes*, 180.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

²²⁰ Charles à Court, 'Omdurman', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 January 1899.

²²¹ Burleigh, *The Khartoum Campaign*, 257.

²²² See: Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 133-38.

describes how the local tribes in the Tūkar district hoped for the restoration of Egyptian rule with the decline of Mahdist power in the area, and has argued that ‘At this time trade with local tribes was proceeding through Suakin and the import of grain was to some extent alleviating the hardships caused by famine. The military authorities were strongly opposed to this policy, as it amounted to feeding the enemy. The political authorities thought differently, since it was desired to win over the Mahdia’.²²³ However, as Mike Davis summarises, Kitchener – with ‘cruel genius’ – ‘simply ignored his civilian superiors and cut off the food supply to eastern Sudan. The tribes starved and Kitchener won easy fame defeating the remnants of the jihad at Turkar in February 1890.’²²⁴ Serels highlights the disparity between British and Mahdist supplies, which the British used to their advantage to curtail Mahdist military successes. In contrast, the British could rely on unlimited Egyptian and international resources.²²⁵ Hence, ‘The benefits of food insecurity’ had been recognised in the 1880s and 1890s²²⁶ and were used against the Mahdist state, as ‘part of a process that stripped victim communities of their resources and that resulted in a recurring, inter-generational cycle of famine and food insecurity.’²²⁷

Clearly, the famine conditions in the country were further worsened for the general population by the reconquest and the Mahdist army also frequently raided towns to support their war effort. However, if these forces were subsequently defeated by Anglo-Egyptian troops, everything that was left behind was viewed by the British as the spoils of war and was not returned to the local community, thus making no attempt to alleviate the plight of the local population.²²⁸ As Wingate reported in 1897, the Mahdist force based in Metemmeh was

living entirely on the grain obtained by foraging parties on both banks. For this purpose Mahmud had 14 nuggers plying between Shabluka and Kitayab seizing grain supplies in the villages. ... It is the custom of the villagers to secrete a reserve of grain by burying it in the ground, and gradually these supplies are being unearthed by the foraging parties and brought in, whilst the unfortunate villagers, to escape the depredations of

²²³ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 190-91.

²²⁴ Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 134.

²²⁵ Serels, ‘Feasting on Famines’, 65-66.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²²⁸ Hunter, ‘Sudan Campaign May-Oct 1898’, SAD/964/3.

the Baggara horsemen and Jehadia, have huddled together on the numerous islands in the neighbourhood, and are suffering great privations.²²⁹

Hence, the local population were caught in the middle and suffered greatly as a result of the conflict. In order to stave off the Mahdists across the riverbank, the British provided 'a liberal supply of firearms to natives'²³⁰ and disarmament would later prove to be 'a long and difficult task' for the new government under the Condominium Agreement²³¹ and contributed to the development of 'a state of anarchy' in certain areas of the country in the aftermath of the reconquest.²³² Clearly, Kitchener at the very least, exploited the scarcity of food to his advantage against the enemy and it seems that he was well aware that many of the Mahdist troops were starving in the lead up to the Battle of the Atbara.²³³ Furthermore, reports on the battle make clear that one military tactic was to drive the enemy into the desert to 'perish'.²³⁴ The presence of the Anglo-Egyptian troops was also a burden upon the local population as they were put under pressure to provide food for the troops and little sympathy was shown if supplies were not forthcoming. Hunter complained about the local population's behaviour in Berber in 1897 and stated: 'The dervishes plundered a good deal, but I have no doubt that the scum of Berber had a good look in too. The Sirdar made a contract for 1000 ardebs of doora [sic] divided amongst certain Sheikhs.' He goes on to complain that 'Up to date, not one grain has been delivered [from 1000 previously], nor is there any sign of it coming, nor is there any intention on the part of the sheikhs to deliver it, nor did any such intention exist in their minds when they signed. Such is my firm opinion.' As punishment, he stated that 'Failing immediate compliance with the orders, I propose to seize their property and send them for disposal, after flogging them here, to the Sirdar.'²³⁵ However, it is clear that the city of Omdurman was under great strain with regards to food supplies, a situation that was worsened by the presence of an 'army of

²²⁹ *SIR* 56.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ See: Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 11-18.

²³² *Ibid.*, 10.

²³³ For example: Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 210; Cox in Meredith (ed.), *Omdurman Diaries*, 68-69. Although, Mahmud claimed on his capture that supplies were not as low as Kitchener was led to believe: Telegram from Cromer, April 9 1898, TNA FO78/5049.

²³⁴ See: Benson, 'Report on Operations on the Atbara 12-17 April 1898', WO32/6143; Parsons, 12 October 1898, 'Report on Operations of Kassala Troops', WO32/6143.

²³⁵ Hunter, 'For Information of Sirdar and Chief of Staff', 24 September 1897, SAD/964/3.

some 50,000 in and around Omdurman [which] had to be fed, not to speak of the civilian population.²³⁶

The Anglo-Egyptian campaign was presented as one of liberation for the Sudanese, as Burleigh's following claim makes clear: 'the rehabilitation of the country through the setting up of just government will be in the nature of discharging a duty long incumbent on Great Britain'.²³⁷ Alford and Sword stated in the aftermath of the Anglo-Egyptian victory in Dongola that 'effectual steps were made to morally reclaim the province', although they failed to recognise the suspect method of trying to achieve this aim by placing 'The whole country ... under military law'.²³⁸ In response to the dire condition of the lands they claimed that it 'had been allowed by its wretched inhabitants to go almost out of cultivation, and to relapse into desert. They had preferred to remain idle rather than sow for the Dervish to reap and had only cultivated little patches sufficient for their own use', however 'under the new order of things, they not only provide for their own use, but cultivate large areas for export purposes';²³⁹ the extent to which this was beneficial and 'liberating' to the local population is however questionable. Despite the devastation wrought throughout the surrounding area, Kitchener concluded that the Dongola expedition had resulted in the end of 'constant Dervish raids and attacks on the villages ... and to relieve, to their intense delight, the large suffering population of the Province of Dongola from the barbarous and tyrannical rule of savage and fanatical Baggaras'.²⁴⁰

One aspect of oppression that the British emphasised was the Mahdists' support of slavery in the Sudan.²⁴¹ However, as Daly has pointed out, the Condominium Agreement created by the Anglo-Egyptians to establish a new government in the country went out of its way to 'prohibit trade in slaves, not slavery itself'.²⁴² Furthermore he states that due to the problem of a labour shortage, the Condominium adopted 'a pragmatic policy that decried slavery, took some steps to root out the trade, but simultaneously upheld and even enforced the continuation of domestic slavery'.²⁴³ As Serels has highlighted, the number of slaves in the Sudan at this time is difficult to determine as 'Junior officials were explicitly instructed by their superiors not to use the

²³⁶ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 212.

²³⁷ Burleigh, *The Khartoum Campaign*, 41-42.

²³⁸ Alford and Sword, *Egyptian Soudan*, 157.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁴⁰ Kitchener to Cromer, 30 September 1890, TNA FO78/4895.

²⁴¹ Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 15.

²⁴² Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 18, 232.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 231.

term “slave” in any official correspondence’; as he highlights, ‘Senior Anglo-Egyptian officials had good reason to hide their activities because, under their watch, tens of thousands of slaves were imported into Northern Nilotic Sudan each year’.²⁴⁴ Britain’s approach to slavery in the Sudan in the nineteenth century was typically contradictory; on the one hand, the trading of slaves between Egypt and the Sudan was viewed as ‘vivid proof that, without British vigilance, Egypt would relapse into despotism’,²⁴⁵ and on the other, Britain did very little to make abolition feasible. In Omdurman the new administration was now responsible for thousands of starving inhabitants, including the 38,000 prisoners that were taken in the battle, as well as the families of the 11,000 Mahdist soldiers who were killed and the 4,000 that had fled with the Khalifa in the battle’s aftermath. However, as Serels argues, ‘Anglo-Egyptian officials were unwilling to provide free grain subsidies to the large dependent civilian population and, beginning in December 1898, starving war captives and their families were put to work’, building Kitchener’s vision for ‘the new Anglo-Egyptian capital, turning productive farms into building plots, roads, the Governor’s Palace, Gordon Memorial College, and houses of worship’.²⁴⁶

Correspondence from Wolseley, author of *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, was notably lacking in humanitarian sentiment and he demonstrated his disdain for the region in his correspondence. Writing to Slatin, Wolseley expressed his regrets regarding his time in the country thus:

At one time I lived in the hope of being able to destroy every vestige of the Mahdi’s town, and no one can know better than you do how nearly that wish was realised. ... I rejoice to think that you are no longer compelled to live amongst savages and that you have come home safe....²⁴⁷

M. G. Talbot’s comments to Wingate, in the aftermath of the Battle of the Atbara in the area of Korti, demonstrate the negative effects of the occupation:

We’ve got in most of the dura [sic]. I fancy we’ve skimmed them pretty well. I hope they will have enough left for seed. In most places I fancy they

²⁴⁴ Serels, ‘Feasting on Famines’, 205-207.

²⁴⁵ Eve M. Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan* (London: University of California Press, 2003), 3.

²⁴⁶ Serels, ‘Feasting on Famines’, 191-92. For a discussion of the complicated relationship between Egypt and the Sudan, and the former as a ‘colonised coloniser’, see: Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism*, 6. Osterhammel, *Europe*, 27.

²⁴⁷ Wolseley to Slatin, 25 August 1895, SAD/439/599.

are alright [sic], but I believe the requisition has fallen hardly on some districts. I am sending them in to Omdurman pretty often and expect a good many refugees now.²⁴⁸

Clearly little was done to improve the situation as Talbot's update to Wingate the following year demonstrates: 'People live upon water nuts and are dying in large numbers. No dura [sic] there and very sad especially as it is all due to the Khalifa having been allowed to stop where he is. Grain is still very dear here, and there doesn't seem to be any prospect of its getting cheaper.'²⁴⁹ Thus, it is clear that the reconquest was not undertaken to benefit the local population and after victory, Kitchener went on to administer the country to the detriment of its inhabitants: for example the renewed famine in the country in the years 1898-9 was further exacerbated by the arrival of government officials who cornered the market, thus pushing up the prices; the appropriation of camels which would usually have been used to bring grain to the markets, were now employed in brick carrying for Kitchener's building designs; Kitchener even claimed that the famine helped in acquiring cheap labour for the building of new infrastructure and allegedly stated, 'The natives around Goz Abu Guma are starving ... and you can get as many as you like for a handful of dhurra a day'.²⁵⁰ Kitchener's priority was clearly the building of the new city.²⁵¹ With regard to the exploitation of local labour for the building of the railway, as proposed by Kitchener, it was stated that 'The great advantage of his proposal is that the line, if made at once, would be practically made by corvée labour', arguing that in any case the line would be built at some stage and 'could never be made nearly as cheaply as at present'.²⁵² Clearly, Kitchener took little action to alleviate the dire conditions throughout the country and he also expressed his belief that the famine conditions would be of help in capturing the Khalifa,²⁵³ who had been on the run since the British took Omdurman and was killed during the Battle of Umm Diwaykarāt on 24 November 1899, in which, 'Once again the machine-guns won the day'.²⁵⁴ Although, as Daly highlights, Wingate, who was to become both the new Sirdar and General-Governor of the Sudan, 'was

²⁴⁸ Talbot to Wingate, 19 April 1898, SAD/266/4.

²⁴⁹ Talbot to Wingate, 4 April 1899, SAD/269/4.

²⁵⁰ Cited in Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 19.

²⁵¹ Gabriel Warburg, *The Sudan under Wingate: Administration in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1899-1916* (London: Frank Cass, 1971), 3.

²⁵² J. Gorst to Cromer, Egypt Confidential No. 4 (1898), TNA FO78/5050.

²⁵³ See Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 19; Warburg, *The Sudan under Wingate*, 5.

²⁵⁴ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 243; for a firsthand account see: A. Cameron, *In Pursuit of the Khalifa*, SAD/622/6.

never to forget that militant Mahdism had been beaten down, it had not given up ... and that more than Maxim guns would be needed to win the battle for the respect of the Sudanese'.²⁵⁵ The country was therefore to be ruled vigilantly and severely under the Condominium; nevertheless, British propaganda continued to take a tone of 'glowing self-congratulation', arguing the 'benefits' of the reconquest for the Sudanese.²⁵⁶

With Britain's renewed efforts to defeat the Mahdia in 1896, the treatment of the local population had already proven to be severe; a Sheikh, who had assisted Digna largely in the matter of supplies was tried by summary court martial and initially sentenced to death, although Kitchener then commuted this sentence to five years' imprisonment; it was stated that this harsh sentencing was believed to have 'produced a profound and salutary impression on the district.' Furthermore, the Gemilab tribe was then informed that 'his ultimate treatment might largely depend upon their behaviour'.²⁵⁷ Serels has also conveyed the harsh treatment meted out to inhabitants on the frontier prior to the campaign; for example in 1889 amidst the famine Anglo-Egyptian military officers found that two merchants at Wadi Halfa, 'Abd al-Jabar Amwad and Ibrahim Muhammad, were selling supplies to a Mahdist expedition and were subsequently executed'.²⁵⁸ Scholars have also described a minor disturbance in 1899, which involved two of the Mahdi's sons and one of his Khalifa's, Muhammad Sharif, in which three members of the Egyptian Army were injured. In the aftermath the three men were put under house arrest until they were tried by court martial; they were found guilty and subsequently shot. As Peter Clark states, 'Even the Khalifa had restrained himself from shedding the blood of the Mahdi's family. But there was no public response or protest'.²⁵⁹ It is therefore clear that Kitchener was determined to rule harshly, 'fearing that any leniency might be interpreted as weakness'.²⁶⁰

The current historiography does acknowledge the controversies that arose in the aftermath of the reconquest to some extent; comparisons of the conflict have even been made with Operation Desert Storm in the Gulf in 1991.²⁶¹ In Spiers' reappraisal of the reconquest, he briefly acknowledges the killing of the wounded, and limits these occurrences to the actions of soldiers who 'followed orders and bayoneted those

²⁵⁵ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 11.

²⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, 20-21.

²⁵⁷ Harry Lamb to Salisbury, 26 May 1896, TNA FO78/4894.

²⁵⁸ Serels, 'Feasting on Famines', 76.

²⁵⁹ See Clark, 'The Battle of Omdurman', 216; Warburg, *The Sudan under Wingate*, 6.

²⁶⁰ Warburg, *The Sudan under Wingate*, 6.

²⁶¹ Daniel P. Bolger, 'The Ghosts of Omdurman', *Parameters*, 21 (1991), 28-39.

feigning injury or those injured who still posed a threat'.²⁶² Whilst he references Bennett's article denouncing this policy, he does not attempt to engage with the contemporary debates surrounding these claims. Furthermore, he defends British conduct regarding the poor medical treatment of the wounded, stating that 'Contrary to Mr Bennett's subsequent claims, the dervish wounded were not totally neglected. Officers ... gave food and water to the dervish wounded, doctors administered first aid in field hospitals, and a central hospital was established to treat the wounded in Omdurman'.²⁶³ However, for those who remained on the battlefield, there was to be no aid, and as Spiers himself highlights, British units were sent home while the neglected wounded were left for dead along the riverbank.²⁶⁴ Zulfo merely states that the individual resistance offered by the wounded after the battle 'led finally to another of the features of the war – the killing of the wounded even after their surrender'.²⁶⁵ Daly perhaps devotes the most attention to the issue of killing the enemy wounded and he addresses the accusations made in Bennett's article, particularly regarding the destruction of the Mahdi's tomb and looting; within his discussion, he acknowledges that the 'killing of the wounded soldiers on the day of battle pales in comparison with the horrific neglect, related by Churchill and others, of the wounded left on the battlefield'.²⁶⁶ Keown-Boyd makes no attempt to hide the brutality of the campaign, claiming that these tactics were a normal part of Anglo-Sudanese warfare; he accepts the killing of the wounded, in Churchill's words, as 'the customary Soudanese precautions' and emphasises the overriding importance of economic considerations in explaining the campaign's military tactics. Keown-Boyd concludes that 'the campaign had been an object lesson in the maximum utilisation of limited resources'.²⁶⁷ In contrast, Holt acknowledges the debates thus: 'The immense bloodshed caused criticism in Britain, despite the general emotional response of exultation at the overthrow of barbarism and the avenging of Gordon' and he also discusses the controversy caused by Kitchener's treatment of the Mahdist's tomb.²⁶⁸ Hence, there has been a failure within the historiography to deal with the wider implications and issues regarding the British campaign and conduct of British soldiers.

²⁶² Spiers, 'Campaigning under Kitchener', 72. See also: idem, *Victorian Soldier in Africa*, 147.

²⁶³ Ibid., 74.

²⁶⁴ Medical Officer S. L. Cummins cited in ibid., 74.

²⁶⁵ Zulfo, *Karari*, 233.

²⁶⁶ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 3.

²⁶⁷ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 243. Churchill, *River War*, vol. II, 154-55.

²⁶⁸ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 240-41.

These events need to be addressed within a wider framework of mass violence. Only a select number of historians have acknowledged the sheer brutality involved in Kitchener's campaign and there has been no thorough investigation into these claims to-date. Levene has discussed the case and comes to the conclusion that 'for all its racial nastiness, [Kitchener's] campaign did stop short of outright genocide'.²⁶⁹ However, Levene does not elaborate on the controversies of the reconquest and the brutal tactics of violence that the campaign involved; instead he focuses on Kitchener's exploitation of the famine conditions in the country. Nevertheless, Levene includes the reconquest within a review of a 'pattern of *fin-de-siècle* genocidal or sub-genocidal reactions to revolt', which he concludes were 'not simply a series of coincidences'.²⁷⁰ The timing of the conflict is important within the context of the development of European imperialism and the 'Scramble for Africa' in which Britain's dominance was already waning at the end of the nineteenth century. As Levene argues, during this time, 'the iron-fist generals, the ones who were prepared to contemplate radical solutions to colonial insurrections, replaced those who operated by the book'.²⁷¹ As the present study demonstrates, one can certainly include Kitchener within this analysis. Other examples of brutality at this time include British involvement in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion (1900-1).²⁷² Clearly the practices of violence against the Zulu were also relevant in this case as discussed above regarding the massacring of the enemy wounded.

Historians have debated the true grounds for the reconquest and have tended to focus on the events leading up to the war, particularly within the context of international relations, the Fashoda Incident,²⁷³ and its wider implications for Europe. Factors that are key to understanding the escalation of the campaign's violence include: the role played by fear of external threat, concerns regarding international prestige in the face of potential defeat and the importance of the humiliating withdrawal of Egyptian and British forces in 1885; it is clear that the advocacy of avenging Gordon was a key propaganda tool, which proved highly effective. In the context of this historical

²⁶⁹ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 260.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 269.

²⁷² On the Boxer Rebellion see chapter 5.

²⁷³ David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987); see also: J. F. V. Keiger, 'Omdurman, Fashoda and Franco-British Relations', in Spiers (ed.), *Sudan*, 163-76. For a study of French colonial violence in the Sudan see: Bertrand Taithe, *The Killer Trail: A Colonial Scandal in the Heart of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 [2009]), in which massacres, collective punishment, scorched earth and looting were routinely undertaken in an approach of 'constant brutalisation', 22.

background of failure and the mounting international pressure felt within the Empire at this time, it is clear that the British had no intention of leaving the country defeated for a second time. Thus, an understanding of the international context is essential to an explanation of the conflict. As Levene highlights, the importance of the humiliating defeat suffered by the Italians at the hands of the Abyssinian army in 1896, as well as international rivalries in the area were important and he concludes that:

Kitchener, thus, *had* to crush the [Mahdia], in the Sudan, not only because it was an affront to British rule but also because the alternative was to allow the French to extend their control from west Africa and ... block off British access to the strategic headwaters of the Nile.²⁷⁴

Heather Sharkey has also highlighted the context of the Mahdist victory in 1885 as ‘a blow at British prestige’ at a time when ‘European powers were beginning to partition the African continent in the rush to expand imperial territories’.²⁷⁵ Paradoxically, a driving force of the British imperial project was an inferiority complex, which included the belief that imperial defeat was representative of a wider failure that threatened the entire project. As Levene has argued, European colonialists’ ‘greatest fear’ was ‘that they would be shown not to be the all-conquering, invincible masters after all’.²⁷⁶ In this instance, the fact that British forces could be defeated had already been ‘proven’ in 1885 and they were therefore even more determined to defeat the Mahdists.

It is evident that the reconquest cannot be explained purely by concerns for Egyptian security; whilst Egypt may have benefitted, this had been the case for the last twelve years. It has even been claimed that ‘Egyptian interests in the Upper Nile played no role in the government’s considerations’²⁷⁷ and Daly states that the reconquest ‘was (correctly) seen as a campaign undertaken in pursuit of British rather than Egyptian interests, and partly to forestall European criticism of British expansionism’.²⁷⁸ In any case, Italian requests for ‘moral support’ in the Sudan and Abyssinia in the wake of the ‘Italian débâcle at Adowa’ on 1 March 1896 and the Mahdist threat to the Italians at

²⁷⁴ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 265: emphasis in original.

²⁷⁵ Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 5.

²⁷⁶ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 265.

²⁷⁷ As highlighted by Holt, *Mahdist State*, 223; see also: Sandes, *Royal Engineers*, 193; Warburg, *The Sudan under Wingate*, 1.

²⁷⁸ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 11.

Kassala provided Britain with the pretext to re-enter the country.²⁷⁹ The reconquest did lead to some isolated criticism in Britain; for example, it was argued that attempts to extend the British Empire in Africa were

not at our own cost, it is not with our own blood, that we are laying the foundations of this empire. It is the cost and with the lives of the poor Egypt fellaheen—whom we have undertaken to protect—that this addition to British power is to be made. In Africa we are extending our borders with the blood and money of subject races.²⁸⁰

The Committee of International Arbitration and Peace Association also voiced their concerns to Salisbury that British actions might antagonise other European powers, forcing Britain into either ‘national humiliation or the prospect and peril of war’.²⁸¹

As chapter 1 argues, episodes of mass violence can be viewed as one part of a wider phenomenon and considerations of genocidal ‘moments’ of potentiality²⁸² are of value – particularly in the context of colonialism – with regards to identifying key instances in which genocide can become a policy option, even if this is not realised.²⁸³ The case of the reconquest of the Sudan and the policies that were implemented in the wake of the British victory can be viewed as part of a process of violence which was potentially genocidal, but which was ultimately contained. It is clear that Kitchener’s policies led to massacres and other excessive violence and these actions are part of a wider European tradition of violence. While it seems unlikely that Kitchener gave *explicit* orders to massacre the wounded and those trying to surrender – although such claims were made²⁸⁴ – it is clear that troops were able to freely interpret his orders and that there were moments where the Anglo-Egyptian troops had ‘free reign’. As Keown-Boyd has stated regarding the killing of the wounded, it was not ‘convincingly discouraged by British officers of the Egyptian Army’,²⁸⁵ and as Bennett highlighted,

²⁷⁹ Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘Kitchener and the Politics of Command’, in Spiers (ed.), *Sudan*, 35; Kimberley to Cromer, 15 February 1895, FO633/114; Holt, *Mahdist State*, 223.

²⁸⁰ Farrer, ‘England and Egypt’, *The Times*, 6 January 1898, FO78/5049.

²⁸¹ International Arbitration and Peace Association to Salisbury, 28 July 1897, FO78/4895.

²⁸² Levene, *Rise of the West*, 52.

²⁸³ A. Dirk Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust’, in Moses and Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide*, 171.

²⁸⁴ Before his death in October 1898, Lt. H. V. Fison claimed that Kitchener gave orders prior to the battle that ‘all wounded Dervishes passed over had to be bayoneted’: cited in Emery, *Marching Over Africa*, 171.

²⁸⁵ Keown-Boyd, *A Good Dusting*, 240.

‘certainly no protest was made’.²⁸⁶ Fundamentally, the responsibility for the campaign was in the hands of Cromer, to whom Kitchener was answerable. Cromer has been described as:

some kind of Napoleonic figure: the embodiment of cold administrative rationality – with the important difference that any ambition to ‘liberate’ the indigenous population had now disappeared. The ‘civilising’ of Egypt served no other interests than those of the occupying power....²⁸⁷

Yehouda Shenhav has recently discussed Cromer within the context of Hannah Arendt’s work regarding imperial bureaucracy and her thesis on the ‘banality of evil’ and Shenhav compares the alleged similarities between Cromer and Adolf Eichmann in particular.²⁸⁸ Shenhav highlights the foundations of imperial and Nazi bureaucracies which were based on race, arbitrary rule with ‘states of exception’, and moral aloofness. According to Shenhav, Arendt ‘argued that the dangerous liaisons between race and bureaucracy had unleashed extraordinary power and destruction, all the more alarming as they were “bathed in an aura of rationality and civilisation”’.²⁸⁹ The flexible and arbitrary nature of colonial rule further increased British power throughout its colonies; as Arendt argued, ‘The only “law” [these men] obeyed was the “law” of expansion, and the only proof of their “lawfulness” was success’.²⁹⁰

As Holt has highlighted, whilst the majority of the forces present were Egyptian and Sudanese, ‘These forces were under British officers and the general direction of the campaign was managed throughout by Kitchener. Cromer, a civilian, had a nominal supervision of his activities but Kitchener enjoyed his full confidence and that of the British government. The khedival government was throughout treated as a sleeping partner’.²⁹¹ Indeed, as Wolseley was at pains to emphasise, Kitchener was to report to and correspond with Cromer, not the War Office.²⁹² As Spiers has highlighted, Kitchener was ‘not a model commander’;²⁹³ Kitchener was well known for his difficult

²⁸⁶ Bennett, ‘After Omdurman’, 20.

²⁸⁷ Osterhammel, *Europe*, 16-17.

²⁸⁸ Yehouda Shenhav, ‘Beyond “Instrumental Rationality”’: Lord Cromer and the Imperial Roots of Eichmann’s Bureaucracy’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 15:4 (2013), 379-99.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 387.

²⁹⁰ Arendt, *Origins*, 215.

²⁹¹ Holt, *Mahdist State*, 230.

²⁹² Wolseley Memorandum, FO78/4894; Beckett, ‘Kitchener and the Politics of Command’.

²⁹³ Spiers, ‘Introduction’, 3.

manner and was fond of saying that regulations ‘are made for the guidance of fools’.²⁹⁴ It is clear that this British-led military campaign was directed on the periphery, with very little input from the metropole and that Kitchener was responsible for troop conduct throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the role played by Sudanese soldiers in the campaign, as Lamothe does. He criticises the current historiography on the campaign, stating, ‘one gets the false impression that the River War was largely won by British Army regiments and the Maxim gun rather than Sudanese infantry battalions — that, along with Egyptian troops, made up some two-thirds of the Anglo-Egyptian army at Omdurman’.²⁹⁵ However, the British were very much in charge of the campaign, and Kitchener’s role was key; as Egerton argued: ‘The Staff of the Army Head Quarters was practically non-existent. [Kitchener] was himself the whole staff rolled into one’.²⁹⁶

The present study is primarily based on ‘colonial’ sources, as are the majority of studies that explore the reconquest campaign. Firsthand accounts from British soldiers are essential to this study and reveal the brutal nature of this violent colonial conflict under Kitchener, as well as the ways in which it was perceived and justified by British troops. Unpublished correspondence and diaries, published eyewitness accounts, as well as official British documents, which are held at the National Archives, have all been reassessed in consideration of the extent to which extreme violence was an accepted part of the reconquest campaign, both in London and on the ground. This study very much focuses on British accounts of the war, although it was of course the case that the rank-and-file were predominantly Sudanese and Egyptian. Lamothe correctly highlights the failure within the historiography to acknowledge the key role played by the Sudanese soldiers in the campaign and unfortunately, due to a lack of sources, the present study can do little to rectify this anomaly and it has not been possible to discuss their perspectives with regards to the nature of the campaign. As Lamothe states, the ‘historiography is especially striking in that so much of what eyewitnesses documented was overlooked or discarded by future historians’. Whilst Lamothe’s study aims to provide a ‘historiographical restoration of sorts’, he still concedes that ‘the primary sources for such an endeavour remain largely European’.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ See Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 30.

²⁹⁵ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 2.

²⁹⁶ Egerton, Memorandum, SAD/477/8.

²⁹⁷ Lamothe, *Slaves of Fortune*, 4.

Kitchener had little to fear from his own conscience.²⁹⁸

The case of the military campaign in the Sudan is highly relevant to our understanding of further British military campaigns, notably the Boer War and World War I and in all three cases Kitchener was a crucial figure; as Kiernan stated: ‘As soon as the Sudan had been dealt with it was the turn of the Boers’;²⁹⁹ however, these were to be two very different campaigns, as Lyttelton observed:

Few people have seen two battles in succession in such startling contrast as Omdurman and Colenso. In the first, 50,000 fanatics streamed across the open regardless of cover to certain death, while at Colenso I never saw a Boer all day till the battle was over and it was our men who were the victims.³⁰⁰

According to Jörn Leonhard, the Boer War demonstrated the deficiencies of the British military and ‘Final victory was only achieved by quantitative superiority and radicalising the means of war’.³⁰¹ Despite the fundamental differences between the two military campaigns, there were also important links, particularly within the development of European colonial warfare; these links need further investigation and will only be suggested here. While this campaign has been emphasised for its targeting of civilians, the tactics used to defeat the Boers were often those previously used in other colonial campaigns including scorched earthed which, in the case of the Boer War, destroyed a total of 100,000 homes.³⁰² Interference with food supplies meant that a civilian population was once again caught in the middle of conflict and left to fend for itself.³⁰³ While it is Kitchener that is typically associated with the brutal tactics against the Boer population, it was nevertheless the case that these tactics began under Frederick Sleigh Roberts and the majority of farm burning was over by the time Kitchener took over.³⁰⁴ Roberts was well accustomed to scorched earth tactics, having ordered the destruction

²⁹⁸ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 154.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁰⁰ Lyttelton, *Eighty Years*, 212; Melvin, ‘Foreword’, 6. For more on the tactics used throughout this campaign on both sides see: André Wessels, ‘Boer Guerrilla and British Counter-Guerrilla Operations in South Africa, 1899 to 1902’, *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies*, 39:2 (2011), 1-24.

³⁰¹ Jörn Leonhard, ‘Nations in Arms and Imperial Defence – Continental Models, the British Empire and its Military before 1914’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 297.

³⁰² Wessels, ‘Boer Guerrilla’, 12.

³⁰³ Keith Surrudge, ‘An Example to be Followed or a Warning to be Avoided? The British, Boers, and Guerrilla Warfare, 1900–1902’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4–5 (2012), 608.

³⁰⁴ Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 185.

of whole villages during the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880).³⁰⁵ However, Kitchener transformed the British campaign and undertook ‘three extreme tactics’ in his ‘total’ efforts against the Boers: these methods focused on blockhouses, which were linked with barbed wire; concentration camps; the ‘systematic’ sweeping of flying columns to destroy food and property.³⁰⁶

As in the Sudan, Salisbury once again advocated extreme methods and favoured isolating the ‘enemy’, stating: ‘... you ought to be able to destroy food with flying columns of considerable strength. You will not conquer these people *until you have starved them out*’.³⁰⁷ The Boer War fuelled Joseph Chamberlain’s idea of ‘racial conflicts’, viewing the war as an attempt by ‘an inferior race – the Dutch – to subdue a superior one’.³⁰⁸ That the war was viewed in racial terms is also made clear by Kitchener’s well-known description of the Boers as ‘uncivilised Africander [sic] savages with only a thin white veneer’.³⁰⁹ This attitude challenges Thomas Kühne’s belief that the Boer War did not ‘go genocidal’ because ‘there was no basis for “race war”’. This statement does not get to grips with the complicated views of British contemporaries regarding racial prejudice towards the Boer or African people.³¹⁰ This campaign gained notoriety for Kitchener’s utilisation of ‘concentration camps’, and it has been estimated that the camps resulted in the deaths of as many as 46,000 noncombatants.³¹¹ While these deaths were arguably the result of neglect and incompetence rather than intentional policy, it may be noted that the British were aware of the devastating consequences that a policy of ‘concentration’ could have as in the case of Spanish concentration tactics in Cuba in which between 100,000 and 300,000 civilians died.³¹² The importance of Kitchener’s involvement in both the Sudan and South Africa is perhaps most significant in his apparent indifference to the suffering of

³⁰⁵ See Wessels, ‘Boer Guerrilla’, 12.

³⁰⁶ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 183.

³⁰⁷ Salisbury cited in Alexander B. Downes, ‘Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy’, *Civil Wars*, 9:4 (2007), 433: emphasis added.

³⁰⁸ Wolfgang Mock, ‘The Function of “Race” in Imperialist Ideologies: The Example of Joseph Chamberlain’, in Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls (eds), *Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany Before 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 196.

³⁰⁹ Kitchener cited in Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki, ‘The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps (1868–1902)’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:3 (2011), 419.

³¹⁰ Thomas Kühne, ‘Honour and Violence’, *History Workshop Journal*, 62:1 (2006), 308.

³¹¹ This includes 28,000 Boer civilians who died, of whom 79 per cent were under the age of sixteen. See: Downes, ‘Draining the Sea’, 428–29; Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2010 [1979]), 494.

³¹² Downes, ‘Draining the Sea’, 436; see also: Jonas Kreienbaum, ‘Deadly Learning? Concentration Camps in Colonial Wars Around 1900’, in Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870–1930* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

others – whether in reference to his own men, the dying enemy wounded, or Boer women and children. Kitchener emphasised victory above all else: indeed, as Thomas Pakenham concludes: ‘Kitchener no more desired the death of women and children in the camps than of the wounded Dervishes after Omdurman, or of his own soldiers in the typhoid-stricken hospitals of Bloemfontein. He was simply not interested. What possessed him was to win the war quickly....’³¹³ This campaign also raised the issue of a discrepancy between Kitchener’s explicit orders and ‘accepted practices’ of violence in relation to the ‘Breaker Morant’ incident in which 12 Boer POWs were shot dead by colonial irregulars. The participants – two of whom were executed on Kitchener’s orders – admitted their involvement in the killings and their central defence remained that they were only carrying out actions of ‘accepted practice’, as stated by George Witton, one of the accused; such practices included ‘No quarter, no prisoners.’³¹⁴ Hence, Kitchener repeatedly showed his willingness to engage in extreme methods of violence. While Kitchener’s campaigns led to some intense debate in the metropole, as this study demonstrates, it is important to note, that rather than being admonished, Kitchener continued to be substantially rewarded for his brutal efforts across the Empire: after the Sudan campaign he received £30,000 and became Baron Kitchener of Khartoum;³¹⁵ after the Boer War he became Viscount and was awarded £50,000,³¹⁶ followed of course by his role as Secretary of State for War in August 1914.³¹⁷

Episodes of colonial violence such as the campaign in the Sudan are essential to our understanding of the development of ‘totalising’ violence on European soil. James McMillan has argued within the context of the Battle of Omdurman and the ‘extreme violence’ of the Boer War that ‘after 1914, it involved no great leap of imagination on the part of the military and of civilian policy-makers to adapt their model of colonial war to European theatres of war’.³¹⁸ Whilst the ‘civilising mission’ of Europe’s empires had been built upon the assumption that ‘what was good for Europe must be even better for the “natives”’, as Kiernan argues regarding the perception of colonialism and its alleged benefits, ‘There remained a final stage, to be reached by 1918, of doubt whether

³¹³ Pakenham, *Boer War*, 495; see also Downes, ‘Draining the Sea’, 429.

³¹⁴ See: George Witton, *Scapegoats of the Empire: The True Story of the Bushveldt Carbineers* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1982 [Melbourne: D.W. Paterson, 1907]), 76. Pakenham, *Boer War*, 539.

³¹⁵ Daly, *Empire on the Nile*, 24.

³¹⁶ Kiernan, *European Empires*, 133.

³¹⁷ Spiers, ‘The Late Victorian Army’, 205.

³¹⁸ McMillan, ‘War’, 48. See also: Doris Bergen, *The Holocaust: A New History* (Stroud: Tempus, 2008, [2003]), 32.

European civilisation was much good even for Europe.³¹⁹ As one soldier seems to have already suspected, the conflict in the Sudan was indicative of events to come in Europe. As Franks stated:

It was indeed a city of the dead, and it was very horrible and sad. War is a cruel and terrible thing, and the more one sees of it and its results, the more one hopes there may never be anything so terrible in Europe again. One talks in a light hearted way of fighting France or Germany, but these things are horrible enough in savage lands.³²⁰

Conclusion

It is evident that the case of the reconquest goes beyond the scale of the violence of the two previous case studies. The extent of the killing in the Sudan is much greater for several reasons. First, as a result of the strength of the Mahdia army, as well as his willingness to fight Kitchener and the Anglo-Egyptian army in open battle. Second, conditions on the ground clearly impacted the nature of this violence as soldiers were forced to wait out the ‘long summer’ in trying conditions. These troops were eager for battle against the forces that had murdered Gordon and were deemed to be ‘savages’ of the worst kind. However, this campaign also involved tactics of scorched earth and starvation, particularly in the opening years of the campaign when there were few direct clashes with the enemy. This campaign remains consistent with contemporary military theories including Callwell’s emphasis upon working outside of the remit of the laws of regular warfare, an emphasis on the need for ‘a big casualty list in the hostile ranks’, as well as calling for ‘not merely the defeat of the hostile forces but their destruction’.³²¹ Other treatises of colonial warfare supported this extreme vision and the Sudan campaign is in line with the arguments put forward by Samuel White Baker, for example, who discussed his experiences of ‘savage warfare’ in his lecture to the Royal United Service Institution and openly advocated an extreme approach, stating:

In rebellions I do not like hanging people after the fight is over; but at the same time, when the troops are called out to act, I think as well to let them

³¹⁹ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 26, 312.

³²⁰ Franks, 2 May 1898, SAD/403/2.

³²¹ Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]), 42, 151, 159.

act thoroughly, and not to sound the bugle to ‘cease firing’ until a severe lesson has been given.³²²

As Henk Wesseling has emphasised, it was often the stronger colonial opponents who were easier to defeat as they sought to engage in open battle, concluding that ‘Set battles were generally won by the Europeans’.³²³ The previous chapter also supports this view as Bai Bureh initially tried to fight the British in open battle and suffered great losses. This led him to undertake guerrilla tactics, which were more difficult for the British to deal with, as the Boer War would also show soon after the reconquest campaign. It is evident that the violence of Kitchener’s reconquest campaign was on a continuum of violence, which could extend to include genocide. While the campaign did not ultimately amount to genocide, this case demonstrates the genocidal ‘potential’ of the one-sided annihilation of the enemy and, as a result, its marked brutalities mean it stands apart from the previous two cases.

³²² Samuel White Baker, ‘Experience in Savage Warfare’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 17 (1873–74), 18.

³²³ H. L. Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars: An Introduction’, in Moor and Wesseling (eds), *Imperialism and War*, 3.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: The Dynamics of British Colonial Violence¹

*A habit of treating troublesome natives as 'vermin' was bound to brutalise white men's treatment of one another when they fell out.*²

This chapter draws some central conclusions from the three preceding case studies and highlights their relevance in relation to other episodes of British violence, as well as additional European and colonial conflicts. The findings of this study are then placed within the wider debates in the historiography of violence and empire. This is followed by a consideration of the connections within and between empires and the relevance of colonial warfare for European warfare, and vice versa. Clearly, colonial wars were more than a precursor to the world wars of the twentieth century, and should be studied in their own right. Nevertheless, colonial violence represents an important historical precedent to the violence of the twentieth century and the ways in which violence from the colonies 'came home'. Furthermore, practices of colonial and European warfare overlapped throughout the nineteenth century and came together in the two world wars. Across the British Empire, examples of colonial violence and 'small wars' did not occur in isolation and events in one colony clearly affected another. It is hoped that the issues raised here will stimulate further research regarding the history of European violence, both in the colonies and closer to home.

A British Way of Colonial War?³

Violence was integral to the establishment, continuation and expansion of the British Empire; while this may seem an obvious statement, it is clear that this violence has often been overlooked or underplayed. By examining lesser-known cases of British colonial violence, a pattern emerges regarding the ways in which communication between the periphery and the metropole and the actions of the men on the spot affected conditions on the ground, antagonising the indigenous peoples and contributing to the

¹ See also, Michelle Gordon, 'The Dynamics of British Colonial Violence', in Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (eds), *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan: forthcoming 2018).

² V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: Black Man, Yellow Man, and White Man in the Age of Empire* (London: The Cresset Library, 1988 [1969]), 225.

³ See, Peter Lieb, 'Suppressing Insurgencies in Comparison: The Germans in the Ukraine, 1918, and the British in Mesopotamia, 1920', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), 627-47.

outbreak of violence and its escalation. The British Empire repeatedly found itself immersed in cycles of violence on the ‘turbulent frontier’ as ‘Governors continued to try and eliminate the disorderly frontier by annexations which in turn produced new frontier problems and further expansion’.⁴ As John Galbraith highlighted, the men on the spot often initiated these policies and London rarely reversed their actions.⁵ As this thesis also shows, London made little attempt to limit the governors’ actions and conflicts were perceived as all but inevitable, although outbreaks of colonial violence invariably led to debates in the metropole on the role of these men. When events led to military intervention it is clear that the men leading these campaigns were increasingly willing to undertake measures of extreme violence. This pattern continued with little action from London. Indeed, the main objective remained the maintenance and expansion of the British Empire.

It is apparent that individuals on the ground were highly important to both the expansion of the British Empire and the development of violence within this process, as an integral component of the extension of British colonial rule. While colonial methods of warfare are a central feature of this thesis, it also analyses the dynamics of colonialism and the antagonistic, arrogant manner with which colonial administrators dealt with the indigenous populations – and their leaders in particular. How these aspects contributed to the outbreak of violence has been explored, as has the willingness of the military – in cooperation with the colonial administration – to undertake military campaigns that were disproportionate to the actual threat at hand, but which were aimed at preventing further resistance. Evidently, the men on the ground – whether civilian or military men – held significant power on a local level and British politicians in London were reliant on colonial administrators for accurate information on colonial conflicts and were subject to the objectives of these men. One source of tension between the metropole and the periphery arose between the aims of increased trade productivity – with limited political involvement – and of territorial expansion. For the most part, London wanted the land and resources without having to pay for them. This thesis set out to understand the colonial processes that allowed the men on the spot to push for expansion, even when it contradicted the aims of the Colonial Office, and the central role of racial prejudices to the actions of these men. The nature of the warfare that resulted from this expansion is central to this study. The utilisation of extreme violence

⁴ John S. Galbraith, ‘The “Turbulent Frontier” as a Factor in British Expansion’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2:2 (1960), 168.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

in the face of indigenous opposition was ultimately accepted on the ground by colonial administrators, and the military men who participated, as well as politicians in London.

This study demonstrates the problematic relationship between the Colonial Office and administrators on the periphery, as these men went about their ‘imperial careering’.⁶ In the case of Perak, Jervois’ actions repeatedly contradicted Carnarvon’s instructions and his objectives were carried out without the Secretary of State’s approval. Such antagonism was accompanied by a precarious relationship between the ‘coloniser’ and the ‘colonised’ and the cases of Perak and Sierra Leone show the inability and refusal of colonial administrators to consider local customs and the perspectives of local leaders. Furthermore, in both cases, preconceived notions regarding ‘tribal’ rivalries led the administrators to underestimate the chiefs’ abilities to unite against the imposition of British rule. This approach is demonstrated by Cardew’s central role in the developments that led to the outbreak of violence in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone, his determination to enforce the Ordinance and his lack of flexibility in the face of opposition played an integral role. Local populations were provoked by the antagonistic actions of the British administrators; these actions led to some form of indigenous retaliation, which then provided the British with a pretext to engage militarily in the region, thus presenting them with the opportunity to use the conflict to achieve their central goal of establishing a British colonial presence. The contradictory nature of colonialism meant that while the Colonial Office was often in favour of a more moderate approach and was keen to avoid prolonged and costly military interventions. At the same time, colonial administrators were keen to make a name for themselves and cement their power on the periphery. These dual objectives heightened the chances that extreme measures of violence would be utilised: one, to establish local power in the region and two, to bring the conflict to an end more swiftly and in such a way as to deter future unrest. Administrators undertook actions which antagonised indigenous leaders in the knowledge that they could rely, if necessary, on the military

⁶ See David Lambert and Alan Lester, ‘Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects’, in Lambert and Lester (eds), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careerings in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2; James Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic during the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), ch. 2. Regarding ‘networks’ within an interconnected British Empire, see also: Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815–45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda’, in Cooper and Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

strength of the British Army; furthermore, they continually insisted that it was the local population that was behaving in a hostile manner. While the men on the ground may not have had the support of their superiors in London, when it came to it, military reinforcements were invariably sent and the resistance brutally suppressed.

In the case of the reconquest of the Sudan, communications between the metropole and the periphery were of less importance as Kitchener's objectives were clear and Cromer was ultimately responsible for the campaign. Despite the controversies surrounding Kitchener's methods, he was nevertheless promoted and given the opportunity to undertake ever more controversial 'solutions' to colonial 'problems', notably in the Boer War. While the specific details of the objectives of those in London and those on the periphery may have differed in each case, they were united in their goal of the continued existence of the British Empire, at the expense of the indigenous populations and in agreement with the basic concepts of the Empire regarding the 'inferiority' of the 'natives' and the racism and prejudices that underpinned the entire project. This thesis has shown that while the degree to which the British Empire exploited the forces at its disposal varied, regardless of the extremities of violence, similar administrative processes and arguments of justification can be identified. The methods discussed throughout this work were used against the indigenous population in a variety of settings and to counter differing levels of opposition. Indigenous populations did not necessarily have to oppose British colonial rule outright – a lack of support or enthusiasm for the British imperial project could suffice – and rarely did a British military response correspond with the level of resistance on show.

While it may appear at first glance that the three cases of violence explored here have little in common due to their differing scales and contexts, on closer inspection and in consideration of first-hand accounts, it is the case that all three show commonalities including the role of racial prejudices and the use of extreme violence. These conflicts all fall under Callwell's definition of small wars and his work represents the closest we have to an official treatise on colonial warfare, in which he openly advocated extreme violence to suppress 'irregular' opponents. The present study demonstrates that regardless of the scale of armed resistance to British colonialism, extreme violence was routinely utilised; the extent of the opposition that the British faced differed greatly in each case: in Perak around 300 fighters at most; in Sierra Leone 3000; and certainly over 50,000 in the case of the Mahdia. All three cases demonstrate a belief in the need

swiftly and brutally to suppress indigenous resistance, in line with Callwell's observations. Furthermore, actions such as banishment, summary punishment and punitive expeditions served to ensure that British military power would deter future potential unrest. All three cases demonstrate an acceptance of the principle of collective retribution – and thereby the suffering of noncombatants – and looting was an integral component in these small wars. Moreover, in both Perak and Sierra Leone, this logic was in evidence in the destruction of deserted villages, a practice that was detrimental to the inhabitants who had fled their homes in fear and suffered as a result of having to hide in the jungle and bush areas. In this way, many inhabitants were punished for the alleged actions of their chiefs. Hence, such actions taught the 'natives' a lesson that they would not forget. By examining three contrasting cases of colonial violence this thesis demonstrates that, regardless of scale, violence was endemic to the British Empire. The utilisation of extreme violence was not the result of isolated 'excesses', but rather an integral component to the expansion and maintenance of Empire.

While the Sudan reconquest was a fight against 'savages', it was also similar to more traditional forms of war, as for the most part, both parties were clearly visible and fought in open battle. Despite this fact, British tactics throughout the campaign did not adhere to contemporary concepts of 'civilised warfare'. Indeed, of the three case studies, the reconquest of the Sudan was the most destructive; the Khalifa fought Kitchener and his men in a pitched battle and the superior weaponry that the British had at their disposal led to the decimation of the Mahdist troops. The extremities of the reconquest are in evidence in the particularly uncompromising nature of the language used throughout accounts of the campaign, the violence that ensued and the relentless pursuit of the enemy from the very beginning, as shown in Dongola in 1896. Unlike the other two cases, the Mahdia was perceived as a significant obstacle to the British imperial project in scale and the context of previous British defeat, and Gordon's murder was particularly pertinent in contributing to a radicalisation of violence. The dehumanisation of the enemy and preconceptions regarding the 'nature' of the enemy contributed significantly to extreme violence that included the mass neglect and killing of the enemy wounded. While for the most part, a clearly defined enemy was lacking in many cases in the colonies, this was not the case in the Sudan and yet, the British continued to undertake actions, which breached international law, but were ultimately deemed acceptable outside Europe.

In all three cases, violence was utilised in extreme forms against those who were perceived to be an obstacle to the British imperial project and notions of the ‘civilising mission’ and racial assumptions buttressed this extreme violence. In each case, participants expressed their disgust and indifference regarding the enemy population. These views were further enforced by the utilisation of the issue of slavery, which was used to justify ‘liberating’ an area. However, as the case studies show, once colonial power was established, British actions were limited in eradicating practices of slavery on the ground. Thanks to the ‘nature’ of the ‘natives’, ‘savage’ opposition was to be expected and potential resistance brutally suppressed, thereby creating a self-fulfilling colonial prophecy. As a result of this racism and the imbalance of relations between the ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’, outbreaks of violence became highly likely, as did the utilisation of extreme measures against the ‘enemy’; a concept which became increasingly flexible. Hence, once opposition was shown, a display of force was considered unavoidable – to ‘teach’ the local population the ‘benefits’ of British rule, as in Perak and Sierra Leone. The rhetoric of empire provided ready-made justifications for a range of actions by the colonists, which could be utilised at various times: blaming the ‘savage native’ was key to this way of thinking. British colonial violence was viewed as legitimate and necessary and as Nicholas Owen has observed in relation to the Amritsar Massacre in 1919, ‘anticolonial violence was interpreted as an illegitimate “disturbance,” “unrest,” or “criminality,” but the violence of the state was seen as a matter of obligation’.⁷ Viewing indigenous grievances as ‘illegitimate’ is an overarching theme throughout the British Empire; this viewpoint was in evidence in both Perak and Sierra Leone and as a result British authorities refused to negotiate or compromise.⁸ The central priority remained the imperial project.

While a distinction was made regarding the ‘legitimacy’ of the enemy in a European context, this was not the case in a colonial setting.⁹ Those who actively opposed the extension of the British Empire were automatically seen as ‘illegitimate’;

⁷ Nicholas Owen, “‘Facts Are Sacred’”: The *Manchester Guardian* and Colonial Violence, 1930-1932’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 84:3 (2012), 644.

⁸ British responses to Kikuyu grievances are a case in point: Caroline Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 126. In comparison to the French ‘oil slick approach’ see H. L. Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars and Armed Peace, 1870-1914: A Reconnaissance’, *Itinerario*, 5:2 (1981), 65. Thomas R. Mockaitis, ‘The Minimum Force Debate: Contemporary Sensibilities Meet Imperial Practice’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), 775.

⁹ With the exception of guerrilla warfare in Europe: Ludolf Pelizaeus, ‘Die Radikalisierung des Krieges der “Guerrilla” auf der Iberischen Halbinsel und in Süditalien, 1808-1813’, in Sönke Neitzel and Daniel Hohrath (eds), *Kriegsgreuel: Die Entgrenzung der Gewalt in kriegerischen Konflikten vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), 205-23.

this ‘illegitimacy’ included their very opposition to the British Empire, their grievances and their tactics. The targeting of *potential* resistance to colonial rule and the belief that violence was necessary to suppress possible future opposition as well as actual, immediate violence encouraged violent measures against the indigenous population. Individual ‘outrages’, such as Birch’s murder in Perak, were deemed to represent such potential resistance and an early show of force was desired in order to stave off violence in the future.¹⁰ As this thesis shows, the colonisers’ actions were informed by assumptions regarding the indigenous populations and their inability to comprehend the lack of gratitude for their ‘civilising’ efforts. Clearly these efforts were unwanted and while British colonists were able to rely on the might of the British Army to impose their will, the utilisation of this ‘might’ was ultimately a sign of colonial weakness and failure.¹¹ Scholars have shown in relation to the use of exemplary violence through colonial policing in the interwar period, that rather than a sign of the colonists’ unrestrained power, resorting to extreme violence ‘derived from the absence of real authority’ and hence the weakness of the state.¹² This trend can be identified more specifically in the case of decolonisation and the British Empire. As the latter sought to hold on to power, ever-more extreme methods were utilised.¹³ So whilst Jervois, Cardew and Kitchener spoke of ‘imposing’ the will of the British Empire on the indigenous population, their need to do so marked a failure in policy in which the ‘savage native’ had to be forced to submit to British colonial rule.

Precedents of violence were continuously being set throughout the Empire and other episodes of violence, notably the Indian Mutiny in 1857, demonstrated that both politicians in London and the men on the spot were able and willing to accept the utilisation of more extreme methods if necessary. Hence, just because politicians in London may have been reluctant to engage in hostilities on the periphery in the first place, does not mean that they were averse to the use of more extreme tactics when it

¹⁰ On colonial ‘outrages’ see: Elizabeth Kolsky, ‘The Colonial Rule of Law and the Legal Regime of Exception: Frontier “Fanaticism” and State Violence in British India’, *American Historical Review*, 120:4 (2015), 1229.

¹¹ A similar argument has been made regarding ‘civilian concentration’ see Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki, ‘The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps (1868–1902)’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:3 (2011), 418; Dan Stone, *Concentration Camps: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); on indigenous protests in the interwar period see: Martin Thomas, ‘“Paying the Butcher’s Bill”: Policing British Colonial Protest after 1918’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies*, 15:2 (2011), 57. With regards to the Amritsar massacre in 1919, see: Kim A. Wagner, ‘“Treading upon Fires”: The “Mutiny”-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India’, *Past and Present*, 218:1 (2013), 195-96.

¹² See: Thomas, ‘Policing British Colonial Protest’, 66.

¹³ For example, Elkins, *Britain’s Gulag*.

came to it. While all three cases included destructive levels of violence in the form of scorched earth, collective punishment, and starvation tactics, for example, they did not meet the levels of the suppression of the Indian Mutiny. However, the fact that the British colonists did not utilise these levels of extreme violence in the cases of Perak and Sierra Leone in particular, was because they were not deemed to be required. Clearly, more extreme methods were an option against Bai Bureh and his men in Sierra Leone, although the scale of the destruction wrought across the country was of course damaging enough. Again, to reiterate the point, if more extreme methods were not utilised, it was because they were not needed. That the methods undertaken had the desired effect was proven by the fact that the house tax continued to be imposed in the war's aftermath and, in the case of Perak that the Resident system also continued. As this thesis shows, a range of options was always open to colonial administrators and the military.

Hence, historical precedents were highly important in terms of colonial violence and in the nineteenth century the Indian Mutiny stood out for the 'lessons' that Britain would learn regarding its treatment of the colonised. The violence enacted across the British Empire post-1857 occurred under the Mutiny's shadow and it clearly represented a 'watershed' in many ways, dominating the British 'imperial mindset far into the twentieth century' and laying bare the fallacy of British moral superiority.¹⁴ Indeed, as Andrea Major and Crispin Bates emphasise,

The sudden, unexpected eruption of violence, the longevity of the subsequent unrest and the atrocities committed against combatants and civilians on both sides, together with the very real threat posed to British rule in India and the perceived challenge to British honour and prestige as an imperial power, set the uprising of 1857 apart from previous conflicts and left an indelible scar on the national psyche.¹⁵

This punitive violence was particularly significant in its scale, the extent to which British civilians were caught up in the unrest, the impact on British public opinion, and

¹⁴ Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 250. See: Jill C. Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹⁵ Andrea Major and Crispin Bates, 'Introduction: Fractured Narratives and Marginal Experiences', in Major and Bates (eds), *Mutiny at the Margins: New Perspectives on the Indian Uprising of 1857: Volume II: Britain and the Indian Uprising* (London: Sage Publications, 2013), xv. Regarding the Mutiny's lasting impact see Wagner, 'The "Mutiny"-Motif'.

the brutal methods utilised, which included tying men to the mouths of cannons before blowing them up.¹⁶ One lesson that the British colonists learnt from the Mutiny was the need to nip rebellions swiftly in the bud, thereby advocating swift and brutal violence.¹⁷ The centrality of this approach was also in evidence in Perak and Sierra Leone and it was informed by the logic that one needed to act swiftly and decisively to prevent the encouragement of further potential unrest. In response to the Mutiny, the British utilised methods including summary executions and scorched earth tactics to bring the country under control – a task that took two years. Typically, the colonists viewed the sepoys' grievances as illegitimate; the outbreak of violence was based upon a 'refusal to use new rifle cartridges for fear that they were greased with pig and cow fat'.¹⁸ Although Jill Bender states that this issue 'provided a convenient explanation for the rebellion, one that did not openly challenge the legitimacy of British colonial control or validate Indian unrest.'¹⁹ These cartridges were never issued, but as punishment for their involvement in the Mutiny, the 'mutineers' suffered culturally specific vengeance at the hands of the British. For example, William Forbes-Mitchell recalled the treatment of one 'Nawâb', who was 'first smeared over with pig's fat, flogged by sweepers, and then hanged.'²⁰ Denis Judd goes so far as to state that 'Those mutineers who were blown into fragments of flesh and bone from the mouths of cannon, or summarily hanged, were among the fortunate ones'.²¹ The levels of violence enacted can be partly explained by the sense of betrayal that the British felt by the 'mutineers'. As Judd states, those involved in the rebellion were 'denounced as ungrateful and treacherous wretches, unmindful of the benefits bestowed by Britain's civilising mission in the sub-continent'.²² This was a theme that continued throughout the Empire's lifetime, until the bitter end.²³ Kim Wagner has demonstrated that the Mutiny affected British responses to future colonial violence in India, highlighting the case of the 'Kooka outbreak' in 1872 in particular. Wagner highlights how post-Mutiny violence in India was understood through the 'lens' of the events in 1857 and that, when violence erupted

¹⁶ See: Kim A. Wagner, "'Calculated to Strike Terror': The Amritsar Massacre and the Spectacle of Colonial Violence', *Past and Present*, 233:1 (2016), 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁸ Major and Bates, 'Introduction', xvii.

¹⁹ Bender, *1857 Indian Uprising*, 5.

²⁰ William Forbes-Mitchell, *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny, 1857-59* (London: Macmillan And Co, 1910 [1893]), 169.

²¹ Denis Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), 73.

²² *Ibid.*, 67.

²³ See for example Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, 114.

again in the country, it was ‘read’ as a second Mutiny.²⁴ It is noteworthy that the sixty-eight Kuka Sikhs executed were tied to canons in a replication and reminder of the exemplary violence of 1857.²⁵ As Wagner shows, this event bridges the “cataclysms” of 1857 and 1919’ and highlights the connections between colonial violence and anxieties; Wagner’s study argues that these events can only be understood in the context of the Indian Mutiny. As discussed in chapter 2, it is highly likely that Jervois was aware of the events surrounding the Kuka Sikhs, as this violence was widely reported in the British press. This instance represents another case of disproportionate British suppression of indigenous resistance. The Kuka case also raises issues typical throughout the Empire regarding the role of the men on the spot; the British deputy commissioner, L. Cowan independently ordered the summary execution of the prisoners, demonstrating once again the challenges of containing the actions of these men, who so often responded with ‘colonial overreaction’.²⁶

Elizabeth Kolsky’s study of the Murderous Outrages Act of 1867, which established India’s Northwest Frontier as ‘exceptional’ by colonial officials, notes the relevance of the timing of the Act in relation to ‘disruptions elsewhere in the empire’,²⁷ namely the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, another key event in the catalogue of British colonial violence and an ‘important and degrading milestone in imperial history’.²⁸ Events in Jamaica sparked attention in Britain as Governor Eyre imposed martial law and called upon British troops in the face of opposition to colonial rule. Typically, Eyre was accused of having ‘[overstated] the danger of a murderous and overwhelming negro uprising’.²⁹ Jervois’ actions in Perak also fit this pattern of ‘colonial overreaction’; after British troops had already brought the area under control, Jervois extended the campaign by several months. Arguments were evoked that the ‘formal cover of law’ was required to protect colonial agents who decided to take the law into their own hands, as Eyre had done, having abused the use of martial law.³⁰ That administrators

²⁴ Wagner, “‘Calculated to Strike Terror’”, 207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁶ See, Levene, *Rise of the West*, 256.

²⁷ This Act created a ‘new legal category of persons, ‘the fanatic’, a term which Kolsky argues is a ‘colonial construction’. Kolsky, ‘The Colonial Rule of Law’, 1221, n10, 1231. On the use of this language in response to the ‘Kooka outbreak’ see: Wagner, “‘Calculated to Strike Terror’”, 208.

²⁸ Richard Gott, *Britain’s Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt* (London: Verso, 2011), 460.

²⁹ Kolsky, ‘The Colonial Rule of Law’, 1231. Charles Townshend, ‘Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800-1940’, *The Historical Journal*, 25:1 (1982), 170.

³⁰ Townshend, ‘Martial Law’, 170. Interestingly, Townshend does not seem to be aware of the declaration of martial law in the case of Sierra Leone in 1898 and states that as martial law was declared in South Africa, the old files on Jamaica were ‘searched out’, 176.

were aware of the wider context of violence across the Empire is borne out in the case studies. Scholars have examined Britain's utilisation of martial law and other 'coercion' laws in relation to the administration of the British Empire. In his consideration of 'states of exception', Tom Lloyd explores the role of martial law in Ireland in 1916 and argues that 'British jurisprudential discourse on martial law had been reshaped' by the controversies of its application in the Morant Bay Rebellion and Boer War.³¹ The use of martial law in Sierra Leone should be viewed within this context; a 'state of siege' was declared, followed by 'The Insurgents' Temporary Detention Ordinance' in 1898, which allowed the colonists to act with impunity.³² Historical precedents were key when it came to the application of martial law; for example in the case of the suppression of the Arab Revolt of 1936-39 in Palestine, the 'ghost of Governor Eyre still haunted' discussions of the matter.³³ A state of rebellion had to be considered sufficiently serious enough for martial law to be declared, although, as Charles Townshend notes, the example of India in 1857 was a 'special case which was not seen as falling under martial, or any other, law.'³⁴

As this thesis demonstrates in the case of Sierra Leone, the use of force to bring an area under British control was aided in many instances by a declaration of martial law. As David Killingray acknowledges in the context of Jamaica, '... Eyre's brutal suppression of the Morant Bay rising in 1865 and subsequent Crown Colony government graphically illustrated that there were two classes of British subjects who could expect different standards of colonial law and justice.'³⁵ This thesis highlights the selectivity with which colonists applied British law throughout the colonies – Jervois acknowledged that punishment of the chiefs would be easier if they were not to become subject to English law. While populations across the Empire may have been technically

³¹ Tom Lloyd, 'States of Exception? Sovereignty and Counter-Insurgency in British India, Ireland and Kenya circa 1810—1960' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009), 111. For more on these issues in relation to Morant Bay see: R. W. Kostal, *A Jurisprudence of Power: Victorian Empire and the Rule of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³² Similarly, the Suppression of Rebellion Act was passed in New Zealand in 1863 to deal with Maori rebellion. See Tony Ballantyne, 'Information and Intelligence in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Crisis in the British Empire', in Alfred W. McCoy, Josep M. Fradera, and Stephen Jacobsen, *Endless Empire: Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 178.

³³ Townshend, 'Martial Law', 190. See: Matthew Hughes, 'The Banality of Brutality: British Armed Forces and the Repression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39', *English Historical Review*, 124:507 (2009), 313-54; Jacob Norris, 'Repression and Rebellion: Britain's Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936-39', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36:1 (2008), 25-45.

³⁴ Townshend, 'Martial Law', 168, n6.

³⁵ David Killingray, "'A Good West Indian, a Good African, and, in Short, a Good Britisher': Black and British in a Colour-Conscious Empire, 1760-1950', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 36:3 (2008), 365.

‘British subjects’, it is evident that colonial law differed from the rule of law in the metropole. While it may seem obvious that law and order would be applied differently in the metropole and on the periphery, such claims were made and were central to justifications for the Empire and its alleged ‘civilising mission’.³⁶ Lloyd highlights the importance of colonial law to the British imperial project thus:

Upholding the rule of law was seen as an intrinsic justification for British dominion abroad: a moral underpinning for the government of foreign others, a marker of a distinctively ‘modern’, ‘civilised’ and ‘British’ polity, and an uplifting, enlightening, educating force for progress.³⁷

In fact, clearly the rule of law was not upheld and colonial subjects could not expect the same treatment as British subjects at home. Methods such as collective punishment and punitive expeditions, amongst others, were utilised to ‘uphold order, not law’.³⁸ Indeed, as Taylor Sherman highlights in her study of state violence and punishment in India, ‘We must move beyond the idea that some colonial penal tactics violated a legal order which was otherwise just.’³⁹

The contradictory premise upon which the Empire was built, that the ‘benevolent’ British Empire subjugated populations in order to ‘civilise’ them was laid bare by examples of British response including, notably, the Indian Mutiny. In times of colonial unrest, the British repeatedly flouted the rule of law and the brutalities that were enacted by British forces exposed the true nature of the British Empire. The Indian Mutiny also served as a reference point for British colonial soldiers throughout the remainder of the century and clearly those events loomed large in the minds of British colonists, in India and across the Empire; on his arrival into Freetown, Sierra Leone in June 1898 Carleton wrote home: ‘Several thousand square miles of territory are now in a state of insurrection and I imagine the country very much resembles what India was in the mutiny’.⁴⁰ The Mutiny served as a constant reminder of what could happen if ‘unruly’ indigenes were not kept under control and set a precedent for the level of ‘acceptable’ violence in the suppression of opposition – it also demonstrated the violent

³⁶ See, Esme Cleall, “‘In Defiance of the Highest Principles of Justice, Principles of Righteousness’: The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897-1900”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40:4 (2012), 611-12.

³⁷ Lloyd, ‘States of Exception?’ 249.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 192. For a discussion of the meaning of terms such as ‘law and order’ in a colonial context see, Taylor C. Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 7.

³⁹ Sherman, *State Violence*, 174.

⁴⁰ Private Papers of Brigadier General F. M. Carleton DSO, Documents.20718, 1 June 1898, IWM.

lengths that colonists were willing to go to in order to maintain power.⁴¹ Furthermore, individuals who had fought to suppress the rebellion were expected to utilise this ‘knowledge’ against other colonial resistance.⁴² The likelihood of extreme violence was increased by the expectations of the colonists regarding the behaviour of indigenous populations; Wagner argues that the Indian Mutiny was instrumental to the nature of British responses to colonial unrest in which they responded to what the violence ‘could become’. This approach, Wagner suggests, contributed to the ‘disproportionality of colonial state violence’.⁴³ Of course, British colonial suppression did not follow a blueprint regarding the Mutiny, and there were specific reasons for the development of the violence in that instance; nonetheless, the sheer brutality of this ‘race war’⁴⁴ is striking and was a ‘lesson’ that the Empire would not forget.

Recent debates regarding ‘minimum force’ illuminate the ways in which assumptions continue regarding a British propensity for moderation. The British Army clearly went beyond what could be considered ‘necessary’ to defeat the indigenous opposition in these cases and, as discussed in chapter 1, minimum force was not part of British military doctrine in nineteenth-century colonial warfare. However, assumptions of a British approach based on moderation were (and remain) present. While recent studies have brought to light the brutalities of decolonisation, such violence was consistent with the colonial relationship hitherto. Huw Bennett importantly highlights the nature of the violence inflicted in Kenya against the Mau Mau and argues that just because minimum force was not adhered to, does not mean that a policy of maximum force was followed, but neither does that demonstrate a British propensity for moderation;⁴⁵ rather, British doctrine allowed the men on the spot to determine the ‘necessary’ levels of force to be applied.⁴⁶ Scholars of counterinsurgency have demonstrated that a British approach was not ‘exceptional’ in its use of violence.⁴⁷ Furthermore, measures of extreme violence were given ‘tacit’ if not official ‘approval’ in London and by colonial administrators, as this study demonstrates regarding

⁴¹ Ballantyne, ‘Information’, 175.

⁴² Bender, *1857 Indian Mutiny*, 132-33.

⁴³ Wagner, “‘Calculated to Strike Terror’”, 214.

⁴⁴ Levene, *Rise of the West*, 250.

⁴⁵ Huw Bennett, ‘Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 21:3 (2010), 466.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 466.

⁴⁷ Another example is the suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine in 1936-39, see: Hughes, ‘The Banality of Brutality’ and also Lieb, ‘Suppressing Insurgencies’.

Salisbury's uncompromising approach in the reconquest and the Boer War.⁴⁸ This thesis supports the view that Callwell's analysis of small wars demonstrated the advocacy and acceptance of the use of a considerable *lack* of restraint, rather than moderation.⁴⁹ Long-held assumptions regarding Britain's 'exceptionalism' include successes in counterinsurgency based on 'hearts and minds'; this approach is deemed to represent a 'British Way' in warfare.⁵⁰ However, as a closer investigation of colonial violence throughout the Empire shows, 'in many instances, slaughter was the "British Way", in theory and in practice'.⁵¹

As I have discussed above, Callwell's approach included a 'mixed message' with regards to the issue of force and at times his argument is more ambiguous, emphasising on the one hand the need to beat the enemy 'thoroughly',⁵² but on the other, the suppression of a rebellion without exasperating the enemy.⁵³ The tension between these two approaches was in evidence throughout the British Empire and is borne out by Jervois' approach in Perak, for example: while Jervois was at pains to emphasise the need to protect innocent civilians, he also advocated swift retribution to prevent extended hostilities and measures of scorched earth and blockades. Similarly, in relation to German colonial warfare, Susanne Kuss highlights the ways in which explicit orders could be implicitly contradicted in a colonial context.⁵⁴ These tensions were often masked in the vague language of colonial documents and first-hand accounts of colonial campaigns are essential to uncover the true extent of the force utilised. In the case of the Sudan, it was clear that the fundamental aim was to destroy the Mahdia as a force for opposition to colonial rule. Nevertheless, Kitchener did at times advocate some restraint, but this explicit order was violated throughout the campaign by an uncompromising approach that offered 'no quarter' and did not view the enemy as human.

In relation to the 'minimum force' debates and the question of British military doctrine, Bennett makes an important point that, as historians, we need to focus on what soldiers actually do, rather than what 'doctrine or social background posit they ought to

⁴⁸ Noted by Mockaitis, 'The Minimum Force Debate', 767.

⁴⁹ As argued by Kim A. Wagner, 'A Scattering of Death: Violence and the Colonial Rule of Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency', *History Workshop Journal* (forthcoming 2018), 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵² Charles Edward Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edn (London: General Staff, War Office, 1906 [1896, 1899]), 151.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁴ Susanne Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, trans. Andrew Smith (London: Harvard University Press, 2017), 32.

do’ – this point is particularly significant considering that the British Army has traditionally placed more emphasis upon the *practice* of colonial warfare rather than doctrine.⁵⁵ Furthermore, doctrinal texts and the ideas discussed by important military figures such as B. H. Liddell Hart generally ignored ‘small wars’,⁵⁶ in favour of focusing on traditional European warfare – this was an emphasis that continued beyond World War I, although the *Field Service Regulations* did add a section on ‘Warfare Against an Uncivilised Enemy’ in the 1912 edition. In any case, this official doctrine only served as a guide and was too general for those who had no experience of colonial warfare; Callwell therefore remained essential reading.⁵⁷ Wolseley’s *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service* confirms an approach, which recognised the need to ‘strike hard and strike quickly.’⁵⁸ This book was distributed to all British officers and much like Callwell’s work, it was continually updated in light of the ‘lessons’ that were learnt in colonial campaigns.⁵⁹ Troops were often ill prepared for the realities of colonial warfare and as they arrived on the periphery, their official training at military academies was of little use and they had to learn ‘uncivilised’ tactics on the job.⁶⁰ This study has shown that colonial troops were given much leeway in terms of their actions and, at times, they were given ‘free reign’, leading to an approach in which no quarter was offered and the enemy wounded were not spared. While such tactics may have been implicitly understood, the ultimate objective of these campaigns was clear: to suppress resistance and sufficiently punish any opposition– the form this violence would take was open to interpretation. In each campaign the tactics of the enemy differed, as did

⁵⁵ Archival research is central to this endeavour: Bennett, ‘Minimum Force’, 469. T. R. Moreman, “‘Small Wars’ and ‘Imperial Policing’: The British Army and the Theory and Practice of Colonial Warfare in the British Empire, 1919-1939”, in Brian Holden Reid (ed.), *Military Power: Land Warfare in Theory and Practice* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 109. On the lack of doctrine in the British Army see Tim Travers, ‘The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918’, in David Chandler and Ian Beckett (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003 [1994]), 212-13.

⁵⁶ B. H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932). See Donald C. Gordon, ‘Colonial Warfare, 1815-1970’, in Robin Higham (ed.), *A Guide to the Sources of British Military History* (London: Routledge, 2016 [1972]), 298.

⁵⁷ Moreman, “‘Small Wars’”, 108-9. *Field Service Regulations, Part I: Operations* (London: HMSO, 1909 [reprinted, with amendments, 1912]). Although Wesseling concluded that military doctrine bound the two types of war together as will-power and the offensive were key in both colonial wars and World War I, ‘Colonial Wars and Armed Peace’, 68-69.

⁵⁸ Garnet Wolseley, *The Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service*, 5th edn (London: Macmillan, 1886 [1869]), 412.

⁵⁹ See Edward M. Spiers, ‘Intelligence and Command in Britain’s Small Colonial Wars of the 1890s’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 22:5 (2007), 661-81. Although Wolseley only dedicated eight pages to ‘wars with savage nations’ and ‘hill expeditions in India’: Wolseley, *Soldier’s Pocket-Book*, 412-19.

⁶⁰ Wesseling, ‘Colonial Wars and Armed Peace’, 61.

the terrain and the conditions, therefore improvisation and adaptation were essential in a colonial context.⁶¹

The case studies demonstrate the ad hoc nature of colonial conflicts, highlighting the typical struggles of small wars: disease, challenging weather conditions and poor living/sleeping conditions, lack of food and clean water, all of which – along with an ‘irregular’ opponent who refused to engage in battle – led to frustration and fuelled a desire to experience military action. As each case study shows, colonial warfare entailed adapting one’s own tactics in response to the actions of their opponents. Or as Wolseley put it: ‘you must to a great extent adopt the enemy’s mode of fighting, which is invariably well suited to the country they occupy’.⁶² The British had a range of extreme methods at their disposal. However, it is important to emphasise, as Kuss does, that the nature of colonial campaigns was directly related to conditions and contexts on the ground (‘theatres of war’/*Kriegsschauplätze*) and hence, as in the case of German colonial campaigns, the military interacted with local conditions producing a ‘unique dynamic’ rather than ‘the imposition of a preestablished mindset’.⁶³ This approach was certainly apparent regarding British colonial troops who received little training in the conduct of colonial warfare, with an emphasis on learning on the job. British campaigns varied greatly and their outcome was subject to the size of the opposition and the tactics their opponents undertook. It is evident from the case studies and Callwell’s treatise, for example, that if a colonial enemy would not fight in open battle, scorched earth tactics were standard. Kuss’ study of German colonial wars emphasises the differing nature of each German campaign and concludes that each context and conflict is distinct. In contrast to Isabel Hull’s work, which has argued a distinct German ‘military culture’ which ultimately led to genocide, Kuss argues that we need to examine the unique local conditions.⁶⁴ Kuss considers three cases, one of which is the German war against the Herero and Nama, which became ‘the first genocide of the twentieth century’.⁶⁵ Kuss’ study shows that this campaign occurred within a similar context to Germany’s other colonial wars and that genocide was one of many options on

⁶¹ Edward Spiers, ‘The Late Victorian Army 1868-1914’, in Chandler and Beckett (eds), *Oxford History of the British Army*, 197.

⁶² Wolseley, *Soldier’s Pocket-Book*, 412.

⁶³ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 5 in reference to work including Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁶⁴ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 74-75.

⁶⁵ George Steinmetz, ‘The First Genocide of the 20th Century and its Postcolonial Afterlives: Germany and the Namibian Ovaherero’, *Journal of the International Institute*, 12:2 (2005): <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4750978.0012.201>: Accessed 8 December 2011.

a continuum of violence; indeed, the events in German Southwest Africa remained the exception.⁶⁶ Hence, by considering a range of campaigns, methods of extreme violence and motivations, Kuss shows that the Herero genocide was not the result of a ‘specifically German will to exterminate’,⁶⁷ but rather that genocide could and did become an option in the colonies in certain conditions. The relationship between colonialism and genocide will be discussed below, but clearly the two are connected. The case studies under examination demonstrate that, as Kuss shows, the difficult conditions in the colonies, as well as a long and uncertain wait for military action contributed to an eagerness to engage in battle with the enemy and a willingness to utilise extreme methods, as the case of Gatacre’s men in the Sudan demonstrates.

Both Kuss and Tanja Bühler highlight the importance of indigenous tactics in colonial warfare and the ways in which these affected the overall nature of the colonial campaigns. Both scholars have considered the German campaigns in German East Africa. Bühler in particular argues that German tactics were affected by local traditions of warfare. Bühler discusses an ‘africanisation’ (*Afrikanisierung*) of European tactics, arguing that the German *Schutztruppe* (‘protection force’) modified aspects of African war tactics, in particular, holding women hostage and removing cattle in order to bribe the rebels into negotiation.⁶⁸ Bühler argues that owing to the nature of colonial conflicts, it was not possible for the *Schutztruppe* to fight their African counterparts with European tactics. Instead, Bühler argues, the *Schutztruppe* had to follow ‘an African logic of violence’, which led to the targeting of the local population.⁶⁹ Clearly one has to tread carefully in arguing that colonial troops undertook extreme methods of violence such as scorched earth in terms of an ‘africanisation’ of European tactics; Bühler is quite clear that this argument should not be understood as trying to exculpate brutal German tactics⁷⁰ – however, this line of thinking certainly can sound similar to contemporary arguments regarding the ‘nature’ of the ‘natives’ and justifications for undertaking ‘savage’ methods. It is of course highly important to emphasise the agency of indigenous actors who fought against the colonisation process, an issue which is often neglected and which ‘colonial archives’ rarely allow.⁷¹ It was argued throughout

⁶⁶ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 177.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁸ Tanja Bühler, ‘Kriegführung in Deutsch-Ostafrika (1889–1914)’, in Bühler et al. (eds), *Imperialkriege von 1500 bis heute: Strukturen – Akteure – Lernprozesse* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011), 208.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷¹ As discussed in the introduction.

the British Empire, as Callwell put it, that in certain circumstances, ‘the regular forces are compelled, whether they like it or not, to conform to the savage method of battle’.⁷² Kuss also highlights that the ‘failure’ of the enemy to conform to European standards of warfare was viewed as a ‘testament to their lack of humanity’.⁷³ Hence, as I have argued throughout this thesis, when European troops diverged from these standards they had a ready-made excuse for doing so: they could blame the ‘savage native’.

It is apparent throughout this thesis that British military tactics were adapted in the face of ‘irregular’ opposition: one example is the case of Sierra Leone in which Lt.-Col. Marshall took over the British campaign in April 1898 and implemented flying columns and scorched earth tactics; British troops had repeatedly failed to bring the opposition into open battle as a result of Bai Bureh’s tactics of ‘bush warfare’, based on stockades and snipers. As stated above, the frustrations of the troops were further heightened by issues of supply and the trying conditions on the ground, notably the discomfort of sleeping in an area that had been decimated by scorched earth tactics. British actions were radicalised by the conditions on the ground and colonial forces needed to adapt in order to remove indigenous opposition. The British Army had a range of methods available to it, there was no uniform response and, similar to Kuss’ study, the context of the campaigns clearly affected the methods that would be utilised. It is evident that in the Sudan, the neglect and killing of the enemy wounded was fairly routine practice. In contrast, only Carleton’s description of the campaign in Sierra Leone described tactics of no quarter and massacring captured troops, and this violence was directly related to a more extreme campaign in the South of the Protectorate. Clearly the tactics of the enemy did influence the brutal methods of the British; but again, it is important to emphasise that extreme methods such as taking no prisoners were available to the colonial troops, when it was felt necessary in the face of staunch opposition. If extreme tactics were not utilised, it was not on the basis of any moral objection.

What both Kuss and Bühler make clear is that an approach which discusses ‘German colonial warfare’ as uniform and prescriptive does not grasp the ways in which there was a range of methods at their disposal and that the tactics and terrain of the indigenous opposition affected how the German colonial troops fought their colonial

⁷² Callwell, *Small Wars*, 31.

⁷³ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 8.

wars.⁷⁴ Hence, such studies demonstrate the specific challenges for *European* colonial armies, who were faced with similar issues throughout their empires. While one may argue that German colonial troops were under additional pressure to succeed as ‘late comers’ to empire, clearly all of the European imperial powers were under pressure to maintain their powers at the *fin de siècle*⁷⁵ – as this thesis shows, concerns of international prestige were at the forefront of the colonists’ minds when faced with indigenous opposition. These more in-depth studies demonstrate the need for further European comparisons, demonstrating the use of similar methods, subject to circumstance. Contrary to Hull’s supposition, German colonial violence was not ‘unique’.⁷⁶ While the violence inflicted against the Herero and the Nama may have been ‘unusual even by contemporary standards’, this fact was not the result of a German propensity for ‘final solutions’.⁷⁷ In the case of the British Empire, as this study shows, if there was a ‘British way in colonial warfare’ it was based on a catalogue of extreme violence, which was drawn upon subject to the conditions on the ground; these methods were readily utilised when deemed ‘necessary’.

The British Empire and ‘Exceptions’ of Violence

Both British and German violence have been regarded as ‘exceptional’ – Britain based on its moderation and Germany based on its brutality. Hull’s work is central to these debates. In *Absolute Destruction* Hull presents the case of British violence in the Boer War in contrast to Germany’s propensity for ‘final solutions’. While the war was fought in a ‘colonial’ setting, clearly, this was not a conventional ‘colonial war’ – although neither was it a ‘gentlemen’s war’.⁷⁸ Hull’s use of this war as her point of comparison is

⁷⁴ Sabine Dabringhaus similarly argues that the extreme violence of the German campaign in the Boxer Rebellion ‘developed from conditions on the spot’: ‘An Army on Vacation? The German War in China, 1900-1901’, in Manfred F. Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1999), 476.

⁷⁵ Levene, *Rise of the West*.

⁷⁶ See for example, Stephen G. Fritz, Review of Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 20:3 (2006), 512-15.

⁷⁷ See Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 37. While the present study has focused on issues related to Britain and Germany in particular owing to limited space, clearly wider comparisons could and should be made. See for example: Thoralf Klein and Frank Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege: Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006).

⁷⁸ See Sibylle Scheipers, ‘Counterinsurgency or Irregular Warfare? Historiography and the Study of “Small Wars”’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:5-6 (2014), 885; J. F. C. Fuller, *The Last of the Gentlemen’s Wars: A Subaltern’s Journal of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937).

problematic. Fundamental to Hull's argument in relation to the nature of the German imperial military are assumptions regarding Britain's contrasting political culture which include: the role of parliamentary intervention, strong civilian control of the military, and effective public criticism.⁷⁹ Regarding the last point, in reference to public outrage, which was voiced in response to reports of the conditions in the concentration camps, it is essential to note that the outcry against this huge loss of civilian life was motivated by the skin colour of the victims. No moral outrage was directed against the 'native' camps, the conditions of which were far worse; Emily Hobhouse did not even visit them.⁸⁰ The failure to make this distinction allows Hull to reach a false conclusion in reference to the role of public opinion in Britain regarding colonial violence.⁸¹ Criticisms were also voiced in the press in response to both the Sierra Leone 'Hut Tax' War and most notably in the case of the reconquest of the Sudan. However, that this criticism was ineffectual can be gleaned from the fact that Britain's most controversial 'colonial' war took place shortly after. In the case of the Sudan, clearly the death of Gordon captured the British public's imagination and there was widespread support for the reconquest campaign and the systematic defeat of the Mahdia. In any case, criticism came too late for a change in tactics and it seems that the running of future campaigns was not affected. Indeed, considering Kitchener's role in the controversial reconquest campaign it may be noted that he was nevertheless chosen as Roberts' successor in the Boer War. Hence his career was not hampered as a result and he was given the role despite (or perhaps because of?) his propensity for extreme measures in the face of strong opposition. Kitchener's successful career brings into question Rod Thornton's contention regarding minimum force and the promotion of 'gatekeepers' of dominant norms. If Kitchener was a 'gatekeeper' of 'Victorian values' then those values supported extreme violence based on racial prejudices, destructive tactics of concentration and 'taking no prisoners', rather than 'pluck' and Christian

⁷⁹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 184-85. See: Thomas Kühne, 'Honour and Violence', *History Workshop Journal*, 62:1 (2006), 304-10.

⁸⁰ Smith and Stucki, 'Concentration Camps', 429. Alexander B. Downes, 'Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimisation in War', *International Security*, 30:4 (2006), 430; see also: Elizabeth van Heyningen, 'Costly Mythologies: The Concentration Camps of the South African War in Afrikaner Historiography', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34:3 (2008), 495-513; idem, 'A Tool for Modernisation? The Boer Concentration Camps of the South African War, 1900-1902', *South African Journal of Science*, 106:5-6 (2010), 1-10:

<http://www.sajs.co.za/index.php/SAJS/article/view/242/290>. Accessed 30 June 2016.

⁸¹ Kuss also makes this point: *German Colonial Wars*, 350, n21.

gentlemanliness.⁸² As Hull shows, Kitchener pushed for ever-more extreme methods against the Boer population – including the banishment of oppositionist Boer civilians and POWs⁸³ – however, rather contradictorily in light of her argument regarding the moderating effects of civilian authorities, Hull states that ‘It is possible that British civilian leaders would have permitted continued severity had it been effective’.⁸⁴ Furthermore, one may question Hull’s contention that Kitchener’s tactics were not effective.⁸⁵

Thomas Kühne also disputes Hull’s approach in relation to the Boer War arguing that ‘it was civil politicians in Britain, like Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner, who advocated war against the Boer at all costs and who were largely responsible for the radicalisation of warfare when the military was confronted with more obstacles than expected’.⁸⁶ Indeed, Roberts offered an amnesty for combatants who surrendered in the first months of 1900; however, Lord Lansdowne criticised this leniency.⁸⁷ Although there were civilian objections to the extreme violence in South Africa – as demonstrated by Liberal politician Henry Campbell-Bannerman’s ‘methods of barbarism’ speech – the tactics used were not new (with the exception of the concentration camps) and scorched earth policies were clearly utilised across the Empire.⁸⁸ It was not always the case that more moderate actions were encouraged by politicians in London;⁸⁹ as Bruce Vandervort argues additional pressure could result from politicians at home for a ‘decisive victory’,⁹⁰ which in turn influenced the British military’s decision to undertake ‘strategies of attrition’, resulting in a radicalisation of the methods of violence.⁹¹ Even when politicians were reticent regarding the use of extreme violence, rarely did they intervene to restrain the actions of the men on the spot.

⁸² See Rod Thornton, ‘The British Army and the Origins of its Minimum Force Philosophy’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 15:1 (2004), 83-106.

⁸³ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 185.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁸⁵ For further discussion see: Alexander B. Downes, ‘Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy’, *Civil Wars*, 9:4 (2007), 422.

⁸⁶ Kühne ‘Honour and Violence’, 308.

⁸⁷ See Downes, ‘Desperate Times’, 432.

⁸⁸ S. B. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics, January 1900–May 1902* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, 1977), 9.

⁸⁹ Kühne, ‘Honour and Violence’, 308. David E. Omissi provides another example of military men encouraging restraint, in this case referring to the use of armed aircraft in Ireland: *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force 1919-1939* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 43.

⁹⁰ Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa 1830-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 209-10.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

While the respective Secretaries of State for the Colonies may have bemoaned the heavy-handed approach of the men on the ground, they took little action to rein them in. Regarding the alleged moderating influence of the British parliament and civilians, politicians in London could also advocate more extreme solutions to colonial unrest, one example of note being Lord Salisbury. Studies of decolonisation also demonstrate the role of politicians in the imperial metropole regarding British colonial violence. For example, Caroline Elkins and Huw Bennett both emphasise the ways in which the extreme brutalities inflicted against suspected Mau Mau were officially sanctioned.⁹²

Distant colonial wars were brought home in a variety of ways, including via newspaper reports provided by war correspondents, parliamentary debates, first-hand published accounts and letters home from colonial troops which, as we have seen, were highly revealing regarding the nature of these campaigns. Significantly, the work of writers such as G. A. Henty whose historical adventure stories described colonial skirmishes and ‘derring-do’, espoused the values of the British imperial project and its ideals to the British public.⁹³ Anyone who was interested could read about the extreme violence of the British Army across the Empire; newspapers quite openly reported and supported the use of extreme violence, accepting the commonly held belief in the ‘civilised’ versus ‘barbaric’ dichotomy, as demonstrated throughout this study. However, critics of British colonial policies and its accompanying violence also accepted this dichotomy. In the cases that I have discussed, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that the criticism, which was evident in contemporary parliamentary debates and certain newspapers, had any effect in curtailing these military campaigns, or that the aims of these campaigns were revised.

Historians have documented the changing nature of modern European warfare towards the ‘total wars’ of the twentieth century and typically they acknowledge the French Revolution as the watershed moment regarding *levée en masse*, ‘the nation in arms’.⁹⁴ Importantly, Hull has challenged the assumption that colonial and European warfare were markedly different and argues that ‘contemporaries insisted that “small wars” were of an entirely different character from “real”, European conflicts; one could learn nothing about one from looking at the other’. Hull emphasises that historians have been too quick to accept this point of view.⁹⁵ As historians explore the relevance of

⁹² See chapter 1.

⁹³ Thornton, ‘The British Army’, 90.

⁹⁴ Scheipers, ‘Counterinsurgency’, 884.

⁹⁵ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 3.

European colonial violence for the genocidal violence that occurred in Europe in the twentieth century, it seems there is also a need to extend investigations to include the relationship between nineteenth-century European and colonial violence. That European warfare was becoming increasingly ‘national’ and hence, ‘total’ in nature was indicated by Napoleon Bonaparte’s reliance upon the need for his massive armies to sustain themselves by ‘living off the land’; such practices made the suffering of the noncombatant population inevitable.⁹⁶ Outside of Europe, the relevance of the American Civil War has been emphasised within the narrative of ‘total war’ and the targeting of civilians.⁹⁷ Henry Dunant’s account of the Battle of Solferino illuminated the brutalities of warfare in nineteenth-century Europe and his work was key to the establishment of the International Red Cross and the beginnings of a codification of international humanitarian law in the form of the Geneva Convention of 1864. However, no such provisions were made for ‘uncivilised’ foes,⁹⁸ including ‘illegitimate’ opponents, and these laws were only intended for Europe; of course it was in the colonies that the worst excesses of violence would take place in this period. As Christine Krüger highlights, contradictory developments were underway during this time regarding European warfare: on the one hand there were efforts to make warfare more humane and on the other, modern weaponry was allowing European armies to wreak mounting levels of devastation, and civilians were increasingly targeted.⁹⁹ For example the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 has been described as ‘a new kind of mass warfare’¹⁰⁰ and German and French troops clearly acted outside of the doctrine of ‘civilised warfare’. Examples include the starvation tactics and bombing undertaken by the Germans, including the Siege of Paris.¹⁰¹ Hull emphasises the Franco-Prussian War for the important precedents of violence that it set and argues that by World War I these ‘exceptions’ had become the rule.¹⁰² Hull identifies that both Britain and Germany were turning toward more ‘total’ forms of war firstly in an imperial context and then through

⁹⁶ Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 89. See: David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon’s Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

⁹⁷ Charles Townshend, ‘Introduction: The Shape of Modern War’, in Townshend (ed.), *Oxford History of Modern Warfare*, 11. See also, Mark E. Neely Jr, ‘Was the Civil War a Total War?’ in Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler (eds), *On the Road to Total War: The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29-52.

⁹⁸ See: Christine G. Krüger, ‘German Suffering in the Franco-German War, 1870/71’, *German History*, 29:3 (2011), 404, 411.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 413.

¹⁰⁰ Jörn Leonhard, ‘Nations in Arms and Imperial Defence – Continental Models, the British Empire and its Military before 1914’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 5 (2007), 291.

¹⁰¹ Krüger, ‘German Suffering’, 412.

¹⁰² Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 119, 122.

the violent practices of World War I;¹⁰³ this development was to reach its height in World War II.¹⁰⁴ Clearly the nature of World War II and Adolf Hitler's objectives for his New Order demonstrate the relevance of European colonial warfare for our understanding of practices of violence across the Nazi Empire.¹⁰⁵ European and colonial warfare were taken to the extreme and combined on European soil in an ideological and racial battle that differed in scale to all that had preceded it.¹⁰⁶ While there was a 'totalising' effect on European warfare in the nineteenth-century, we must consider European colonialism in order to identify methods of violence closer in nature and scale to the genocidal violence of 1939-45. As Glenn Anthony May has suggested, 'What came to be called "total war" was colonial warfare writ large'.¹⁰⁷

As discussed in chapter 1, scholars are exploring the role of colonial violence and assumptions regarding the 'exceptionalism' of German colonial violence in particular. Peter Lieb's consideration of counterinsurgency tactics is one example of a comparative approach and his work contradicts arguments regarding minimum force, demonstrating that Britain was willing to take extreme measures in certain circumstances. Lieb's study regarding the British suppression of unrest in Mesopotamia in 1920 highlights the lengths to which the military was willing to go in the face of substantial opposition and also demonstrates that assumptions of 'exceptionalism' on either side are too simplistic.¹⁰⁸ The present study supports this view and highlights that the British Army was willing to undertake tactics of extreme violence in a colonial context, even in the absence of 'substantial opposition'. An interesting point of comparison regarding the tactics used by European colonists is the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900-1901. An international alliance of eight states was created, including Britain, France and Germany. As Kuss has explored, a range of 'interactions' was key to the conflict which 'unfolded on a multilateral plane'.¹⁰⁹ The allies fought a brutal

¹⁰³ Ibid.: regarding the Franco-Prussian War, 118; regarding the Boer War, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Sönke Neitzel and Daniel Hohrath, 'Entfesselter Kampf oder gezähmte Kriegführung? Gedanken zur regelwidrigen Gewalt im Krieg', in Neitzel and Hohrath (eds), *Kriegsgreuel*, 32. Roger Chickering, 'Total War: The Use and Abuse of a Concept', in Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ See Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London: Penguin, 2009 [2008]); Michelle Gordon, 'Colonial Violence and Holocaust Studies', *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, 21:4 (2015), 272-91.

¹⁰⁶ See Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1999 [1998]), ch. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Glenn Anthony May, 'Was the Philippine-American War a "Total War"?' in Boemeke et al. (eds), *Anticipating Total War*, 457.

¹⁰⁸ Lieb, 'Suppressing Insurgencies'.

¹⁰⁹ Susanne Kuss, 'Co-operation Between German and French Troops during the Boxer War in China, 1900/01: The Punitive Expedition to Baoding', in Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870-1930* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 197.

campaign against the Boxers in which tactics included, *inter alia*, rape and plunder, as well as the destruction of villagers' provisions and property, and mass executions.¹¹⁰ In the case of Baoding, as Kuss describes, the punitive expedition ended with the execution of suspected 'Boxers' who were forced to dig their own graves; temples were destroyed and the local population was subject to a levy to pay for the executions and the administration of the city.¹¹¹ Indeed, as Hull emphasises, 'the uprising brought out the worst in all armies present',¹¹² although the methods they used were of course nothing new in a colonial context. That European troops fought together in this way demonstrates a consensus regarding the conduct of colonial warfare; this case also clearly highlights the ability of European powers to come together in 'extra-European war', in spite of rivalries and animosities across the continent.¹¹³

Scholars are increasingly considering the ways in which colonial and European warfare were interconnected; we need to consider how events in one empire affected those in another and the interaction of a dialogue across empires with regards to colonial violence and methods of 'dealing' with recalcitrant native populations. Scholars are addressing the ways in which European colonisers 'learnt' from one another and how this 'knowledge' informed European tactics of violence, thereby considering whether we may identify a 'common approach' between European powers in their *modus operandi* in the colonies,¹¹⁴ and how this approach informed tactics within and across empires. Had European colonialism created 'a common European tool kit', which was widely available across the continent against perceived enemies from within and without, and which ultimately came to be used on European soil?¹¹⁵ If knowledge was transferred between the metropole and the colony then this 'traffic' went in both directions. The treatment of the colonised and the European poor provides one example of learning between the metropole and the periphery. The 'conviction that work must be the basis for any kind of help' was a colonial policy, which we may recognise in the actions taken in the famine in Ireland in the 1840s or the famine camps

¹¹⁰ Thoralf Klein, 'Straffeldzug im Namen der Zivilisation: Der "Boxerkrieg" in China (1900-1901)', in Klein and Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege*, 160.

¹¹¹ Kuss, 'Co-operation Between German and French Troops', 208.

¹¹² Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 148. See also Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹¹³ Kuss, 'Co-operation Between German and French Troops', 211.

¹¹⁴ Jonas Kreienbaum, 'Deadly Learning? Concentration Camps in Colonial Wars Around 1900', in Barth and Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation*, 219-35.

¹¹⁵ Peter Holquist, 'Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905-21', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 4:3 (2003), 651. See also Donald Bloxham et al., 'Europe in the World: Systems and Cultures of Violence', in Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 20.

in India in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as the aftermath of the reconquest campaign in the Sudan, as discussed above. In Britain, this approach was the basis for the Poor Law and the workhouses.¹¹⁶ Although context was important, as Syed Hussein Alatas has noted: '[w]hen the British capitalist denigrated the British working class he was not denigrating the entire British nation. In the case of the colonial ideology, whole communities and ethnic groups were affected.'¹¹⁷ Clearly the development of colonial policies on the periphery was informed by national, colonial and local knowledge and contexts, and there was no uniform approach. Nevertheless, it was the case that the use of brutal methods on the periphery had in common the imperial ideology of European 'superiority' over the 'inferior' 'natives', which informed 'deadly learning' across empires.¹¹⁸

The knowledge that accumulated throughout Europe's empires included practices which had already been undertaken within Europe, but which were utilised on a different scale in the colonies and that were radicalised by the racial ideology of empire. Attempts to codify humanitarian laws in European warfare aimed to remove these practices from European soil, however, such methods including starvation tactics, summary executions and punitive expeditions continued to be deemed acceptable in a colonial context. The accumulation of experiences throughout the colonies led to an 'archive' of methods that were used to quell opposition to European powers – the phenomenon of the concentration camp is just one example.¹¹⁹ Arguments regarding knowledge transfer clearly represent a challenge to the historian in terms of empirical evidence and it is clear that one needs to tread carefully in making assumptions regarding wider connections.¹²⁰ It is nevertheless important to emphasise the fact that many of these modes of violence had taken place in Europe and when extreme practices of violence became increasingly common in Europe in the twentieth century, this was not merely the result of a transfer of knowledge from the colonies back to the metropole but rather represented an interaction between the two; these experiences filtered back to Europe in the twentieth century as European warfare became increasingly violent and

¹¹⁶ Kreienbaum, 'Deadly Learning?' 224; Smith and Stucki, 'Concentration Camps', 429.

¹¹⁷ Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 30.

¹¹⁸ See: Kreienbaum, 'Deadly Learning?' 230.

¹¹⁹ Regarding 'an "imperial cloud" of stored colonial knowledge' see: Aidan Forth and Jonas Kreienbaum, 'A Shared Malady: Concentration Camps in the British, Spanish, American and German Empires', *Journal of Modern European History*, 14:2 (2016), 256.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 250; see also Stone, *Concentration Camps*; Jonas Kreienbaum, *Ein Trauriges Fiasko: Koloniale Konzentrationslager im südlichen Afrika 1900-1908* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2015).

destructive. Kuss also highlights such ‘interaction’ in relation to the Boxer War and the ‘forms of exchange’ which took place.¹²¹ Aside from setting precedents, acts of colonial violence were relevant in terms of how individual ‘outbreaks’ of violence were dealt with by colonial authorities. As Hull also argues, European armies learnt from one another and ‘Their similarities far outweighed their differences’.¹²² Jonas Kreienbaum notes how in the face of guerrilla warfare the Colonial Office looked to the Franco-Prussian War and American Civil War ‘in order to evaluate which measures were feasible in counter-guerrilla warfare’.¹²³ With regards to the practice of massacres, Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan also note the importance of personnel exchanges and the ways in which experiences were transferred, citing the example of British officers in Ireland in 1798 that later served in Spain, India and Australia.¹²⁴

The taking of hostages represents one example of the interaction between the methods utilised by European powers in continental warfare as well as on the periphery. In South Africa, Roberts had already proclaimed the intention to take hostages in an attempt to halt the destruction of railways by the Boers; as L. S. Amery summarised, ‘residents in the various districts might be carried on trains, as hostages for their compatriots’ good behaviour’. However, as Amery states, these measures were not effective (and were revoked a few weeks later) as ‘the persons who were ordained to suffer were not the mobile commandos who did the damage, but peaceful Boers who had surrendered’. Importantly, Amery claims that this policy was founded on ‘precedents set by the Germans in 1871’.¹²⁵ While Britain’s practices of violence had been predominantly utilised in the colonies, during World War I it became clear that Britain – as well as her allies and rivals – was willing to undertake tactics that would not be considered ‘civilised’.¹²⁶ Britain has a history of naval bombardment and blockades (which invariably led to civilian suffering), as well as aerial bombardment.¹²⁷ Blockades were used to devastating effect against the Central Powers in World War I via the so-called ‘starvation blockade’ which was enforced by the British and which ultimately led

¹²¹ Kuss, ‘Co-operation between German and French Troops’, 197-217.

¹²² Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 98-99.

¹²³ Kreienbaum ‘Deadly Learning?’ 221.

¹²⁴ Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, ‘Massacre in the Old and New Worlds, c.1780-1820’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 15:2 (2013), 113.

¹²⁵ L. S. Amery, *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902* (London: Sampson Low, 1906), 492.

¹²⁶ In relation to Germany see, John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (London: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹²⁷ See A. J. P. Taylor, ‘War and Peace’, Review of Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* and Martin Caedel, *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith*, *London Review of Books*, 2:19 (1980), 3-6.

to the excess deaths of 763,000 civilians in Germany and Austria-Hungary, in a bid to ‘starve Germany out’;¹²⁸ British methods also included the use of poisonous gas and jellite shells, which contained cyanide.¹²⁹ Other colonial ‘learning’ includes tactics that emerged during and after World War I regarding the internment of POWs, ‘aliens’, as well as civilian refugee camps in Europe.¹³⁰ It is also interesting to note, in the context of British policies, that German POWs retained a higher status than colonial workers in Britain’s labour companies in World War I.¹³¹ As James McMillan argued, ‘The violence that would be generated by the First World War was unprecedented in Europe itself, but it had nineteenth-century roots and antecedents’; these antecedents occurred both within and outside of Europe.¹³²

European military theorists drew on the experiences of other countries, as is evident from Callwell’s work, which explored a range of campaigns to bring together his treatise on the challenges of ‘irregular’ warfare for ‘regular’ troops. Although, in marked contrast to Britain, Kuss argues that Germany did not try to determine ‘lessons’ from her own imperial warfare.¹³³ With regards to the three case studies, direct personnel connections were unlikely due to their timing: the Perak War took place over twenty years earlier and the Sudan and Sierra Leone campaigns were occurring simultaneously. However, Carleton provides one example, as prior to fighting in Sierra Leone, he had been present in Dongola at the beginning of the Sudan reconquest campaign, in which ‘no quarter [was] given or asked’.¹³⁴ In relation to both campaigns, Carleton expressed his indifference to the suffering of those that he and his fellow troops killed. While his letters do not provide direct reflections in relation to comparing the two campaigns and the ‘lessons’ he may have learnt, it is perhaps significant, as discussed above, that it was the Indian Mutiny that first came to mind on his arrival in Freetown, Sierra Leone. By considering the wider context of colonial violence, we can

¹²⁸ Maurice Hankey, secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence cited by Downes, ‘Desperate Times’, 186.

¹²⁹ This is the official toll, although Downes argues the figure of one million, see: ‘Desperate Times’, 178, n78. Isabel V. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), 237.

¹³⁰ See: Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993); *Contemporary European History*, 16:4 (2007), special issue: World Wars and Population Displacement in the Twentieth Century.

¹³¹ Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, 225, 235.

¹³² James McMillan, ‘War’, in Bloxham and Gerwarth (eds), *Political Violence*, 48. For the radicalisation of warfare in World War I see: Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹³³ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars*, 125.

¹³⁴ See chapter 4.

see that military men such as Kitchener, Wolseley and Gatacre took their experiences with them and adapted tactics of extreme violence across the Empire and beyond; these connections warrant further research.

Clearly discussions regarding Germany's relationship with extreme violence in her colonies are linked to discussions of colonialism and genocide, as scholars have been considering the connections between German colonial violence and Nazi genocidal violence, as well as exploring Hitler's expansionist aims in 'the East' as colonialism.¹³⁵ Scholars have discussed whether German colonial violence can be understood as 'exceptional' and the extent to which we can identify 'continuities' from 'Africa to Auschwitz'.¹³⁶ This thesis argues that studies of British colonial violence are relevant to these debates in terms of the apparent emergence of a new colonial *Sonderweg*.¹³⁷ While it does not suffice to argue that there was a 'direct line' of continuity from the colonies to the genocidal violence of World War II, it is clear that there was an historical context of *European* traditions of violence which was relevant to twentieth-century developments of extreme violence. Levels of German colonial violence were not 'exceptional' and need to be considered within the context of European colonial practices.¹³⁸ Kuss argues that rather than a direct line of continuity, a 'German colonial *Sonderweg* was conspicuous by its absence'.¹³⁹ While contemporary British commentators may have criticised 'German methods' in the colonies prior to 1914, these arguments once again recall 'the peculiar imperial squint', when considering another empire's atrocious behaviour.¹⁴⁰ The present study demonstrates that it was not only the German colonists who celebrated introducing 'civilisation' to 'semi-barbarous people ... by the thunder of artillery, the demolition of towns, and

¹³⁵ See for example: Jürgen Zimmerer, 'The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39:2 (2005); Carroll P. Kakel, III, *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide: Hitler's 'Indian Wars' in the 'Wild East'* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*.

¹³⁶ See Benjamin Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe', *European History Quarterly*, 35:3 (2005), 429-64.

¹³⁷ Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 237.

¹³⁸ This fact was clear at the thought-provoking conference at the British Academy, 'Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern and Contemporary World', 29 June – 1 July 2015. Programme available at:

https://www.newcastle.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/180668/BritishAcademyProgram_Final_Web.pdf. Other studies of European colonial violence include: Benjamin Claude Bower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Klein und Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege*. Regarding Dutch colonial violence in Indonesia see: *Journal of Genocide Research*, 14:3-4 (2012).

¹³⁹ Kuss, German Colonial Wars, 3.

¹⁴⁰ V. G. Kiernan, *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse, 1815-1960* (London: Fontana and Leicester University Press, 1982), 166.

human bloodshed.¹⁴¹ With regards to the similar approaches of Britain and Germany in the colonies, Vinay Lal references the fact that the British ‘pioneered’ the use of dum-dum bullets in India, and argues that ‘though Britain, the island civilisation, prided itself on its unquestionable moral superiority to the militaristic Germans, it undoubtedly had a thing or two to teach’ them.¹⁴² Indeed, as Ulrike Lindner’s work highlights, the British Empire served as a ‘role model’ for European imperialism, and for Germany in particular.¹⁴³ As the introduction discusses, scholars have explored European colonialism as an important historical precedent to fascism on European soil. In criticising the ‘continuity thesis’, Birthe Kundrus emphasises a need ‘to relativise the significance of German colonialism and stress the European dimension of imperialism. From this vantage point, the imperial world of the 1930s, especially the British Empire, was a kind of “sounding board” for National Socialism.’¹⁴⁴ Hence the British Empire was also an important precedent regarding extreme racial violence. It is evident that colonial violence is relevant to understandings of the intra-European violence of the twentieth century and there is a need for more empirically based, synchronic comparisons of colonial violence and for further in-depth enquiry into individual cases of colonial brutality. We need further studies of European colonial violence based on archival research so that comparative research can be undertaken, which will enhance our understanding of the development of European traditions of violence both within and outside of the colonies.¹⁴⁵

A Colonial Logic of Genocide?¹⁴⁶

At the outset of this study I argued the relevance of considering the phenomenon of colonial violence through the lens of genocide. An exploration of the relationship

¹⁴¹ African explorer Joseph Thomson cited in Kenneth Mackenzie, ‘Some British Reactions to German Colonial Methods, 1885-1907’, *The Historical Journal*, 17:1 (1974), 167.

¹⁴² Vinay Lal, ‘Good Nazis and Just Scholars: Much Ado About the British Empire’, Review of P. J. Marshall ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire, Race and Class*, 38:4 (1997), 95.

¹⁴³ Ulrike Lindner, ‘German Colonialism and the British Neighbour in Africa Before 1914: Self-Definitions, Lines of Demarcation, and Cooperation’, in Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 254-72.

¹⁴⁴ Birthe Kundrus et al, ‘Forum: The German Colonial Imagination’, *German History*, 26:2 (2008), 269; Kundrus, ‘German Colonialism: Some Reflections on Reassessments, Specificities, and Constellations’, in Langbehn and Salama (eds), *German Colonialism*, 34.

¹⁴⁵ See Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, ‘Hannah Arendt’s Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz’, *Central European History*, 42 (2009); Stone, *Histories*, 235.

¹⁴⁶ Robbie McVeigh, ‘“The Balance of Cruelty”: Ireland, Britain and the Logic of Genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10:4 (2008), 541-61.

between colonialism and genocide demonstrates the connections between the two; in light of the size and significance of the British Empire it is logical that the latter also be at the centre of discussions regarding this relationship. Discussions of Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day highlight the need for greater investigation into Britain's role in mass violence, to challenge assumptions that genocide has little to do with Britain and its history; Britain's role in genocidal violence and practices is much more complex than is often assumed and this role needs to be explored. In a discussion of the relationship between Ireland and Britain within a context of genocide – an issue which has received only a limited amount of attention – Robbie McVeigh rightly emphasises the difference between settler and 'administrative colonialism', the latter being most relevant to the present study and within which 'the logic is less directly genocidal'.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, as McVeigh argues in the context of British policies in Ireland, the *potential* for genocidal policies was present, not least due to the ability of colonists to use starvation tactics as 'a deliberate *administrative* policy of genocide'.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, starvation tactics could serve to radicalise campaigns of colonial warfare into 'wars of extermination' (*Vernichtungskrieg*).¹⁴⁹ The one-sided nature of colonial violence, technological advances and increasingly 'total' aspects, as well as the racism that informed colonial violence are issues that connect the Empire to potential practices of genocide. The 'potential' for genocide is clear in the reconquest of the Sudan in reference to starvation tactics, the massacring of the enemy wounded and surrendering troops, as well as the targeting of Emirs for violence in the conflict's aftermath. However, in considering the relationship between colonialism and genocide, Michael Mann rightly points out that 'colonial governments almost never wanted to kill the natives beyond what was necessary for conquest. They wanted the natives to tax and conscript.'¹⁵⁰ Roberta Pergher and Mark Roseman also emphasise this point: 'On the face of it, genocide is inimical with empire, indeed in some sense its negation' as '[i]f the "others" are *all* eliminated ... imperial rule ends'.¹⁵¹ Hence, it is perhaps more

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 555.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 556: emphasis in original. See Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001).

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Morlang, "'Die Wahehe haben ihre Vernichtung gewollt.'" Der Krieg der "Kaiserliche Schutztruppe" gegen die Hehe in Deutsch-Ostafrika (1890-1898)", in Klein and Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege*, 96-97.

¹⁵⁰ Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2005), 73.

¹⁵¹ Roberta Pergher and Mark Roseman, 'The Holocaust – An Imperial Genocide?' *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 27:1 (2013), 45: emphasis in original. Although it is of course rarely the case that *all* members of a targeted group are killed in genocide.

useful to consider ‘moments’ of genocidal potential in relation to administrative colonialism, owing to the fact that, fundamentally, the European coloniser needed a population to colonise.¹⁵² In contrast to these arguments, when it comes to settler colonialism in nineteenth-century America and Australia, Norbert Finzsch, among others, has argued that settler imperialism is itself inherently genocidal.¹⁵³ The close relationship between colonialism and genocide is made clear by Raphael Lemkin’s oft-quoted statement that:

Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonisation of the area by the oppressor’s own nationals.¹⁵⁴

For Jürgen Zimmerer, the relevance of colonialism for genocide is clear; as he states, ‘genocide is colonial’, though it does not necessarily follow that the reverse is true.¹⁵⁵ The initial disregard of the subject ‘colonial genocide’ can be accounted for, in part, by the overemphasis of political scientists in the 1980s on the role of the state in genocide.¹⁵⁶ Lemkin, whose work on the subject, as well as the related 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide has been rediscovered in recent years, did not share this assumption.¹⁵⁷ When Patrick Wolfe discusses settler colonialism in genocidal terms he refers specifically to the ‘logic of elimination’, arguing that this logic is present in cases of settler colonialism and states

¹⁵² A. Dirk Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust’, in Moses and Dan Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2007), 171; Levene, *Rise of the West*, 52.

¹⁵³ Norbert Finzsch, ‘“The Aborigines...Were Never Annihilated, and Still They Are Becoming Extinct”’: Settler Imperialism and Genocide in Nineteenth-Century America and Australia’, in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn, 2010 [2008]), 252; see also: John Docker, ‘Are Settler-Colonies Inherently Genocidal? Re-Reading Lemkin’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 81-101; Patrick Wolfe, ‘Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4 (2006), 387; idem, ‘Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race’, *American Historical Review*, (2001), 866-905.

¹⁵⁴ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

¹⁵⁵ Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘Nationalsozialismus postkolonial: Plädoyer zur Globalisierung der deutschen Gewaltgeschichte’, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 57:6 (2009), 534.

¹⁵⁶ Dan Stone, ‘Defending the Plural: Hannah Arendt and Genocide Studies’, *New Formations*, 71 (2011), 52; idem, *Histories*, 214-16.

¹⁵⁷ As noted by A. Dirk Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 18.

that: 'Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal.'¹⁵⁸ Wolfe argues that this logic is a result of the settlers' need for the land, but not necessarily the labour of the people, thus making their presence undesirable to the colonists.¹⁵⁹ Colonial genocide challenges the perception of genocide as state-led as often in a colonial context it is the colonial settlers rather than the state that are leading the violence.¹⁶⁰ Caroline Elkins' *Britain's Gulag* also shows how the presence of settlers in a colonial context could radicalise the nature of the conflict in the face of indigenous resistance. Even though genocide did not occur in this case, Elkins highlights the *potential* for genocide as settlers grew increasingly frustrated with the actions of the imperial metropole and they sought to take the law into their own hands.¹⁶¹ The point regarding Elkins' study as well as the present work is not to 'prove' that genocide took place,¹⁶² but rather to examine the dynamics of violence within a consideration of the wider debates around genocide.

While studies of colonialism and genocide have highlighted similar issues to those identified in the present study with regards to communication and policies between the metropole and the periphery, these issues were made even more complex by the actions of the settlers and highlight the problematic issue of colonial genocide and intent.¹⁶³ The question of 'unintended' consequences of colonial policy is particularly challenging for genocide scholars.¹⁶⁴ Levels of responsibility are difficult to ascertain, for example, as governments were often more than aware that their policies would lead to what they perceived to be the 'inevitable' demise of the indigenous population as a result of factors such as disease, malnutrition, birth-rate decreases to

¹⁵⁸ Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism', 387.

¹⁵⁹ Although Wolfe emphasises that while the relationship between the colonisers and the American Indians was based upon the land, the 'blacks' relationship with their colonisers—from the colonisers' point of view at least—centred on labour' and hence slavery: Wolfe, 'Land, Labor, and Difference', 867. For an alternative view see: Alison Palmer, 'Colonial and Modern Genocide: Explanations and Categories', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21:1 (1998), 103.

¹⁶⁰ A case in point is the destruction of the Aborigines in Australia; for further discussion see: A. Dirk Moses, 'Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History', in Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 24-25, 28-35; Tony Barta, 'Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonization of Australia', in Isidor Wallimann and Michael N. Dobkowski (eds), *Genocide and the Modern Age* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 237-51. Palmer differentiates between 'state-led' and 'society-led' genocide: Palmer, 'Colonial and Modern Genocide'.

¹⁶¹ Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, 38, 64.

¹⁶² See Moses, 'Empire, Colony, Genocide', 7.

¹⁶³ In relation to the genocide of the Aborigines in Australia see: A. Dirk Moses, 'An Antipodean Genocide? The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in Australia', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2:1 (2000); Barta, 'Relations of Genocide'; idem, 'Decent Disposal: Australian Historians and the Recovery of Genocide', in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010 [2008]), 296-322.

¹⁶⁴ Moses, 'An Antipodean Genocide?' 89-90.

name a few, even if these were not the effects of an active policy of killing.¹⁶⁵ Hence, the issue of communications is no less problematic with regards to settler colonialism and policies in the metropole could differ enormously to the intentions of settlers and the two were often highly contradictory; just because official policy was theoretically designed to protect the indigenous population, did not insure its implementation and real conditions on the periphery could easily overtake the ideals of those in the metropole. Thus, a lack of agency from government could be enough to seal the fate of a native community, with a persistent failure of the metropole to hinder settler behaviour in the colonies.¹⁶⁶ We may recognise the fact that the government in London often failed to protect the population and continued its imperial project regardless of the devastating consequences at the hands of the settlers, consequences of which they were well aware.¹⁶⁷ This study demonstrates that in cases of administrative colonialism, politicians in the metropole were also aware that extreme tactics of violence were being utilised against indigenous resistance and that politicians in London rarely had a moderating effect upon these campaigns.

Establishing clear lines of intent in the colonies can be highly problematic, especially since colonial systems of government could be confusing and complex. One example, which has been discussed among genocide scholars, is the case of the destruction of the indigenous Tasmanian population; Tom Lawson certainly considers this to be a case of ‘British genocide’. While highlighting the key role of social Darwinist thinking and the extermination of the Tasmanians, Lawson also emphasises key features of the approach taken in Australia, which we may identify as being part of a wider approach throughout the British Empire, even though the outcome in the case of Tasmania was the almost total destruction of the indigenous population of the island, and clearly this genocidal violence went far beyond anything discussed in the cases above. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that similar approaches to violence against the indigenous populations were utilised across the British Empire. For example, Lawson describes the desire of the British government to demonstrate ‘absolute force’ against the Aborigines and thus to ‘demonstrate to the indigenous population the full might of the British Empire’.¹⁶⁸ Clearly force was used to ‘teach the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 90, 97. See: Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

¹⁶⁶ Ann Curthoys, ‘Genocide in Tasmania: The History of an Idea’, in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 246.

¹⁶⁷ See Moses, ‘Genocide and Settler Society’, 28-29.

¹⁶⁸ Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 51.

natives a lesson' and exemplary violence was used repeatedly to suppress both actual and potential resistance across the Empire, as this study shows.¹⁶⁹

Racial prejudices informed London's indifference to the suffering of the indigenous population at the hands of the settlers, believing that their extinction was ultimately 'inevitable'.¹⁷⁰ While the cases within the present study do not deal directly with genocide, they demonstrate that British politicians were willing to allow extreme methods in the colonies in the event that these were deemed to be necessary. In a consideration of the genocidal potential of colonial warfare, Dominik Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer emphasise that 'even in cases in which colonial military commanders did not aim at exterminating their indigenous enemies they usually willingly and cynically accepted the death of thousands of Africans or Asians as a collateral damage of their method of warfare'.¹⁷¹ This thesis has repeatedly highlighted the unequal and often one-sided nature of colonial warfare in terms of strength and weaponry and shows that the potential for mass violence against indigenous resistance was great; here again we may recognise the 'potential' for genocidal violence in the extreme violence that was routinely utilised. Kuss and Bühner demonstrate the ways in which a consideration of genocide is relevant to studies of European colonialism; Kuss' study also shows that there could be a fine line between extreme violence and genocide, subject to the circumstances on the ground, which could quickly radicalise. And in emphasising extreme tactics of brutality – including hunger tactics and scorched earth – Bühner highlights that such tactics were often a sign of weakness on the part of the 'colonial powers', rather than the result of a clear policy of genocide, although the end result could still be highly destructive.¹⁷² While the cases discussed here did not constitute genocide, this thesis shows that even small-scale colonial conflicts led to one-sided brutalities that ravaged the regions the British sought to 'civilise' and 'protect'. Colonial conflicts could easily become wars of attrition due to the imbalance of power and resources between the colonial force and the indigenous forces/local populations. Genocidal 'potential' was further heightened by the perceived 'illegitimacy' of the colonial enemy. Schaller and Zimmerer also consider the binary encoding regarding the

¹⁶⁹ See, Amanda Nettlebeck and Lyndall Ryan, 'Salutary Lessons: The Australian Colonial Frontier and the "Civilising" Role of Legal Violence', paper presented at the conference: *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern and Contemporary World* on 29 June 2015 at the British Academy.

¹⁷⁰ Moses, 'An Antipodean Genocide?' 90, 97. See: Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*; Dan Stone, 'Biopower and Modern Genocide', in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 162-79.

¹⁷¹ Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Settlers, Imperialism, Genocide: Seeing the Global Without Ignoring the Local', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10:2 (2008), 193-94.

¹⁷² Bühner, 'Kriegführung', 215.

‘colonised’ and the ‘colonisers’ to be a ‘precondition for genocide’, stating that ‘Colonial wars are thus potentially genocidal’. In considering the relationship between settler colonialism and genocide, they state that ‘three factors seem to be especially important: a sense of crises, a radicalisation on the ground, and the absence of any restraining political or moral authority’.¹⁷³ Clearly the issues they raise are relevant to the present study; a sense of crisis and perceived threat to the colonial project was present in each case and was essential to the execution of extreme violence, but this sense of crisis was often limited and stemmed predominantly from the results of the colonisers’ own actions against the indigenous populations. There was no real threat on the ground and this meant that the violence was contained and did not extend beyond the objective of ‘pacifying’ the area and bringing it under British control.

As Dirk Moses highlights, there are many ways to study empire and genocide; the point of such endeavours is not to ‘prove’ that genocide took place, but neither should we downplay the levels of destruction that were present.¹⁷⁴ While for many imperial historians, the issue of genocide in the colonies is an ‘anachronistic question’,¹⁷⁵ it is the case that colonialism and genocide are intimately connected and if we view colonial warfare on a continuum of violence, we can recognise the potential for genocide within. Colonial violence was often one-sided: first, from a technological point of view. Second, in relation to the disparity between the losses of the indigenous population in comparison to the British forces. However, indigenous opponents also had advantages in the form of local knowledge and resources, although British tactics of scorched earth and blockades soon cut off access to these resources. British colonial violence may be viewed within a wider context of European colonial violence and clearly further comparative studies are necessary. It is apparent that we need to be more open and honest about Britain’s relationship with extreme violence and the true nature and legacy of the British Empire.

As the introduction discusses, debates regarding European colonial violence and their relevance to European violence raise the question of why it was Germany, and not Britain, that unleashed the greatest levels of racial violence across Europe in the twentieth century. Hull presents the issue thus: while ‘all imperial powers behaved despicably in the colonies ... only Germany went on during World War II to pursue

¹⁷³ Schaller and Zimmerer, ‘Settlers’, 193-94.

¹⁷⁴ Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide’, 7.

¹⁷⁵ See chapter 1.

complete extermination as national policy'.¹⁷⁶ Britain shared many of the same concerns and challenges that its continental neighbours were grappling with at the *fin de siècle*, including the implications of industrialisation and urbanisation, and the demands of the new working-class, including increased political participation. Britain should not be viewed as immune to more extreme elements that were seeking new solutions to contemporary problems, but political extremism was contained by the political system and importantly, in Britain, unlike in other European countries in the interwar period, 'mainstream conservatism did not need to co-opt [British fascism's] ideas in order to remain in power'.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, these ideas were present in Britain and as Dan Stone explores, the fact that British fascism fundamentally did not go beyond a set of ideas was not 'inevitable' and although we may look back at this period as one of 'political continuity', it was not so keenly felt at the time.¹⁷⁸

If one considers the factors presented as typical in the interwar period in encouraging political and racial violence, these clearly had limited relevance for Britain. Ian Kershaw for example emphasises that low levels of political violence corresponded with, *inter alia*, the fulfilment of imperial ambitions, having fought on the winning side, a lack of revolutionary or counter-revolutionary circumstances and a national identity based on statehood over ethnicity and culture.¹⁷⁹ There is no doubt that victory in World War I was essential in providing stability within Britain. However, the extreme violence that Britain utilised in World War I to become a victor is often overlooked.¹⁸⁰ In Britain, a parliamentary system had long been established, even if universal suffrage had not, and 'the principal traditions of liberal democracy were both longstanding and highly regarded'.¹⁸¹ But there were periods of instability in Britain in the interwar period, including the General Strike in 1926, which 'left a simmering legacy of bitterness'. However, incidents of violence in the Strike were relatively low and institutional

¹⁷⁶ Isabel V. Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany', in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 142.

¹⁷⁷ Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 4.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Ian Kershaw, 'War and Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 14:1 (2005), 115.

¹⁸⁰ Methods included the 'starvation blockade' as discussed above.

¹⁸¹ John Stevenson, 'Conservatism and the Failure of Fascism in Interwar Britain', in Martin Blinkhorn (ed.), *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 264.

representation of the unions meant that a revolutionary approach was not favoured.¹⁸² Hence, there was a lack of revolutionary zeal in the country, as demonstrated by the fact that, as Carl Levy highlights, Tory support for Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists was abandoned ‘when he resorted to violence’.¹⁸³ Despite the relative political stability that Britain experienced, in some respects we may recognise similar trends to events on the continent and demobilised soldiers after World War I took part in race riots and street violence in the aftermath of the war, joined the paramilitary auxiliaries in Ireland (the ‘black and tans’), as well as the expanding trade unions.¹⁸⁴ However, as Paul Preston asserts, Britain was one of the countries with a more flexible system, which was better able to deal with the challenges it faced, and also, importantly, had the ‘safety valve’ of a colonial empire.¹⁸⁵ Of course, we cannot know what would have taken place had Britain been on the losing side of the war and had lost its colonies, as Germany had,¹⁸⁶ but clearly the strength of the British Empire and Britain’s victory in the war were key in terms of maintaining relative peace at home, as was the long-established parliamentary system.

This relative peace in Britain in contrast to the continent allowed the British Army to fulfil its role in policing at home within the practice of ‘military discretion’ when dealing with civil unrest; this approach was clearly not in evidence in the Empire, as the example of Ireland and the prospect of Home Rule shows.¹⁸⁷ As in the nineteenth century, throughout the interwar period, the violence undertaken on behalf of the British government took place predominantly throughout the British Empire, as indigenous resistance to the British Empire created ‘a crisis of empire’.¹⁸⁸ As the present study

¹⁸² Paul Preston, ‘The Great Civil War: European Politics, 1914-1945’, in T. C. W. Blanning (ed.), *The Oxford History of Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 167; Barbara Weinberger, ‘Keeping the Peace? Policing Strikes 1906-26’, *History Today*, 37:12 (1987), 35; Stevenson, ‘Conservatism’, 267.

¹⁸³ Carl Levy, ‘Fascism, National Socialism and Conservatives in Europe, 1914-1945: Issues for Comparativists’, *Contemporary European History*, 8:1 (1999), 116. In relation to the violence of the suffragettes see Stevenson, ‘Conservatism’, 264.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas, ‘Policing British Colonial Protest’, 60; to compare circumstances in relation to the defeated powers and the role of paramilitary violence see: Gerwarth, ‘The Central European Counter-Revolution’. For a consideration of political violence in England see: Adrian Gregory, ‘Peculiarities of the English? War, Violence and Politics: 1900-1939’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 1:1 (2003), 44-59. Regarding the interwar myth of ‘peaceableness’: Jon Lawrence, ‘Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 557-89.

¹⁸⁵ Preston, ‘The Great Civil War’, 153-55.

¹⁸⁶ Anne Summers, ‘Militarism in Britain before the Great War’, *History Workshop Journal*, 2:1 (1976), 122.

¹⁸⁷ Spiers, ‘The Late Victorian Army’, 210; see also: Thomas, ‘Policing British Colonial Protest’, 58.

¹⁸⁸ John Gallagher, ‘Nationalisms and the Crisis of Empire, 1919-1922’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 15 (1981), 355-68.

demonstrates, Britain's willingness to rule by force in the colonies was not new. As resistance grew in strength, as Martin Thomas argues, there was a 'repressive consensus' regarding how to deal with colonial resistance in this period, which 'rarely broke down';¹⁸⁹ this consensus was based upon the need to 'terrorise' participants of unrest, rather than 'antagonise'.¹⁹⁰ This study addresses the brutalities of suppressing colonial resistance and the expressed need to act swiftly and decisively against indigenous resistance, demonstrating that such 'repression' occurred within a wider historical framework of British violence in the colonies. It would take another world war before resistance to the British Empire would achieve its aims, but Britain's 'dirty wars' of decolonisation were fought until the bitter end and were consistent with Britain's violent colonial past, rather than a doctrine of 'minimum force', as discussed in chapter 1.¹⁹¹

Concluding Remarks

This thesis emphasises the importance of archival research for furthering our understanding of colonial violence and the ways in which British soldiers viewed the events in which they participated, demonstrating that they perceived the destructive and brutal tactics as justified, based on the 'uncivilised' nature of the 'savage natives'. This study highlights the extent of the destruction that occurred as a result of 'small wars' across the Empire – a term which reveals little as to the scale of the resultant destruction. There are many examples of these wars and we know very little about most of them, which clearly warrant further research. While sometimes small in scale, these wars nevertheless devastated whole communities, often with the use of 'total' methods, and need to be studied in their own right. By focusing on these little-known conflicts, this study illuminates how first-hand accounts are essential to our understanding of British colonial violence and the ways that British military men justified their participation in extreme violence. This thesis set out to demonstrate the nature of this violence and the levels of destruction it entailed throughout the British Empire, in contrast to claims that the British Empire was fundamentally a 'good thing'. It shows the inherent nature of the violence within the colonial relationship and the importance of

¹⁸⁹ Thomas, 'Policing British Colonial Protest', 56.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁹¹ See: Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Imperial Endgame: Britain's Dirty Wars and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

racial prejudices to the outbreak of violence and the forms taken by this violence once conflicts broke out. By its nature, colonial violence was disproportionate; extreme violence was accepted as necessary in the endeavour of preventing further potential unrest.

Further archival research is needed to enhance our understanding of the extent of the violence and destruction across the Empire, as well as the unfolding of events, which led to ever-expanding British rule. Future research will also need to bring the violence of the British Empire within a comparative framework.¹⁹² This study contributes to the historiographies of the individual wars, which for too long, have been consigned to the studies of often ‘parochial’ military history, meaning that their relevance within a wider context of extreme violence has been overlooked.¹⁹³ Such studies are necessary to further challenge the long-held perception that the British Empire was ‘not as bad’ as its European counterparts. This thesis also contributes to the body of work on colonial warfare, within wider considerations of studies of violence. The existence of the British Empire was only possible because its politicians and military men were willing to utilise extreme methods of violence in the face of opposition. While maximum (genocidal) violence was not always used, neither was the minimum and as scholars are increasingly finding, the history of the British Empire is not one of restraint. Violence was fundamental to the British imperial project from the very beginning, both in establishing and maintaining British rule. Throughout its lifetime the British Empire consistently utilised extreme violence to extend its reach and as such, the brutalities of decolonisation were consistent with the logic and traditions of British colonial violence in establishing and maintaining the Empire. As well as considering the violence of conquest and occupation we need to incorporate studies of the everyday violence that permeated the lives of those who found themselves under the imposition of British colonial rule. British rule generally began and ended with measures of highly destructive violence, and in between these instances, violence was ever-present in the day-to-day running of the Empire. Furthermore, the ways in which European empires interacted with each other are important and the means by which

¹⁹² As John MacKenzie highlights, British imperial historians have remained too introspective and more comparative studies are needed regarding similarities, cooperation and connections: MacKenzie, ‘European Imperialism: A Zone of Co-operation Rather than Competition?’ in Barth and Cvetkovski (eds), *Imperial Co-operation*, 47.

¹⁹³ See Kim A. Wagner, ‘Seeing Like a Soldier: The Amritsar Massacre and the Politics of Military History’, in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 25.

techniques of violence were transmitted between empires and back to Europe need further investigation.

This thesis argues that a reassessment of Britain's relationship with violence is required, an issue that is clearly much more complicated than standard studies of British history acknowledge. There is a British history of colonial violence, as well as a legacy of willingness to utilise extreme tactics against both combatants and noncombatants both in and outside of the colonies. Such a reassessment not only has implications for the country's past, but also for its role in the world in the present and future. Studies of British colonial violence also, of course, have implications for the history of those nations against whom this violence was unleashed. A rethink is also necessary regarding the relationship between European and colonial warfare; clearly European tactics did not correspond to contemporary notions of 'civilised warfare' and extreme violence occurred throughout nineteenth-century Europe, albeit sporadically. Comparative studies will be essential to this endeavour, as will the work of scholars of violence, genocide, and colonialism, as well as those of European and British history. Considerations of European colonialism, of which the British Empire was central, are essential to furthering our understanding of the dynamics of colonialism and violence in the colonies as well as on European soil; in the twentieth century, the 'violence outside Europe was about to come home to roost'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind*, 320.

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