Africa in Cleveland: 
Colonial Wars and Perceptions of Race and Empire in American Newspapers

Thesis

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By

Amy Lynn Selby, M.A.

Graduate Program in African American and African Studies

The Ohio State University

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Thesis Committee:

Franco Barchiesi, Advisor

Lupenga Mphande

Sarah Van Beurden
Abstract
This thesis examines the change in American public opinion regarding two colonial wars, the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 in South Africa and the Mau Mau uprising of 1952-1960 in Kenya. The representations of the Anglo-Boer War differed greatly from those of the Mau Mau uprising, despite similarities such as the colonial power involved, occurrence within African colonies, and even the methods used by both the colonial power and the colonized people. While mainstream newspapers strongly sided with the Boers, the Mau Mau were presented as savages. However, the African-American newspapers did not follow the mainstream interpretations of events. By using comparative historical analysis of three newspapers in the Cleveland, Ohio area, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Cleveland Gazette, and the Cleveland Call & Post, I demonstrate that the perceptions of Clevelanders toward the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1901 and the Mau Mau uprising of 1952-1960 resulted from contemporary anxieties regarding the fear of foreigners and communism, and, above all, race. While white Americans overwhelmingly supported the Boers during the colonial war in South Africa at the turn of the century, they supported violent methods to suppress a colonial war in Kenya fifty years later. African-Americans, however, were more varied in their opinion of the earlier conflict, with different newspapers supporting the Boers or British or, sometimes, neither. While African-Americans did support the Mau Mau, there was a concern with identifying with the uprising due to fears of communist accusations and the
anxiety of jeopardizing the burgeoning domestic civil rights movement. This thesis challenges the notion that most Americans supported the Boers, while, fifty years later, viewed the Mau Mau as violent savages by demonstrating that American opinion varied, thus defeating the notion of a single “public opinion.” I conclude that understanding the reflection of global events in “public opinion” must be set against the background of domestic issues and anxieties, which amplify the resonance of those events. The media coverage of the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising speak to the troubles of American society as much as to distant conflicts.
To Dr. Joseph Takougang, Professor of African History and Studies at the University of Cincinnati. It was his class, ten years ago, that turned my attention to Africa.

To my father, Thomas, whose story inspired this thesis, and my mother, Terry, for her unwavering moral support.

To Charlie
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Vita

June 2000........................................Lakewood High School

June 2004........................................B.A. History, University of Cincinnati

June 2009........................................M.A. History, University of Cincinnati

2007-2009......................................Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of History, University of Cincinnati

2009-2010......................................University Fellowship, The Ohio State University

2010-2011......................................Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of African American and African Studies, The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: African American and African Studies
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Introduction:
Race, the Press, and Colonial Violence

In the early 1950s, my father was approximately five to six years old and he was afraid of a group called the Mau Mau. He did not know who or what they were or where they were from, he only remembered being afraid that they would come down the street and attack his family. This fear was so vivid that he clearly remembers this incident almost sixty years later. It is even more telling that this event occurred before my grandparents bought a television; therefore, what my father knew of the Mau Mau Emergency was from listening to his parents and other adults talk about the information they had read in the morning newspapers. Although he now finds this story humorous, as the wild imagination of a six year old stemming from an unknown fear, it demonstrates the power newspapers had to both form and reflect public opinion.

However, the story my father related caused me to consider the larger implications of another colonial war and its presentation in the United States, the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The contrast of these two colonial wars within the

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1 Many terms are used for the situation in Kenya from 1952-1960. "Mau Mau Emergency," "Mau Mau uprising," "Mau Mau rebellion," etc. I mainly will use "Mau Mau uprising," because of the implied negative context involved with the word "rebellion." This is neither the time nor the place to discuss the literature or opinions of historians and politicians regarding the "right" of Kenyans to "rise up" against the British. As I take the stance that a "rebellion" implies that the Mau Mau did not have the right, I will avoid this term. I will use "Mau Mau Emergency," particularly with regards to the British government and its response, since it was the "official" term of the situation in Kenya between 1952-1960. When I do use "Emergency," it is through the British perspective or in a sarcastic tone, as in later when I discuss when the Mau Mau "Emergency" was "officially" declared by the British, although it had been present for several years prior to the declaration.
British Empire has the potential to be both interesting and enlightening. Although both the Mau Mau uprising and the Boer War took place in the British Empire on the African continent and were major campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa, the British Empire confronted different racialized opponents. Despite this, there are many similarities between these events that make the British Empire and the wars in its colonies of South Africa and Kenya excellent examples for investigation of how the reporting on foreign colonial wars can reflect domestic anxieties within the United States and American media. Both the Boer War and Mau Mau uprising were attempts to throw off or avoid British colonial rule\(^2\) and witnessed the use of concentration camps established by the British in order to control the local populations. The majority populations in the camps during both wars were predominately female, as the men were in the field fighting. Furthermore, most of the events that were reported in the press came through British cable and wire services and few dissenting reports were allowed to pass through the censors.\(^3\) The events in South Africa and Kenya were not only newsworthy in the metropole, but also in the United States and made headlines in the American press.

Despite these similarities, there was one main distinction, which resulted in differently racialized American perceptions of colonial violence in these two events. The opponents of the British Empire during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, the Boers (or Afrikaners), were whites mostly of Dutch descent. Originally settling in the Cape during

\(^2\) The British government and the governments in the Afrikaner Republics (The Orange Free State and the South African Republic) disputed over the extent of British control and even the status of the Afrikaner Republics as either colonies or independent nations. This will be addressed more in Chapter 2. There was no such ambiguity on the status of Kenya as a colony of Great Britain.

the seventeenth century, by the early nineteenth century the Boers found themselves under British authority. The Boer War of 1899-1902 was not the first conflict between the Dutch-descended settlers and the encroaching British. In the 1830s and 1840s, the Boers, unhappy with British authority, had fled north of the Cape Colony in the “Great Trek”; however, this event did not spark armed conflict between the British and the Boers. Tensions spilled into warfare in 1880 during the “First” Anglo-Boer War after the Boer South African Republic (Transvaal) refused annexation by Great Britain. The peace treaty and conditions associated with the First Anglo-Boer War were the main causes and conditions which led to the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The situation in Kenya fifty years later differed in that the opponents of the British were Africans rather than European settlers. The Land and Freedom Army, commonly referred to as the Mau Mau, was predominately made up of Kikuyu farmers protesting land policies that favored the white settlers over the African majority. In both cases, the opponents of the British Empire were members of rural societies, the hostilities predominately involved one ethnic group in the region, sometimes assisted by others, and both peoples were rising up against the British government in the name of freedom and independence. Against these similarities stood a visible difference: the Boers were white

4 It is unclear where the term “Mau Mau” originated. Some hypotheses include variations of “muma,” or “uma,” “oath” or “get out,” respectively, in Kikuyu; variations of “uma” or “ua,” or “to bite/sting” or “to kill,” respectively, in Swahili; an unknown language for “quickly, quickly” or “the hidden ones;” relation to the Mau Escarpment; or even a nonsensical term designed to frighten Europeans. See Carolyn Elkins, Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 380, n. 44; Gerald Horne, Mau Mau in Harlem?: The U.S. and the Liberation of Kenya (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009), 241, n. 3; David A. Percox, Mau Mau & the Arming of the State, in Mau Mau and Nationhood, eds. E.S. Atieno Odhiambo & John Lonsdale (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), 146, n. 9
and the members of Mau Mau were black.⁵ I argue here that this racial difference was then used as a signifier of American perceptions of those two conflicts in ways that reflected domestic anxieties toward contemporary issues concerning race and politics and the way these concerns played out within the newspapers of a growing urban area, Cleveland, represents tensions accompanying population and social change.

As international historian Richard Mulanax states, “[o]ne forgets today that in 1899 and 1900, the attention of the American people was riveted to events in South Africa.”⁶ In Cleveland, Ohio, the Boer War was rarely absent from the front pages during the first year of hostilities. However, not much exists in term of studies of articles, political cartoons, editorials, and letters to the editor in American newspapers. A few analyses have been published regarding the perceptions of the Boer War in the media, although they focus mainly on British newspapers. Paula Krebs, in *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War*, provides an in-depth study of the Boer War and the role of the British newspapers in shaping and reflecting British public opinion.⁷

According to Mulanax, American public opinion was overwhelmingly pro-Boer, while the McKinley and Roosevelt administrations were “amicably neutral” toward Great Britain.⁸ Most popular opinion was underpinned by the persistent collective memory of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, which helped to form a general ill will

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⁵ It is important to remember that “Boers” was an ethnic group in South Africa while Mau Mau was a movement comprised mainly of the Kikuyu ethnic group.
⁷ Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*.
⁸ Mulanax, *The Boer War in American Politics and Democracy*.
toward the British, as well as Irish and German populations that were usually anti-British and pro-Boer. However, this public opinion, as demonstrated in mainstream newspapers, represented mostly a white readership and ignored the African-American minority. African-American readers and press were in a more ambiguous position regarding the Boer War. The Boers were white descendants of Dutch colonizers, but they were also trying to prevent and overthrow the colonial yoke of Great Britain. Both sides in the confrontation were colonizers, both the British and the Boers were “white,” and there were reports of both sides mistreating Africans.

Similarly, the Mau Mau uprising was major news in both the mainstream and African-American media. While the white press was decidedly pro-British and anti-Mau Mau, the violent actions of which it reported as atrocities, African-American leaders and the Black press found themselves straddling an uncomfortable line. The Mau Mau were seeking to rid themselves of colonial oppression, which was welcomed by the African-American leaders and press. However, the reports from Kenya regarding the Mau Mau violence, presented a dilemma as to whether Black leaders committed to peaceful change

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9 Ibid.
10 While both the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising can be considered wars for decolonization, since they were attempts to remove British authority, it is more aptly to call them “colonial wars.” The Mau Mau uprising is unquestionably a war for decolonization, the Anglo-Boer War is trickier to classify as such. The Boer Republics were created after the Great Trek, during which Boers traveled north of the Orange and Vaal Rivers. After the First Anglo-Boer War of 1880-1881, the independence of the Boer Republics was questioned as the Boers, as victors, declared themselves independent while the British claimed the territory as part of the Empire. The Second Anglo-Boer War can better be described as a “colonial war” or even a “war of conquest,” rather than a “war for decolonization.” This issue will return in this paper in Chapter 2 and in the first section of the Conclusion. See Anthony Nuttig, *Scramble for Africa: The Great Trek to the Boer War* (New York: Dutton Publishers, 1971); Chapter One in Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York: Random House, 1979); Peter Warwick, “Introduction,” in *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, eds. Peter Warwick and S.B. Spies (London: Trewin Copplestone Books Ltd., 1980); Bill Nasson, “Introduction,” in *The South African War, 1899-1902* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999);
could support the movement in spite of its methods, towards which the rising civil rights movement had an uncomfortable relationship.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon, a foundational postcolonial theorist, stated that violence was inherent to colonialism and, in order for the colonized to free themselves from their oppressors, violent means, in proportion to that exerted by the colonists, would be needed. Gayatri Spivak agrees with Fanon in her understanding of colonialism as something inherently violent, in what she calls “the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project.” Several authors who have examined colonial wars note, and in some cases center their studies on, the escalating violence associated with obtaining and maintaining colonial possessions. In her study of the 1904-1907 German annihilation of the Herero and Nama populations in German Southwest Africa, Isabel Hull argues that the Germans embraced a violent extremism, which included the use of “collections camps” in order to “monitor,” and, in some cases, destroy a civilian population. However, the “collection camps” used by the Germans were not their own

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invention. S.B. Spies’s study of the internment of Boer civilians by the British during the 1899-1902 Boer War indicates that colonial powers were willing to adopt increasingly severe policies against whole populations, even when those populations were themselves white European settlers.16 These draconian policies begun in the 1899-1902 war in South Africa, continued in other areas of the African continent and elsewhere during much of the next century. It is within this framework of postcolonial critical theory that I examine the American press and colonial violence.

One of the most influential books regarding perceptions of colonialism in public opinion is Anne McClintock’s *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*.17 She argues that race, gender, and sexuality cannot be separated from the imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.18 McClintock’s study examines the print media, in the form of advertisements, and their shaping and supporting of the colonial context. However, she only examines advertisements in British newspapers rather than also including articles, editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons. By examining these other indicators of public opinion within American newspapers, in the context established by McClintock and other postcolonial theorists, I will discuss what makes the representations of the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising substantially different between the mainstream and African-American newspapers

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16 Spies, *Methods of Barbarism*.
The aims of this project are threefold. The first is to investigate how the Boer War and Mau Mau uprising were portrayed in the American press, particularly in Cleveland, Ohio, a large, Midwestern industrial city, in order to reveal public perceptions of colonial violence. Second, to show how mainstream newspapers differed from African-American newspapers, and, third, to demonstrate how these representations are, in fact, a mirror of contemporary anxieties. I will focus on the Midwest for several reasons. First, I wish to contain my study within a specific geographic location and much focus has already been given to African-American newspapers in such areas as the South and East. Similarly, there was a vibrant, stable, long running, and influential Black press in many cities in the Midwest that has not been given the same attention as other areas. Third, these cities of the Midwest had relatively large African-American populations outside the South and yet were smaller than the large metropoles of New York City and Washington, D.C. Many Midwestern cities had large Germanic, Irish, and Anglo-descent populations, each of which could impact public opinion and the media, a factor that decisively shaped the contrasting coverage of colonial events in Cleveland’s prominent mainstream and African-American newspapers.

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20 Extensive literature has been written regarding the *Chicago Defender*, probably more than any other African-American newspaper.

21 While there were many African-American newspapers established throughout the Midwest during the late 1800s and early 1900s, none managed to survive long enough to encompass both the Boer War (1899-1902) and the Mau Mau Emergency (1952-1960), unlike contemporary “mainstream”
Much has been written on the history of the press in the United States. The history of foreign news in the American press is more important to this study than the history of the press itself. Aurora Wallace’s seminal *Newspapers and the Making of Modern America* comprehensively looks at small town newspapers as well as national news outlets, but does not examine how foreign news in these newspapers helped “make” American public opinion toward foreign countries. David Paul Nord, in *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers*, examines how news created communities based on location, religion, or class, but does not look at how these communities came to interpret foreign news. I will, instead, focus on how different readerships in Cleveland, as addressed by different newspapers, interpreted foreign events with regards to their own understanding of domestic issues.

There have been several studies showing that certain factors determine which countries are represented in American news and which characteristics generally shape interest in foreign news. These factors include wars, coups, violence, and natural disasters, what has been termed “crisis reporting,” and to a lesser degree, distance from the United States, economic ties, and relevance to the United States. As early as 1930, newspapers. Therefore, two different African-American newspapers had to be used to cover the two time periods. While *The Plain Dealer* will be examined for both the 1899-1902 and 1952-1960 time periods, the *Cleveland Gazette* will be used for the former and the *Call and Post* for the latter.

Julian Woodward recognized “that the average newspaper editor of an American morning daily is convinced that at least in peace times an increase beyond 5 or 6 percent in the proportion of news space devoted to foreign dispatches will not pay its cost in terms of increased circulation.”\textsuperscript{26} Beverly G. Hawk postulates that “crisis reporting” is the result of little space or time being given to an individual story. She argues that “if a reporter has only a brief time or a small space in which to describe and explain a political event much, of necessity, must be left untold.”\textsuperscript{27} Hawk further claims that news stories need to be brief in order for the American audience to “comfortably understand.”\textsuperscript{28} This means that such stories as wars, coups, natural disasters, famines, disease, and other “crises” take prime of place in the media. In his critique of the failures of American news programs on television, Aaron Segal states “the American viewer has no background information to prepare him/her for the two minutes of crisis news on his evening screen.”\textsuperscript{29} Viewers or newspaper readers are, therefore, forced to turn to themselves to fill in the blanks, often relying on stereotypes. It is “[w]hen ignorance is combined with stereotypes[,] that the reporting can be downright mischievous.”\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 52.
However, Emmanuel Onyedike argues that “crisis reporting” of Africa is less prominent in African-American newspapers, whose editors are more focused “on presenting positive images of Africa.”\textsuperscript{31} Although my study involves two wars, and thus fits the category of “crisis reporting,” the use of such reporting is important to study American public representations of colonialism and how related stereotypes were not just the result of incomplete information or short attention spans, but also spoke to a domestic American reality that, like colonial societies, confronted its own racialized inequalities, conflicts, and anxieties.

To be sure, news about wars and other “crisis reporting” may grab headlines, but, according to Beverly G. Hawk, this interest is fleeting. She claims that “[i]nterest in Africa waxes and wanes. […] Many stories surge to the headlines and disappear quickly, leaving Americans with little understanding of the continent or the politics that drive it.”\textsuperscript{32} This observation was demonstrated by both the Boer War of 1899-1902 and the Mau Mau uprising. When the conflicts began, news regarding the events was on the front page for many days and editorials were frequent. However, as the conflicts wore on, coverage declined. When the Boer War went from large troop movements and sieges of cities to the more prolonged guerrilla warfare, the front page news stories became far less frequent. Similarly, not long after the conflict began, stories regarding the Mau Mau uprising were hidden among the pages of the \textit{Cleveland Plain Dealer}. As the war dragged on, the newspaper resorted to stories emphasizing how many suspected and


\textsuperscript{32} Hawk, “Introduction,” 3.
convicted Mau Mau were hanged by the British for treason, terrorism, and murder. While the *Cleveland Call & Post* coverage of the Mau Mau lasted longer, it too started losing interest in the conflict as other domestic stories took precedence.\(^{33}\)

Conversely, researchers have argued that “relevance to the United States is an important factor in the international news coverage in the U.S. mass media,”\(^{34}\) which R.G. Hicks and A. Gordon call “ethnocentrism.”\(^{35}\) In contrast to Hicks and Gordon’s “ethnocentrism,” Hawk claims that news stories involving Africa are likely to be brief, in order to remove them from an historical context that could link the West directly to the problem reported.\(^{36}\) Hawk’s argument is substantiated by the reporting of the Mau Mau uprising, when the focus was more on the actions of the Kikuyu rather than their reasons for fighting the British in the first place. Although Chang et al. and Hicks and Gordon focus on the United States, Hawk’s argument extends to the West in general and is applicable to Great Britain, which was perhaps the United States’ main ally in the 1950s. I argue that this “ethnocentrism” extends to representations of and identification with participants along racial lines.\(^{37}\)

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\(^{33}\) Such domestic stories include the Sam Sheppard murder trial in 1954 and the *Brown v. Board* decision.

\(^{34}\) Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger, “Determinant of International News Coverage,” 410.


\(^{36}\) Hawk, “Introduction,” 18.

\(^{37}\) Although outside the scope of this paper, there is also a gendered component to this history of the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising. During both conflicts, mainly men fought British forces and the concentration camps largely incarcerated women and children. In addition, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British men faced a “crisis of masculinity,” which war and the militarization of British culture, *e.g.*, the Boy Scouts, could help alleviate. By men fighting in the Anglo-Boer War and by imprisoning women, British men could reassert their challenged masculinity. See Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Seth Kovan, “Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and the Great War in Great Britain,” *American Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (October 1994). This relates to the notion of American manhood, particularly with this connection among the Anglo-Boer War,
As studies of the American press favor “mainstream” or “white” newspapers, they neglect the African-American press. The African-American press has its foundation in 1827 with the publication of Freedom’s Journal. This pioneering newspaper “set the stage for the black newspapers that were to follow by covering a much broader range of subjects than just slavery in editorials and articles, sometimes ‘stealing’ material verbatim from other papers.” Several historians have provided valuable insight into the trends found within the Black Press. For example, during the Boer War, African-American newspapers were focused on anti-lynching laws, civil rights, and anti-Jim Crow segregation. By the time of the Mau Mau uprising, African-American newspapers were mainly focused on civil rights but were also aware of and supportive of independence movements in European colonial possessions. These time periods offer unique insight into African-American opinion of European imperialism and colonialism, as editors, leaders, and readers related such topics to their own social and political conditions. While there are no studies regarding the presentation of colonial concentration camps in Africa within the African-American press, C.K. Doreski examined the news of the internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during the Second World War as reported in the Chicago Defender. Doreski’s argument that differing perspectives by editors at the Chicago Defender “reveal as much about the individual temperament and politics of the columnists as they do about genuine diversity

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of opinion in minority America,” is useful to discuss the presentation of colonial violence within African-American newspapers. African-American public opinion was not monolithic, but was, in fact, quite diverse. The variation of opinion is evident in both how the Cleveland Gazette and the Cleveland Call & Post, respectively, presented and reported the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising.

Historians have also, even if to a lesser extent, studied press coverage of Africa in general and African independence movements in particular within African-American newspapers. Charles A. Bodie stated that prior to the First World War, coverage of foreign news in African-American newspapers “was thin and mainly confined to Africa and the Caribbean region” although between 1865 and 1915, even “Africa was treated as an afterthought.” While Bodie may have a point here, as the attention of the African-American press was primarily directed at fighting slavery, Jim Crow, lynching, disenfranchisement, and growing demands for civil rights, coverage of events in Africa resonated with the broad concerns of the reading public. The “afterthought” place of Africa did not prevent coverage of the Boer War and the Mau Mau. Although both the Cleveland Gazette and the Cleveland Call & Post were weekly rather than daily

publications, the coverage was more than adequate for assessing the opinions of the editors, writers, and readers.

“Race” has been consistently deployed as a signifier of domestic problems in the United States’ public opinion. When Anglo-Boer tensions rose to the point of war, the United States had just finished its own war with Spain. At the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, there was great debate regarding the possibility of the United States becoming a colonial power for the first time in its history. Questions of race were present throughout these debates particularly with the possibility of acquiring Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. Racialized anxieties also surrounded the establishment of Jim Crow racial segregation laws and lynching. American readers approached the 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War during this turbulent time in the United States. Domestic and international news and opinions, and their related anxieties, were not only reported but also sometimes intertwined. The connection between these domestic and international concerns is of decisive importance for this paper.

The Mau Mau uprising also captivated American attention in the 1950s. However, little has been written of the uprising that relates to the American public. While the literature on the Boer War is extensive, and most of what was written on the subject does include at least a small section of American public opinion, comparable scholarship is limited with regard to the Mau Mau. However, as exemplified by my

43 Contemporary anxieties also included concerns over gender, particularly masculinity. See Hoganson, Fighting for American Manhood.
father’s story, the news of the Mau Mau uprising was on television and in the press. In his study on African-American leaders and their response to colonialism and the Cold War, James Roark argues that these leaders shifted course during the Cold War from uncompromising support of anti-colonial and independence movements to a more cautious endorsement. For the specific case of the Mau Mau, Roark states that instead of focusing on economic conditions and a criticism of Western interests, African-American leaders shifted to a criticism of social discrimination, a position that could avoid accusations of communist sympathies on account of anti-capitalism remarks.45

Caroline Elkins’s Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya questions mainstream explanations of the events by focusing on the concentration camps established by the British to hold suspected Mau Mau and collaborators. She also demonstrates that the British press was fully aware of the atrocities that were occurring in Kenya. Elkins states that “Mau Mau was as much about propaganda as it was about reality,” as demonstrated by Britain’s attempt to control information leaving Kenya.46 However, “unauthorized information” was printed in both the British and Kenyan press. In England, “the Manchester Guardian, the Observer, the Daily Mirror, the Daily Worker, and the New Statesman and Nation printed stories of colonial brutality and government evasiveness, while […] papers like the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail


46 Elkins, Imperial Reckoning, 46.
hewed to the government line.” 47 These more conservative papers presented the Mau Mau as savages and the settler community as “benevolent if battered” and “entitled to the protection of Her Majesty’s forces.” 48 Information regarding the Emergency in direct opposition to the government’s version was making headlines in Great Britain, yet the same information was not published in mainstream newspapers across the Atlantic. Rather than presenting even a hint of the atrocities that were making the news in Great Britain, the Cleveland Plain Dealer attached to the Mau Mau images of savagery, murder, and godlessness. The Cleveland Call & Post, however, reported more on the internment of Africans in concentration camps and the brutal methods used by the British. However, the dramatic situation in Kenya still was not investigated as keenly as across the Atlantic.

This thesis will discuss how the two colonial conflicts, the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau “Emergency,” were presented in Cleveland newspapers in ways that reflected contrasting public perceptions of colonial violence as they related to domestic debates and concerns surrounding race and meanings of empire and the nation. Chapter Two investigates the representation of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 in the mainstream Cleveland Plain Dealer and the African-American newspaper the Cleveland Gazette. This colonial war was interpreted through America’s concerns over domestic issues such racial and ethnic identification, xenophobia, and the imperial future announced by the outcome of the Spanish-American War. Chapter Three analyzes the

47 Ibid., 286.
48 Ibid., 286-287.
Mau Mau uprising in Kenya of 1952-1960 through the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the African-American newspaper the *Cleveland Call & Post*. Similarly to the Anglo-Boer War, Clevelanders were invited to connect the Mau Mau uprising to domestic issues, especially the continuing relevance of race, the growing civil rights movement, and the fear of communism. The final chapter discusses the findings of my research by showing that media presentations and receptions of colonial conflicts and violence show the existence of multiple “publics,” both along racial lines and within each racial constituency, which found in newspapers’ reporting outlets for their contested discursive strategies.
Chapter 2: The Boer War in Cleveland’s Consciousness

Introduction

Between 1899 and 1902, American attention was drawn to the southern tip of the African continent. During the almost three years of the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, Americans woke up every morning to newspaper headlines about the conflict, presidential platforms were centered on the war, and Americans even held rallies and fundraisers. Such interest resonated with developments closer to home. A pre-war political cartoon in The Cleveland Plain Dealer depicts two characters boxing: a British man wearing a vest made from the Union Jack, and a Boer farmer wearing overalls. Across the Atlantic Ocean stands Uncle Sam, behind whom a Filipino “native” crouches in the bushes, blowing a dart at Uncle Sam’s back. The caption reads “Uncle Sam: ‘I have troubles of my own without interfering in yours.’”¹ While this cartoon refers to problems America was having in occupying and governing the Philippines after the Spanish-American War, local reactions to the Anglo-Boer War also spoke to many domestic anxieties. Not only were Americans concerned over their newfound identity as an imperialist nation, but the Anglo-Boer War also came at a pivotal time in American history when issues regarding race relations, immigration, and immigrant rights were

¹ Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 25, 1899.
common topics of debate. All of these issues were present in the way in which American newspapers examined and presented the Anglo-Boer War.

The (Second) Anglo-Boer War

The (second) Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 was, in fact, only one episode of an ongoing conflict between the Boers and the British government. Although quite complicated, it is important to have a brief background of Anglo-Boer relations leading up to the Second Anglo-Boer War. After a Dutch settlement was established there in 1652 as a “revictualling station […] for its passing sailing vessels engaged in trade with India and the Spice Islands,” the Cape became increasingly important for the British as a strategic location for their imperial navy. The British seized control of the Cape in 1806 and by 1815 the British had established the Cape Colony on the former possessions of the Dutch East India Company. As, in the second half of the nineteenth century, gold and diamonds were discovered in the Afrikaner republics established north of the Orange river – the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal) – the British attempted to expand their control over those areas. Following the attempted annexation in 1877 by the British of the South African Republic (SAR), in December 1880 the Boers and the British fought their first war over control of the mineral-rich region, ending in a Boer victory a few months later. Despite this victory, the question of Boer sovereignty remained undecided. The Pretoria Convention signed in 1881 granted the South African Republic

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Republic “full internal independence, while Britain retained a token ‘suzerainty’ in respect of its relations with foreign powers, frontier zones, and the distinctly petty issue of African rights.”\(^4\) However, issues regarding voting rights for the mainly British residents in the South African Republic, called *Uitlanders* (foreigners), continued.

Prior to the outbreak of war, negotiations had collapsed several times between the Boers and the British. The British insisted that they were unable to participate in such negotiations because doing so would indicate their recognition of the South African Republic as a fully sovereign nation.\(^5\) On October, 9 1899, SAR’s President Paul Kruger presented to Conyngham Green, British Agent in Pretoria, an ultimatum demanding that Britain “agree to arbitration on ‘all points of mutual difference;’” the withdrawal of British troops from “the borders of this Republic;” the withdrawal of all British reinforcements that had arrived in South Africa after June 1, 1899; and a prohibition for all British troops to land “in any port of South Africa.”\(^6\) These terms were rejected thus leading to the formal declaration of war by the SAR in alliance with the other Boer republic, the Orange Free State, on October 11, 1899. While many thought that this would be a short war, it dragged on for two and a half years and became a political nightmare for the British Government.

The biggest scandal of the Anglo-Boer War involved the camps that were established to house mainly Boer women and children. In September 1900, General John


\(^6\) Pakenham, *The Boer War*, 104.
Maxwell established “camps for surrendered burghers in Bloemfontein and Pretoria.”\(^7\)

By December, the British military commander, Lord Kitchener, “proclaimed a South Africa-wide policy whereby surrendered burghers and their families would be housed and fed in such camps, courtesy of the British military.”\(^8\) However, the circular memorandum by Kitchener announced the true intention of this policy. Dated December 7, 1900, this policy “emphasized ‘the necessity of denuding the country of supplies and livestock, in order to secure the […] advantage of depriving the enemy of means of subsistence […]’.”\(^9\) Stories about the conditions in these camps emerged, including that women and children whose husbands and fathers were still fighting were only given half-rations as a way to encourage the men to surrender.\(^10\) Furthermore, death rates were published in Britain, Europe, and the United States. When it could no longer be denied that one in five children in the camp died, conditions slowly improved, further demonstrating the power of the media.\(^11\)

According to Stephen Badsey, the Anglo-Boer War significantly changed war reporting.\(^12\) Cable lines reported news quickly and actions that occurred one day could be read the next day in British and American newspapers. Due to technological advances, information could be sent almost around the world in a fraction of the time.

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\(^7\) Paula Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 32.

\(^8\) Ibid.


\(^10\) Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*.


necessary during previous wars. Not only could people around the world be informed about battles and situations in South Africa hours after they had occurred, rather than days and weeks, but the amount of information that made its way to the British, European, and American papers further made this war quite different from any other. In a sense, the way in which spectators half a world away accessed it made this a world war. While Cleveland is just a small window into this world, it is in many ways representative of the way international events were processed by average Americans in ways that responded to their own anxieties and concerns.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Gazette

During the first year of the conflict, it was a rare day when the war did not make front-page news of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. As early as a year before the official declaration of hostilities, the Cleveland Plain Dealer was reporting the increased tensions between the Boers and the British. On December 30, 1898, an article carried the headline “Blood May Flow in Johannesburg” and a subsequent line “Trouble Brewing as on the Eve of the Jameson Raid,” alluded to the failed Jameson Raid of 1895. By May 1899, five months before war broke out in South Africa, the Cleveland Plain Dealer

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13 From the beginning of the war, the Anglo-Boer War was in the news everyday until 20 June 1900. In the first year of the conflict, it was only absent from the Cleveland Plain Dealer 22 times.

14 In response to Afrikaner resistance to giving Uitlanders the immediate and unconditional franchise, diamond and gold magnate Cecil Rhodes conspired to cause an Uitlander uprising under Dr. Leander Starr Jameson in order to seize the South African Republic and then appeal to the British Empire for protection. See Bill Nasson, The South African War, 1899-1902 (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999), 30. However, the planned insurrection failed and within a few days, the Jameson raiders were surrounded and Jameson himself was captured. See Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War (New York: Random House, 1979), xxix. As Jan Smuts, General and second Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, reflected, “The Jameson Raid was the real declaration of war in the Great Anglo-Boer conflict… And that is so in spite of the four years truce that followed… the defenders on the other hand silently and grimly prepared for the inevitable.” Pakenham, The Boer War, 1.
published a map of South Africa on the front page with the heading “Boers Are Preparing for Trouble” (May 17, 1899). Cleveland readers were prepared for the fight to come.

African-Americans also intently followed the conflict in newspapers and the “Afr[ican]-American press covered the events of the war until its conclusion.”15 While some African-American newspapers remained silent or supported the Boers, the majority of African-Americans preferred British rule in South Africa, and this was reflected in the press. Reasons for this support included a belief that “the British stood for equal justice for all, while the Boers represented oppression.”16 Many African-Americans also believed that the British stood for “civilizing” Africans, which the “backward” Boer farmers prevented.17 In addition to the idea that the British sought civilization, editors and readers also recognized the oppression non-white South Africans experienced under the Boers, and hoped for better treatment of their brethren under the British.

The Cleveland Gazette was founded by Harry Clay Smith in August 1883. From the beginning it was a “six-columned, four-paged broadsheet and claimed to have ‘the largest bona fide circulation among the Ohio African-Americans.’”18 Interestingly, although “[f]rom the inception of the conflict, articles and editorials appeared in most black newspapers and periodicals discussing the issues of the war,” Sylvia Jacobs argues

16 Ibid., 143.
17 Ibid., 150.
that the *Cleveland Gazette* remained uniquely silent on much of the war.\(^{19}\) She claims that this “silent treatment” regarding the war was due to editor Harry C. Smith’s realization that, regardless of the victor, white supremacy would prevail over the majority African population and the oppression of Africans would continue. Even though he appeared to tacitly support the British, he published and reprinted enough articles that cast doubt on the humanitarianism of the British toward the African population. While he did not take a side in the conflict, his silence cannot be thought of as ignorance toward its underlying issues, especially since his paper had covered many international stories. A segment, “The War in Africa” by G.W. Weippiert, also appeared frequently during the conflict. The opinion of editor Smith, and his influence over his readership, was reflected by the articles he chose to reprint and the few editorials he wrote.

Interest in the Anglo-Boer War ran throughout the country, and Cleveland was no exception. Wars typically garner attention, but the Anglo-Boer War also drew attention by virtue of its exotic location, where what was often presented as a small population of farmers fought against a mighty colonial power. Technological advances in weaponry and new developments in military tactics added to the excitement of news reporting. Cleveland had large Irish and German populations which held rallies in support of the Boers. Irish-Americans tended to identify with opponents of the British and German readers typically identified with the Boers as fellow Germanic peoples.\(^{20}\) These demographics played a role in the reception of the Anglo-Boer War in Cleveland and were echoed in the representation of the war in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, whose

\(^{19}\) Jacobs, *The African Nexus*, 142, 150.
writers and editors responded to the contemporary anxieties of their evolving readership. Growing concerns surrounded the rise of the United States after the Spanish-American War as a colonial power, debates over the naturalization of foreigners and voting preferences of immigrants, and, above all, race relations, whereas divisions of the *Plain Dealer*’s readerships into supporters of the British and the Boers ignored the plight of the millions of Africans who were also affected by the conflict.

**The Anglo-Boer War and the American Empire**

A major anxiety in the American public during the Boer War concerned the consequences of the Spanish-American War that led to the conquest of colonial territories and protracted guerrilla warfare in the Philippine Islands. In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain and started a short conflict that added territory to the United States. At the conclusion of the war, the United States possessed Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and Cuba. Although Cuba was granted semi-autonomy relatively quickly, the United States held onto Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Americans were apprehensive about the United States becoming a colonial power and this was reflected not only in the confusion surrounding whether or not to support the US actions in the Philippines, but also in the debates concerning the territories acquired by the war. Moreover, the Hawaiian Islands had already become a US possession and the possible influx of Latin Americans and Polynesians strengthened fears regarding foreigners in general. The similarities between the Spanish-American War and the Anglo-Boer War

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21 Philippines gained independence in 1946.
with their national and political conundrums were not lost on the editors of the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

When the Boer leaders claimed that the British would need to “exterminat[e] every loyal Afrikander,” they were unfortunately prophetic of Lord Kitchener’s tactics when he assumed the British command. By Summer 1901, the horrors of the concentration camps were known and had been reported in England and in the United States. Boer representatives speaking throughout the United States claimed that “[m]en, women and children are dying at a rate that would mean the extermination of the Boer race in nine years.” The Cleveland Plain Dealer did not shy away from reporting the death rates and notifying the public of the terrible conditions found in the camps. However, the representation of these camps was used to comment upon the Spanish policy in Cuba and the American policy in the Philippines. In August 1901, an editor likened the Spanish General Valeriano Weyler’s “reconcentrado” policy during the Cuban war for independence to Lord Kitchener’s policy in South Africa, which swept the land clear of Boer non-combatants. Another editorial, in November of the same year, was titled “Concentration Camp Horrors,” and went into details on the British policy, including the burning of farms and the rounding up of families under British guard. Again, the connection was made between Kitchener’s policy to that of Weyler’s

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22 Quoted in Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 9, 1899.
23 Ibid., March 7, 1902.
24 On September 1, 1901, the Cleveland Plain Dealer reported that 62,479 men, women, and children were “under British supervision” and that over 1,000 died in the month of July 1901 along; well over half were children. In an article two days later, it was estimated that 100,000 Boers were in concentration camps.
26 Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 4, 1901.
in Cuba, particularly with regard to the death rates among the women and children in the camps. More importantly, however, this editorial also examined American concentration camp policies in the Philippines after the end of the Spanish-American War when the American government was trying to occupy the islands. While the Spanish were guilty of atrocities in Cuba, the United States were equally guilty in the Philippines and the editor stated that Americans had no right to point the finger at the British for their actions in South Africa. Just as the Spanish camps in Cuba and the British camps in South Africa led to high death rates, “the results [in American camps in] Samar [Philippines] can hardly be different.”

Articles and editorials stated that the concentration camps in South Africa were reminiscent of the Spanish-American War as well as the American-Philippines War. Even the terms used by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* drew on this imagery. Rather than employing the British government’s term “refugee camps,” the words “reconcentrado camps” were used more often in the newspaper instead. The British policy in South Africa resembled more the Spanish policy—enclosing the local population with barbed wire surrounding blockhouses while starving the imprisoned people in order to get the insurgents to give up the fight—than Britain’s stated aim of providing accommodation to refugees. Jingoists had used the idea and images of these camps to encourage American intervention in Cuba and to fight the Spanish-American War, but the *Plain Dealer* also referred to the camps established by the United States in the Philippines as “reconcentrado camps.” The purpose for all three types of “reconcentrado camps” was

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27 Ibid., November 10, 1901.
presented as the same in Cuba, South Africa, and the Philippines: to control the local population and prevent it from helping guerrilla fighters. The connection between these events could not be ignored by the American public. In all cases, the concentration camps were considered bad, even when employed by the United States government. The war in the Philippines confirmed for anti-colonialists the problems associated with overseas colonies and exemplified the anxieties sections of the American public felt for the country’s new colonial role.

Colonial Conflict and American Nation Building

The apprehension over colonial possessions was not the only anxiety in the United States that was reflected in media presentations of the Anglo-Boer War. Questions concerning what defined the “nation” were also quite prevalent, particularly regarding citizenship and voting rights. The issue between the Boers and the British revolved around voting rights for foreigners and, as shown in an editorial from September 8, 1899, this issue was related directly to conditions in the United States. The editor notes that “[t]here is not in [the Pretoria Convention] a word in regard to the franchise or representation. […] But in what country have aliens equal franchise rights and privileges with the citizens, or burghers?”

Matthew Frye Jacobson, in his analysis of xenophobia at home and abroad during the 1880s and 1890s, concludes that (Anglo-Saxon) Americans feared that their “rightful heirs were now threatened by hordes of inferiors – immigrants at home and

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29 Ibid., September 8, 1899. Emphasis added.
savages abroad.”  

While the American nation had been built on immigration, what was new and different was the scale of immigration and the origins of the majority of immigrants.  

In 1882, facing increasing Chinese immigration into the country, the United States had passed The Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese from obtaining American citizenship. House Bills were introduced in attempts to add Japanese and Koreans to the ban as well as bar Chinese from the newly acquired possessions of “Porto Rico, the Philippines, and all other colonial possessions of the United States.”  

While no laws were established banning Eastern and Southern Europeans or those from the Near East and Africa, the establishment of Ellis Island in 1892 and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in 1906 demonstrated a shift to a more systematic way of keeping track of immigrants as well as a more enforceable way to exclude or deport “undesirables.”

Suffragists also argued that by enfranchising “fit” American women this “foreign menace” could be avoided. This shifted the call for suffrage from an egalitarian idea to

34 Kern, HR 6525, 57th Congress., 1st sess., (December 17, 1901).
one in which “all human beings, native and foreign born, were not equal, and the inferior ought not to rule the superior.”

Some even argued that in America, women were “governed by every kind of a man under the light of the sun. There is no race, there is no color, there is no nationality of men who are not the sovereign rulers of American women.”

Demands for universal suffrage based on inalienable rights were lost in the desire to ensure a white, Anglo-Saxon voting base.

The use of the Anglo-Boer War as a reflection of domestic concerns regarding unequal rights and citizenship conditions in United States society was not restricted to mainstream newspapers. Those African-American newspapers which sided with the Boer cause “compared the Boer position in South African society with that of blacks in American society.”

Pro-Boer African-Americans viewed the Boer attempt at overthrowing British hegemony as an analogy to the fight against oppression black Americans felt in the United States, particularly in the South. However, this representation of the conflict was rare, as the majority of the African-American press sided with the British. Pro-British African-Americans viewed the treatment of Africans at the hands of the Boers as similar to that experienced by blacks in the South, particularly the realities of sharecropping and racial segregation.

While the Cleveland Gazette remained silent on most issues connected to the war, it did not remain silent with regards to race in neither the United States nor in South Africa. It is difficult to separate issues of race and nation, as they are inextricable intertwined.

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37 Ibid., 126.
The Boer War and Race Relations in the United States

Despite the Anglo-Boer War involving two white nations as belligerents, Africans could not be excluded from its representations. Several articles in the *Plain Dealer* attempted to estimate how many Africans lived in the Boer republics. In one article, it was reported that there were “500,000 blacks in the Transvaal and the Orange River colony combined.” Atrocities committed against Africans were sometimes reported and there was a feeling that if the tactics used against the Boers were used against black South Africans, it would cause them to take up arms against both sides. Of particular concern was that African crops would be destroyed because of the use of the surplus crops to feed the *burgher* fighters in the field. There were also reports of Boers shooting Africans. American concerns over the consequences of mistreating Africans in South Africa should not be ignored as they directly related to African-Americans facing discrimination and lynching in the United States, particularly the Deep South. At the time of the Boer War the United States faced what is known as the “nadir” of its race relations. Race relations in that period worsened, the Ku Klux Klan obtained a foothold in even Northern life and politics, and Jim Crow race segregation laws were

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40 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 22, 1901.
41 Even before the war, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* occasionally printed stories regarding atrocities committed against Africans. November 21, 1898
42 *Ibid.*, January 8, 1901
increasingly passed throughout the country. Furthermore, during the “nadir” the incidence of lynching rose, as reported in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

Portraying the Boers as religiously devoted, plucky farmers and the British as greedy militarists, American public opinion was generally in favor of the Boers. However, there were a few departures from this pro-Boer sentiment. In a letter to the editor, M.O. Senseny stated he wanted to inform Clevelanders so that they could “form an intelligent opinion of the south African war.” The letter described actions of the Boers against the African population in South Africa, adding that Afrikaners “did not think it wrong to cheat, rob, horsewhip or kill a native for that matter, and does not think it wrong now.” After listing further crimes the Boers committed against Africans, including impressing them into slavery, taking women as concubines and abandoning their offspring, Senseny stated that “the Boer at best is semi-barbarian.” This was a rare example of a reader expressing outrage at the experience of Africans in South Africa. Mistreatment of Africans was not limited to the Boers’ actions, however, a situation also not ignored by *The Plain Dealer.* One article quoted *The South African News* claiming that “[t]he treatment of blacks on Boer farms, and also on the ‘Dutch’

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46 Among many examples, lynchings were reported in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* on December 7, 1899; March 27, 1900; July 11, 1900; January 14, 1901; and June 7, 1901. Many of the articles reported on lynching or attempted lynching in the South and West. However, on January 22, 1899, the *Plain Dealer* reported that sheriffs in Zanesville, Ohio, had been called to prevent a lynching. Zanesville is approximately 150 miles from Cleveland. An interesting question to investigate would be how frequently lynching occurred in Ohio, where such crimes took place, and how thoroughly reported these incidents were to examine whether Ohio lawmakers tried to prevent racial violence in the state. The Ohio legislature passed an anti-lynching law in 1896, however a national debate regarding federal anti-lynching legislation was a topic of debate during the time period of the Anglo-Boer War. See Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).


48 *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* February 23, 1900.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
farms in the Cape Colony, contrasts favorably with that of the blacks in the employment of many English and other settlers in south Africa.”

The writer alleged that the Boers’ treatment of black South Africans also stalled peace negotiations, as he argued that the British wanted “the extension of the franchise to the blacks” in South Africa.

In contrast to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the major theme of the *Cleveland Gazette* regarded the conditions of Africans in the South African republics and their treatment at the hands of both Boers and British. In a reprint from the *New York Sun*, readers were made aware that, if given the opportunity, the “Basutos” would have been more likely to turn against the Boers than the British. However, “[t]heir grievances against both Dutch and English are deep-seated and of long standing.”

Two weeks later, most of an article by G.W. Weippiert addressed the possibility of black South Africans rising up against their white oppressors. While Africans had grievances against both sides, the author stated that “[t]he Boers – even their best friends admit this – have treated the Zulus and Kaffirs with a cruelty unprecedented in the history of the dark continent, and the British have slaughtered the blacks by the thousands.”

In a rare editorial on the Anglo-Boer War, editor Smith took the stance that the Boers were the worse of the two white powers fighting over control of South Africa. He stated that “[t]he Boers have among them their black subjects. They are ostracized, persecuted and subject to many cruel discriminations which at once render them unworthy of the sympathy and encouragement which Americans are disposed to

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51 Ibid., March 26, 1901.
52 Ibid., March 13, 1901.
53 Cleveland Gazette, October 28, 1899.
54 Ibid., November 11, 1899.
bestow.”

In contrast, Smith stated that “Britain has long since established its reputation as a most liberal and magnanimous nation and it may be well that she assert her supremacy in the maintenance of her partial authority.”

He believed that the British would end the “caste system” in South Africa, which would encourage the growth and prosperity of that country. This rare glimpse of editor Smith’s thoughts concerning the Anglo-Boer War demonstrated that, although he was slightly pro-British, he was more concerned about the treatment of black South Africans than rightful claims over territory and Uitlander rights. However, Smith, while not recognizing that before the war the British had in fact severely limited African suffrage in the Cape Colony they controlled, indicated that he could support the Boers if they would treat the Africans properly.

Articles printed and reprinted in the Gazette concerning the Boers had a tendency to present them as barbaric. The Boers mistreated Africans and, as mentioned in one article, in 1865, the “Boers made a supreme effort to annihilate the Basutos, whom they accused of stealing their cattle.”

In a reprint from the Philadelphia Press, the author went into detail regarding the maltreatment of Africans by the Boers. He explained what he saw as three laws that drove the Boer policy against Africans: preventing non-whites from owning property, prohibiting marriage except for that under “tribal regulations,” and refusing legal protections against a white man. These laws in South Africa were

55 Ibid., February 3, 1900.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., March 17, 1900.
58 Ibid., May 19, 1900.
frighteningly similar to Jim Crow legislation that was starting to gain ground throughout most of the United States.\(^{59}\)

However, the British were not always depicted in a positive manner either. In a letter to the editor regarding his travels through Africa and the South Pacific, Robert Allen reported that the British were using “slave labor” in the diamond mines and gold fields. He described how the Africans were forced to work these fields, which had been their own land before the British took over, and extract these valuable minerals, “hand[ing] them over to the fair Englishman, without as much as a ‘Thank you.’”\(^{60}\) The British mine owners were allowed to shoot Africans, under the single defense of “he did not follow orders.”\(^{61}\) Allen used this situation to explain that the condition in South Africa would be no different whether Boer or British were the victors and ruled supreme over the area. The author did not doubt the cruelty of the Boers, but argued that the difference between the two was negligible.

In a January 6, 1900 “Current Topics” column, editor Smith printed “[t]he gold mines in South Africa are largely made profitable by cheap labor. The Kaffirs work for 50 cents a day.”\(^{62}\) At this point, readers well knew that the mainly British Uitlanders owned and controlled the mines. Blaming British mine companies for using cheap African labor raised analogies with the situation of black sharecroppers in the South, despite the fact that the development of a mining-based economy in South Africa marked

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60 *Cleveland Gazette*, February 23, 1901.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., January 6, 1900.
in fact the decline of sharecropping there. Black sharecroppers in the American South rarely made enough money in a given year to avoid being in debt to the owners of the farm and therefore toiled to work off the previous year’s debt before they could gain a profit. This system ensured the white landowners’ ability to tie African-Americans to the land, usually the same land where they and their ancestors had been slaves.  

However, an aspect in which the Cleveland Gazette remained oddly silent was the role of Africans in the war, which contradicted the notion that it was a “white man’s war.” Although both the Boers and the British feared arming the native population, Africans fought on both sides. Zulus were recruited by the British for several purposes, including scouting, spying, warning of Boer incursions, and were even authorized “to stop and search wagons throughout the country” after the declaration of martial law. BaSotho (“Basutos”) served “as servants and hospital aides” and also “provided a depot for the auxiliary services as the British army moved north.”

The plight of the Africans was dramatically evident in key events of the war, like the long siege at Mafeking, yet this fact was ignored by both the Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Gazette. It was frequently reported in British newspapers that Africans were in Mafeking and correspondents repeatedly notified their readers about the situation there, including the desperate situation of the population and the even direr state of the Africans.

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65 Siwundhla, “The Participation of Non-Europeans,” 47.
66 Ibid., 53.
printed in the *Daily Telegraph* (London).\(^{68}\) The condition of the African residents in Mafeking even concerned the white inhabitants, as they witnessed blacks “dig[ging] up dead horses” and garbage to eat.\(^{69}\) This desperate situation appeared to be common knowledge to white British readers,\(^{70}\) however it never made the pages of even the African-American *Cleveland Gazette*.

Africans were also held in British concentration camps. At the beginning of this policy, most African “refugees” interned there were “labour tenants, cash tenants or sharecroppers” on Boer farms. However, “as the guerrilla war dragged on[,] Africans from [nearby] locations and even from mission stations were also compelled to seek refuge in the camps.”\(^{71}\) Segregated camps for Africans faced the same problems that plagued the white ones,\(^{72}\) even though they remained ignored in the ensuing controversies. Death rates in these camps may never be known, as after the war they were not recorded as the losses in the Boer camps were.\(^{73}\) The *Times* (London) on occasion mentioned these camps, “but never to cite conditions in them,” but rather to comment “on how the men in the camps were being employed by the British and how the inhabitants were growing their own crops for food.”\(^{74}\) Not even these few glimpses into the Africans held in the concentration camps made the pages of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* or the *Cleveland Gazette*.

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\(^{69}\) Ibid., 36.
\(^{70}\) Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*.
\(^{71}\) Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, 204.
\(^{72}\) Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire*, 32.
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 52.
\(^{74}\) Ibid.
Both the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *Cleveland Gazette* connected the Anglo-
Boer war to domestic debates on empire, nation, and race, but the focus of these two 
papers was different. The majority of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*’s readers would have 
identified with both the Boers and the British on a racial level and therefore had to turn to 
ethnic and historical considerations to determine which side to support. The *Plain 
Dealer* also presented racial issues more in light of its opposition to the nascent 
American imperialism and concerns over who belonged to the nation and enjoyed rights 
of citizenship. Readers of the *Cleveland Gazette*, on the other hand, were more likely to 
develop a racial identification with African actors rarely mentioned in the mainstream 
Cleveland newspaper. For them, racial parallels spoke more to the oppression of 
African-Americans than to more distant issues of empire, nation, and immigration.

**Conclusion**

In a prophetic line from an editorial in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, “[t]hese ‘little wars’
against a people fighting for their independence nearly always are more protracted and 
far more costly in blood and treasure than estimated at the beginning.”

The short little war discussed in this chapter lasted two and a half years and cost thousands of lives from 
battle, disease, and starvation. It captured the attention and imagination of British, 
Europeans, and Americans alike. During the first year of the war, it was a rare day in 
which the Anglo-Boer War did not make the front page of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. 
However, to Americans this war on the other side of the world was a mirror of domestic 
concerns and anxieties. My discussion shows that such issues differed depending on the

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75 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 7, 1901.
newspaper and its readership. The mainstream (white) Cleveland Plain Dealer was generally pro-Boer and presented issues in South Africa that echoed fears of increasing immigration and foreigners’ voting rights and imperialism, the Cleveland Gazette focused more on relating the racial policies of the Boer and British to that of white America. Some anxieties crossed the racial barrier; however, the differences in the ways the two newspapers portrayed the racial dimensions of the conflict cannot be ignored.

Paula Krebs recognized that the “press’s changing place in ‘public opinion,’ as readership extended across class and gender lines, was part of the changing publics for journalism, propaganda, and literature about imperialism.”76 This was not restricted to the British press, for the American press not only created its own image of the Anglo-Boer War, but mainly used the international conflict as a mirror for domestic concerns. While the Anglo-Boer War presents an interesting comparison of mainstream versus African-American newspaper depiction of a British colonial war and the use of these events to reflect contemporary concerns, these differences would reappear under quite different circumstances fifty years later when another British colonial war, the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, went to print.

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76 Krebs, Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire, 177.
Chapter 3:
The Mau Mau and American Fears

Introduction

George Padmore described the Mau Mau uprising as “the biggest colonial [conflict] in Africa since the Boer War.”¹ The Mau Mau insurgency engulfed parts of Kenya between 1952 and 1960, and was played out every day in the morning newspapers and on the evening news. Even *Time* magazine and *The Nation* ran stories on the situation in Kenya.² Popular books and movies also used the Mau Mau as subjects, some with extremely negative depictions, which played on American images of Western whiteness as possessing “cleanliness, Christianity, democracy, and social order” in order to fight communism during the Cold War.³ Conversely, the white settlers in Africa, particularly South Africa and Kenya, and their treatment of local people were seen by many African-Americans as similar to white America’s treatment of African-Americans in the United States. This chapter discusses representations of the Mau Mau insurgency in mainstream and African-American newspapers in the United States and how they reflected coeval fears in American society.

³ Ibid., 87.
Historian Joel Foreman argued that the representation of the Mau Mau in the West “had specific ideological effects” by “dramatiz[ing] a complex sociopolitical phenomenon” in order to avoid any real change, “confirm[ing] existing stereotypes about African behavioral patterns” in order to avoid examining the real causes of the uprising, and “promot[ing] American readers’ identification with the British.” My argument is that, similar to the way in which the representation in the Cleveland press of the Anglo-Boer War was really about contemporary anxieties, so, too, was the way in which the press presented the Mau Mau uprising.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Call & Post in 1950s Cleveland, Ohio

By the 1950s, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, like the majority of American public opinion, was no longer supportive of colonized peoples rising up against the British Empire. Rather than aiding those fighting for independence from the British, as during the Anglo-Boer War, news regarding the Mau Mau uprising was often placed far from the first page. During the first four years, the conflict made the front page only four times, all within the first thirteen months following the first mention in the newspaper. Nevertheless, there were articles and special reports on the Mau Mau, as well as advertisements for three movies that were made during this time: Mau Mau, Simba, and

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4 Foreman, “Mau Mau’s American Career,” 81.
5 The Cleveland Plain Dealer printed several stories expressing the necessity of France to decolonize but did not take the same opinion regarding Great Britain. A key example would be the opinion presented in editorials and letters to the editor that France needed to decolonize French Indochina (Vietnam), but such opinion was not expressed regarding Great Britain in Malaya.
6 The Mau Mau first appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer on September 4, 1952. The four front page articles were on May 14, 1953; June 13, 1953; September 22, 1953; and October 7, 1953.
Safari. The advertisements printed in the Cleveland Plain Dealer for these movies depicted black men wearing war paint wielding swords, knives, and even skulls. The image of a Mau Mau “witch doctor” was even used to sell Dodge automobiles. The headline on the advertisement stated “No-Voo-Do, Just Good Deals!!” These images demonstrate that information on the Mau Mau uprising was circulating amid the population, reinforcing stereotypes of Africans and using the image of Mau Mau fighters to channel the American “gaze.” The overlap of popular culture and media, while beyond the scope of this paper, demonstrates that consumers were attuned to representations of Africans and Mau Mau fighters. Anne McClintock’s work examines the usefulness of empire to sell consumer goods during the early years of European colonial expansion, and the Dodge advertisement indeed demonstrates that even another country’s empire could be exploited to sell products. These forms of popular culture also reflects the Plain Dealer’s presentation of the Mau Mau as bloodthirsty, irreligious Africans wanting nothing more than to kill all the white settlers in Kenya, an image that contrasts with the

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7 Mau Mau was panned, being called “a strange cross-between a timely documentary film and a penny-shocker which seems nearly as lurid in parts as the Lower Mall’s lobby posters for this new attraction.” Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 12, 1955.

8 The advertisement for Mau Mau includes four Africans, one of whom has war paint on and wields a sword. Phrases such as “Africa Explodes with Naked Terror,” and trailers stating “See the secret killer society that horrified the world! Every incredible scene filmed under fire at the risk of DEATH!” and “See hair-raising ritual of the Mau-Mau Oath in forbidden uncensored films! You are there as it actually happens!” (November 18, 1955). The advertisement for Simba is subtitled “The Savage Mau Mau Story” and has the headline “Blood-Curdling Terror that Strikes in the Night… Leaving a Trail of DEATH!” On the bottom half of the poster is “Terror!” printed four times with such phrases as “The ruthless savagery of sudden raids in the night!” “The Frenzied horror of secret Mau Mau Blood rituals!” and “Terrified white residents huddled behind barred doors… awaiting the dreaded Mau Mau!” (October 21, 1955). Safari’s advertisement was much calmer than the other two, but still makes note of viewers having to “fight off the most savage Mau Mau attack.” (June 12, 1956). The Mau Mau appear to only be part, rather than the entire, story.

9 Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 24, 1955.
one of previous anticolonial insurgents, the white Boers, which the paper often portrayed as pious and righteous fighters against foreign aggression.

The *Call & Post*, an African-American newspaper that was popular not only in Ohio, but also nationally, was created after the 1928 merger of the *Cleveland Call* and the *Cleveland Post*. The *Cleveland Call* was founded in 1920 by Garret A. Morgan, the African-American Clevelander who invented the traffic light and the gas mask. That same year, the *Cleveland Post* was established by Herbert Chauncey and Norman McGhee\(^\text{10}\) as “the mouthpiece for the fraternal organization, the Modern Crusaders of the World,”\(^\text{11}\) an insurance company.\(^\text{12}\) Chauncey’s Empire Savings and Loan Association was “the first black-owned savings and loan in Cleveland’s history.”\(^\text{13}\) The *Cleveland Call & Post* had 23,162 readers in 1944 and, according to Felecia Jones Ross, it reached an estimated “75 percent of black homes in Ohio.”\(^\text{14}\)

The *Call & Post* portrayed quite a different story from the *Plain Dealer*. Though it was undeniable that there were deaths and violence in Kenya, the presentation of the “bad guys” in the two papers was the opposite. By focusing on dissimilar aspects of the uprising, such as the Mau Mau “oaths” and their alleged communist affinities, violent tactics, and British oppression, the two papers differed quite dramatically in presenting the situation in Kenya.

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\(^\text{10}\) Bessie House-Soremekun, *Confronting the Odds: African American Entrepreneurship in Cleveland, Ohio* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2002), 36.


\(^\text{12}\) House-Soremekun, *Confronting the Odds*, 36.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 35.

The African-American population in Ohio had increased from just over 63,000 in the whole state in 1870 to almost 300,000 in 1965 in Cleveland alone. Not only was the African-American population growing, but Cleveland’s overall population declined. Although still a large city, Cleveland’s population decreased by over 100,000 residents from 1950 to 1965, when it stood at 810, 858. Racial unrest loomed large, as African-Americans were pushed into “overcrowded, dilapidated dwellings that lacked running water.” While de jure segregation in the Cleveland Public Schools had been abolished before the pivotal Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation, de facto segregation remained as late as the 1970s and 1980s. Cleveland children were assigned to schools in their neighborhoods, which had been intentionally segregated, especially as whites fled areas that saw increases in the African-American population. In addition, the relationship between the African-American community and the Cleveland police was tumultuous and it was common for African-Americans to be held in “jail without being charged with a crime.” Racial tensions escalated to the point that, in 1966, Cleveland erupted in a race riot. It was into this turbulent racial atmosphere that information regarding the Mau Mau reached Cleveland readers.

15 Ibid, 253, 263.
20 Ibid.
The Mau Mau

The history leading up to the Mau Mau uprising is long and embedded in the fact that Kenya, much like South Africa, was a settler colony. Claimed by the British in the late nineteenth century, the central highlands seemed perfect for white settlement due to their arable land and cool climate. Increasing numbers of whites moved to Kenya, taking the best land for themselves and pushing the larger number of Africans, mainly the agricultural Kikuyu, onto reserves or “allowing” Africans to remain on the land as “squatter tenants,” working the land for the whites. Starting in the 1940s, and accelerating when African veterans returning from the Second World War found that conditions in Kenya had worsened, a movement called the Land and Freedom Army started direct actions in rural areas including “labor strikes, setting fire to farm buildings and crops and the maiming of livestock.” In the 1940s, white settlers in control of district councils passed laws restricting the rights of “squatter tenants” and, in some cases, evicting them. By the latter half of the decade, evictions had increased, furthering the discontent among the mainly Kikuyu tenants. By the late 1940s, the movement had further organized itself and included “oathing,” which, according to Caroline Elkins, was a “traditional Kikuyu practice,” that “forge[d] solidarity during times of war or internal crises; the oath would morally bind men together in the face of great challenges.”

The Mau Mau “Emergency” “officially” began when Senior Chief Waruhiu was assassinated on 9 October 1952, “just ten days after Sir Evelyn Baring arrived in Kenya

to assume his new role as governor of the colony.²⁵ Previous unsolved murders were then attributed to the same group which had killed Waruhiu.²⁶ The violence and discontent, which had been brewing for decades, boiled over into a guerrilla war which lasted almost eight years. Despite the date of January 1960 as the end of the “Emergency,” the Mau Mau movement did not end until independence in 1963. The period of the “Emergency,” declared a few hours after Waruhiu’s death,²⁷ cost the lives of 95 Europeans, 2,000 Africans loyal to the British, and over 10,000 Mau Mau and suspected Mau Mau.²⁸ However, many more had been incarcerated in an extensive concentration camp system.

Representation of the Mau Mau and America’s Racial Anxieties

Similar to what was seen during the Anglo-Boer War, the two newspapers portrayed different angles of the same story depending on the race of the combatants in Kenya and the race of their readership. The amount of news coverage itself also differed. During the uprising in Kenya, the Plain Dealer reported on it very infrequently, approximately once a week or only a few times a month, while the weekly Call & Post had large stories in every issue for well over a year. The depth of the coverage also differed. The Plain Dealer frequently used frightening language contained within short articles, usually hidden among advertisements several pages into an issue. Although the Call & Post also rarely had a Mau Mau story on the front page, it was consistently on the first page of the

²⁵ Ibid., 32.
²⁶ Ibid.
²⁷ Ibid., 34.
²⁸ Frederick Cooper, Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 73.
foreign news section. The articles published by the *Call & Post* were usually lengthy and in depth, describing situations beyond mere numbers of dead, wounded, and imprisoned.\(^{29}\) Not only were the types of stories different, but the representation of the entire situation differed between the *Plain Dealer* and the *Call & Post*.

One way in which the Mau Mau were presented in both the *Plain Dealer* and the *Call & Post* was through the use of descriptive words. While the Boers had been called “courageous” and “brave” in the *Plain Dealer*, the paper described the Mau Mau by using other, much more negative terms, *e.g.*, “terrorist,”\(^{30}\) “anti-white,”\(^{31}\) “white hunters,”\(^{32}\) “gangsters,”\(^{33}\) and “cults.”\(^{34}\) Other phrases included “dread secret society,”\(^{35}\) “knife-wielding fanatics,”\(^{36}\) “a bloodthirsty movement”\(^{37}\) with a “lust for killing.”\(^{38}\) The movement was also described as having “sworn to drive the white man out of Kenya,”\(^{39}\) or, in even more frightening terms, “vowing death to white men.”\(^{40}\) Not only were the terms used to describe the Mau Mau intended to strike fear into the hearts of the white

\(^{29}\) Rather than publishing a few numbers every few weeks or months, as the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* did, the *Cleveland Call & Post* listed larger statistics beyond a single battle. For example, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* headlined “14 Mau Mau Killed” and in text states that this occurred during a “clash near Nyeri,” while the *Call & Post* headlined “2,822 Mau Mau Die in 11-Months Fight.” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, June 16, 1954; *Cleveland Call & Post*, December 19, 1953.

\(^{30}\) *E.g.*, January 2, 1954; February 24, 1954; May 31, 1954; January 9, 1955; September 5, 1955; October 20, 1955

\(^{31}\) *E.g.*, October 21, 1952; October 24, 1952; April 22, 1953; February 24, 1954; July 15, 1954; December 14, 1955

\(^{32}\) *E.g.*, April 15, 1956

\(^{33}\) *E.g.*, March 17, 1953; July 26, 1953.

\(^{34}\) *E.g.*, December 23, 1952.

\(^{35}\) *E.g.*, May 14, 1953.

\(^{36}\) *E.g.*, May 14, 1953.

\(^{37}\) *E.g.*, October 24, 1955

\(^{38}\) *E.g.*, October 24, 1955.

\(^{39}\) *Cleveland Plain Dealer* December 26, 1953.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., December 8, 1953.
readers, the methods of the “rebels,” whether confirmed or not, were also described in gory details. 42

“Terrorists” and “anti-white” were not the only words used to describe the Mau Mau. While the Boers had been presented as pious and God-fearing, the Mau Mau were depicted as irreligious or atheist. The Mau Mau was frequently connected to an oathing process during which a new member pledged allegiance. Descriptions of the oath included reports of drinking blood, “tacking up the entrails of cats and goats on [settlers’] doorsteps,” and even “include[d] bestiality, cannibalism, such acts as picking out a dead person’s eyes and drinking the fluid from the sockets.” Oaths were reported for both the Mau Mau and the Boers, but one was presented as satanic and frightening while the other was presented as a commendable covenant with fellow Boers and God.

Another way in which the Plain Dealer depicted the Mau Mau was visual. Unlike the picture of the Boers praying over the deceased British at the battle of Spion Kop, the pictorial representations of the Mau Mau were far more sinister. On May 17, 1953, the Plain Dealer included an issue of The American Weekly, a weekly Sunday supplement, which ran John Gunther’s story “Murder, Magic and Mau Mau.” Somehow at odds with the nuances in the article, page one had a drawing that depicted a black man’s face, with crazed eyes, baring his teeth, and holding a knife in a threatening

41 Elkins, Imperial Reckoning.
42 Beheading; hacking to death. Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 26, 1953; October 7, 1953.
43 Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 20, 1955.
44 Ibid., April 5, 1953. Another article described the oath ceremony “instruments of magic,” including “[a] banana-wood arch under which the initiate must pass, a hollow banana stem filled with blood and with a sheep’s eye impaled on each end, Sodom apples threaded on twigs and calabashes holding blood and earth. The Mau Mau witch doctors preside over the bizarre but effective ceremonies” (December 25, 1952).
45 Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 20, 1954.
46 Ibid., May 17, 1953.
manner, which fully demonstrated how The American Weekly and the Cleveland Plain Dealer interpreted the conflict. Such a representation was included in order to strike fear into the hearts of the readers; it appeared to be an attempt to make the white viewer identify with the fear facing the white settlers in Kenya. The Mau Mau in the picture seemed ready to leap out of the page and attack the reader.

However, the Call & Post presented the Mau Mau in a rather different manner. Articles printed in the Call & Post still referred, as the Plain Dealer did, to the Mau Mau as “terrorists,” but in quotes or as “alleged” or “so-called Mau Mau terrorists,” which imply that the paper did not agree with the terms used by mainstream newspapers. Rather than calling the goals of the uprising as “death to the white man,” the Call & Post called the anti-colonial opponents in Kenya as a “liberation movement.” While the actions of the Mau Mau were reported in the Call & Post, the newspaper made sure to define violence as “alleged” or to imply that there was little evidence to connect the Land and Freedom Army with the violent actions reported. The oathing process, when mentioned in the Call & Post, was not described in the same ghastly and repulsive manner as the Plain Dealer.

While the Plain Dealer only presented the Africans involved in the uprising as evil and rarely mentioned the white settlers, the Call & Post portrayed the British as harsh, militaristic colonizers. Reports of British issuing “shoot to kill” orders against any suspected Mau Mau, even when Mau Mau were fleeing from the enemy, were

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47 Cleveland Call & Post, December 19, 1953; August 15, 1953; November 6, 1954; and December 17, 1955.
48 Ibid., April 18, 1953.
49 Ibid., December 19, 1953.
published.\textsuperscript{50} There were even accusations that settlers were shooting Africans only to call them “Mau Mau” after the fact.\textsuperscript{51} In reference to the oathing process, a long article was printed which concerned the approval of the Kenya Legislative Council for the death penalty “for anyone convicted of administering the anti-white man Mau Mau oath,” as an attempt to frighten the Africans into giving up the fight in Kenya.\textsuperscript{52} Not only was the death penalty meted out for participating and administering the Mau Mau oath, but also for aiding the Mau Mau fighters and for possessing firearms; the latter punishment was not applicable to whites living in Kenya.\textsuperscript{53} Other penalties were also increased, including ten years imprisonment for “consorting with an armed African,” whether Mau Mau or not.\textsuperscript{54} Although such measures were reported in the \textit{Plain Dealer}, they were kept to short, “informative” blurbs. The \textit{Call & Post} also reported on the British use of irons on African prisoners being used as forced labor, as well as the British attempts to justify such treatment.\textsuperscript{55} Several articles announced that the British government cleared British forces of inhuman treatment, although it was reported that British troops were indiscriminately shooting Africans and offering awards for kills.\textsuperscript{56}

In addition to the descriptions of the atrocities committed by the British and white settlers against Africans, the \textit{Call & Post} reported on the concentration camps established in Kenya, something which could not be found in the pages of the \textit{Cleveland Plain

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibid., May 2, 1953.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid., September 10, 1955.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid., January 31, 1953.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., May 2, 1953.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid., June 6, 1955.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., January 8, 1955. The British claimed that the irons were used “to insure [the Africans’] safe custody” and they were not used for longer than three months. They also claimed that the irons could be removed for medical reasons.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., February 13, 1954.
\end{itemize}
Dealer. The Call & Post reported that 62,000 Africans were held in “detention camps.” Similar to the claims made during the Anglo-Boer War, the use of these “detention camps” was in order to reduce the ability of the Mau Mau to gain advantage from the local population. The British, furthermore, claimed that these camps were also used for rehabilitation, in order to force suspected Mau Mau to give up their membership in the secret organization. The conditions in the camps were far from sanitary and a typhoid outbreak affected at least 650 out of the then 16,000 internees at a “detention camp” in Manvani. Despite reports of the camps and their conditions, the British refused to relax the prison terms, even sentencing girls as young as eleven or twelve to “long terms of imprisonment.” The Call & Post reported that Colonial Secretary Lennox-Boyd claimed the ages had been reported incorrectly, although other Members of Parliament provided evidence as to the veracity of the girls’ ages. In fact, one article connected the conditions in Kenya and the treatment of the Kikuyu and other Africans at the hands of the white settlers and British to the Holocaust. The author, Marty Richardson, called the actions “the most disgraceful case of the wiping out of a whole people since the days of Adolph Hitler at his worst.” He accused Great Britain and the United States of influencing the United Nations to ignore the situation in Kenya.

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., October 2, 1954.
60 Ibid., June 30, 1956.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., April 9, 1955.
63 Ibid.
The Cleveland Press, Empire and Decolonization

Similarly to the representation of the Boers during the Anglo-Boer War, the Mau Mau were presented as backwards in mainstream American newspapers. However, while the Boer farmers were seen by Americans as defending their way of life against British militarism and imperialism, the Mau Mau were presented as needing the guiding hand of white civilization. For instance, the backwardness of the Mau Mau weapons, described as “home-made guns of wood and iron piping,”64 was reported in direct contrast to the British use of automatic firearms and planes for scouting and bombings. Other weapons used by the Mau Mau included the panga (a machete) and a “sharp hoe used by Kikuyu tribesmen for tilling the soil.”65 In contrast to the depiction of the Mau Mau, the whites who were in Kenya were seen as considerate employers. Even whites living in other countries not affected by the uprising were considered good and brave. One story in the Plain Dealer presented a woman, Mary, born and raised in Cleveland, and her British husband, John Minnery who owned a pyrethrum66 farm in Arusha, Tanganyika.67 A number of their employees were Kikuyu and on January 6, 1954, the police came to the farm and arrested the Kikuyu employees, leaving the Minnerys with “650 women and children to cope with.”68

The Call & Post more overtly demanded British decolonization. Many articles written by Charles H. Loeb for “World on View” directly addressed decolonization and the problems in many colonies. Unlike the Plain Dealer, which only called for the end

64 Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 7, 1953.
65 Ibid., January 26, 1953.
66 A plant used to produce insecticides.
67 Modern day Tanzania.
68 Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 28, 1954.
of French colonialism, the call for the end of British colonialism and the end to racial legislation in South Africa were prominent stories in the *Call & Post*. During the Mau Mau uprising, several of its “World on View” reports were dedicated to the situation in Kenya.⁶⁹ In one, Loeb made an economic argument as to why the British needed to leave Kenya, particularly since even partial independence did not stop the “relentless march of colonial people towards freedom and liberation.”⁷⁰ A guest editor for “World on View” noted the hypocrisy of those colonial powers who claim democracy at home and the desire to set an example for the rest of the world, yet ignore the conditions of Africans and Asians in their colonies, who “remained in poverty, filth, disease, ignorance and starvation.”⁷¹ By describing how the Mau Mau oath involved the removal of “all articles of European origin[… b]efore entering the oath hut,” the anonymous author presented the oath as a rejection of the colonialists’ culture and a pledge to shed colonialism from Kenya.⁷²

Both the representation of the Africans and British during this time connects directly to American concerns over decolonization. While the white press attempted to portray the Mau Mau as backwards and brutal, as demonstrated by the stories regarding witchcraft, oaths, and backward weapons and beliefs, the African-American media portrayed the British as violent, racist, exploiting colonizers. The *Plain Dealer* occasionally printed stories concerning decolonization, but usually regarding Ghana, France’s colonies in Africa, and the war for independence in the British colony of

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⁶⁹ *E.g.*, *Cleveland Call & Post*, September 26, 1953; November 7, 1953.
⁷⁰ Ibid., September 26, 1953.
⁷¹ Ibid., September 13, 1955.
⁷² Ibid.
Malaya. The *Call & Post* called for universal decolonization, focusing on areas such as Africa and Asia as well as highlighting the progress of independent nations, such as India and Egypt and, later, Sudan and Ghana.\(^{73}\) The election of Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister of the Gold Coast also made headlines in the *Call & Post* as it wished well for the future, independent nation.

The debate over decolonization was playing out in the pages of the important papers in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as other cities across the nation. While most Americans “had always been decidedly anticolonial”\(^{74}\) and, after World War II, it became increasingly understood that the age of empire would come to a close, American opinions toward decolonization and Africa were muddled at best.\(^{75}\) According to Steven Metz, American interests in Africa were threefold: markets, ideological interests, and “the global containment of communism.”\(^{76}\) The Mau Mau uprising started in the middle of the Korean War as well as the Malayan “Emergency,” another war for independence. Both the Korean War and the Malayan conflict involved communists backing the non-Western side, which led American media to temper their endorsement for wars for independence with their fears over communism. The United States government itself realized that it was in a double bind regarding decolonization. Despite supporting decolonization, mainstream opinion regarded Africa as backward and needing continued Western guidance and assistance, which dovetailed with the ambitions of the US as the

\(^{73}\) Egypt gained independence in 1922, India in 1947, Sudan in 1956, and Ghana in 1957.  
\(^{75}\) As stated earlier, opinions regarding decolonization in French colonies versus British colonies differed. While there was support for the decolonization of French colonies, such calls within the pages of the *Plain Dealer* were not made regarding British colonies.  
\(^{76}\) Ibid.
new capitalist and anti-communist superpower. On the other hand, America dared not alienate the Western European colonial powers of France and Great Britain, “America’s Cold War allies.”

**Communism**

A United States diplomat stated that the “success of Mau Mau in Kenya works to the benefit of International Communism in creating another focus of unrest in the Western sphere.” Other than depicting the Mau Mau as backwards, irreligious savages, the other important representation of the Mau Mau in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* connected the movement to communism with such headlines as “Red Shadow Creeps Over Restless Africa.” Even those writers who recognized that such a connection was erroneous recognized, nonetheless, its usefulness in hinting at the threat coming from America’s rival, the Soviet Union. In some articles, the Mau Mau were not directly connected with communism, but the writers would include information regarding the uprising in discussions of wars against communists in other parts of the world, particularly Malaya. With glaring headlines such as “Britain Steps Up Fight Against Reds, Mau Mau,” such a connection was not difficult, and was probably indeed desired by the authors and editors. By including the two conflicts together in the same article, one

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79 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 4, 1953.
80 Ibid., January 9, 1955.
81 Ibid.
would assume that they both related to the war against communism, even if that was not necessarily the case.

The connection between the Mau Mau uprising and communism was made through often dubious ties. Jomo Kenyatta had spent time in Moscow, a fact that was highlighted in the *Plain Dealer*. Quoting Major Allister Smith, one article in the *Plain Dealer* even states that the “Mau Mau terrorism has its roots in communist agitation” and “Kenyatta became a ful-fledged [sic] apostle of violence only after his ‘conversion’ in Moscow.” One of the Land and Freedom Army generals, Waruhiu Itote, took the name “General China,” the moniker by which the *Plain Dealer* usually referred to him. However, there were articles recognizing that such a connection to communism was unfounded. These articles usually presented the situation as one in which communism could take over but where Kenyatta’s Kenya African Union was “not Communist-controlled as yet, there [was] grave danger it will be taken over for Communist purposes – unless there is intelligent action by the white settlers and British authority.” Very few articles in the *Call & Post* mention Kenyatta’s time in the Soviet Union.

While the *Call & Post* also mentioned the possible connection of the Mau Mau with communists, it was only as a warning to the Western powers. One article quoted

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82 E.g., ibid., March 4, 1953; April 11, 1953; August 3, 1955.
83 Ibid., August 3, 1955.
84 It was actually difficult to determine if Itote took the name himself or if it was given to him by the Western press. However, in *Rethinking Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya*, S.M. Shamsul Alam stated that “[i]n August 1952 Itote finally left home and entered the Hombe area of the Mt. Kenya forest, taking the combat name of ‘General China.’” S.M. Shamsul Alam, *Rethinking Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 57.
85 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 4, 1953.
86 Ibid.
Dr. Mozell C. Hill, chairman of the Department of Sociology at Atlanta University. He stated that the uprising was neither communist led nor linked, yet had the potential to become so due to Great Britain, the United States, and other Western nations failing to “assert the moral leadership that is necessary to capture the attention of the black man.” He continued that since the treatment of the local people in the colonies was so poor and that the only hints of democracy were reserved for white men, a possible turn of the Mau Mau toward communism should be blamed on the Western nations. In another article, the claims that Russia was in daily talks with Mau Mau leaders regarding monetary and material support of the uprising was denounced as rumor and propaganda. Parallels between the Mau Mau and the war in Malaya referred strictly to decolonization rather than communism. Similarly to the Plain Dealer’s attempts to portray Kenya in the same light as Malaya by including both within the same article, the Call & Post also included Malaya and Kenya in the same articles, yet for different reasons. The Call & Post wanted to call attention to the connection to decolonization rather than communism.

The fear of communism and the debate over decolonization went hand in hand in American public opinion. While the United States was traditionally anti-colonial, which James Roark claims “sprang from its revolutionary heritage,” it was preferable for its government to have Africa and Asia as colonial possessions rather than fall into the

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87 Atlanta University was a historically black university founded in 1865. In 1988, it merged with Clark University (established 1869) to form Clark Atlanta University. See Rodney T. Cohen, Black Colleges of Atlanta (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000).
88 Cleveland Call & Post, August 1, 1953.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., September 5, 1953.
91 Despite owning territories and colonies
clutches of America’s enemies, the Soviet Union and China. There was a general fear
that every colonial war had communists behind the scenes because, in the mind of
Western policymakers, any people desiring to throw off the yoke of Western domination
was suspect of wanting to give up “civilization” and “democracy.”

The Cold War, however, also placed constraints on the African-American
leadership as to how to question colonialism and support decolonization and even wars
for independence while avoiding the danger of being denounced as communists. Many
African-American leaders who supported the Mau Mau uprising were themselves
suspected or investigated for alleged communist ties. Of particular concern were Paul
Robeson and his Council on African Affairs (CAA). The CAA, established as the
International Committee on African Affairs (ICAA) in 1937, was “one of the most
important voices for Africa in the United States during the next decade.” In the late
1940s, the CAA was investigated by the United States Attorney General and listed “as a
subversive organization.” In 1952, the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB)
stated that the CAA was “directed, dominated or controlled by the Communist Party,
USA.” The House Un-American Activities Committee investigated leading African-
Americans for suspected communist ties, leading Ralph Bunche, Howard University

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94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., 80.
professor and diplomat, to denounce his ties to Robeson. Such actions were also followed by Walter White, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), whose *The Crisis* called Robeson “Moscow’s No. 1 Negro” and “Kremlin’s Stooge.” Kenyatta’s connection to Moscow and Robeson further dampened the support for the Mau Mau among African-American leaders fearing to be portrayed as communists.

The African-American press broadly reflected the constraints placed by the fear of communism. Roark examines how *The Crisis*, the official publication of the NAACP, reflected the change from “[v]igorous protest against economic and political oppression […] to protest against social discrimination in the colonial empires.” Using the Mau Mau uprising as an example, he stated that “the NAACP focused on the ‘color bar’ – social discrimination – as the root cause.” The *Call & Post*, however, did mention economic and political issues in its reports on Kenya. Several articles mentioned the fact that African land had been given to white settlers and expressed the hope that the situation could be eased through a fairer parliamentary system rather than land redistribution. Although land redistribution was hinted at on several occasions, the *Call & Post* avoided outright demands of anything other than decolonization. Its advocacy for “fairness” in land ownership and political representation mirrored the growing civil rights movement in its call for economic and political equality and the emphasis on a “fairer parliamentary system” also stressed the paper’s democratic ideals. This again

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98 Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, 82.
100 Ibid.
reflects the burgeoning civil rights movement as African-American leaders were trying to present themselves as patriotic, democratic, and law-abiding in order to avoid denunciations of communism. The fear of communism thus decisively influenced both how the Cleveland and larger American public perceived the Mau Mau uprising as well as how the situation in Kenya was portrayed in the pages of the *Plain Dealer* and the *Call & Post*.

**Conclusion**

Although the Mau Mau uprising was big news, it was only covered extensively in the *Cleveland Call & Post* rather than in the mainstream *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The two most popular national news stories that occurred during the time frame of the conflict in Kenya were the Korean War and *Brown v. Board of Education*. On June 15, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea, sparking the “police action” that would last for three years. A few years prior to the war, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 to desegregate the United States’ military, but it was not until the Korean War that it became nearly impossible to maintain segregated military units. It was feared that segregation would be used by the communists as propaganda against the West, and New York Congressman Jacob Javits, “calling for a congressional investigation” of continued racial segregation in the United States’ military, stated that “segregation and discrimination on the grounds of race, creed or color in the United States can be used to

\[\text{101 President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 on 26 July 1948. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 86.}\]

\[\text{102 Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 86-87.}\]
While debates over segregation and attempts at integration were fueled by the Korean War, communism hovered over competing policies on race and was used to stifle the radicalism of the civil rights movements, as evident in the NAACP’s denunciation of Paul Robeson.

Not even a year after the signing of the armistice indefinitely halted the Korean War, another news story made national headlines. On 17 May 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down their landmark decision on *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*, unanimously overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and stating that “separate but equal” violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause. In 1952, the Justice Department filed an *amicus curiae* brief regarding the case, stating that “[t]he existence of discrimination against minority groups in the United States has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries. Racial discrimination furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubts even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith.” The Justice Department’s *amicus curiae* thus used language similar to that presented by Congressman Javits’s call for an investigation over segregation in the military.

The coverage of the Mau Mau in the Cleveland press confirms the deep, highly ambiguous connections between how the American public opinion responded to African decolonization and its domestic anxieties over how changing race relations connected to political radicalism. Thus the NAACP drastically scaled back calls for decolonization,

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103 Quoted in ibid., 87.
104 *Plessy v. Ferguson* established “separate but equal,” a decision that was used to create racialized legislation throughout the United States.
105 Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, 86.
most likely after witnessing what happened to the CAA, and, in turn, focused on domestic issues. The “evidence” used against the CAA during the investigation rarely connected the organization to the Communist Party, “but, rather, simply assumed that support of African liberation groups was Communist and therefore treasonous.”

Issues of whether to support racial justice or colonialism were contentious and the Plain Dealer managed to straddle the two viewpoints in calling for a more racially equal society in Kenya through education and land distribution without demanding decolonization. For the newspaper, it was important in the fight against communism to both “stamp out” the Mau Mau while creating “a real multiracial society [in Kenya] – Europeans, Indians, and Africans – in which we can all work in harmony.”

The Call & Post called for racial equality while emphasizing its links to the decolonization of Egypt, Indo-China (Vietnam), and Kenya, realities it likened to the American South. The Call & Post was not a militant newspaper, but connecting colonialism to African-Americans’ oppression at home was a powerful argument in the struggle for freedom in the South.

Sympathies with the emerging civil rights movement in the United States were still, however, under the shadow of the fear of communism. African-American leaders were afraid of explicitly supporting the Mau Mau due to the reports of the violent nature of the struggle. The situation in Kenya, nonetheless, sometimes forced some African-American leaders to examine the question of “how extensively to use violence in

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106 Von Eschen, Race Against Empire, 135.
107 Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 25, 1952; March 31, 1953; April 5, 1953.
108 Ibid., April 5, 1953.
109 Cleveland Call & Post,
resisting white supremacy” in the United States.\textsuperscript{110} One NAACP member in Michigan wondered if such a focus would be on the Mau Mau and their tactics if the races of those involved were reversed, “if the Mau Mau society were white like the Ku Klux Klan & it [attacked] … the colored race… would [there] be such an uproar.”\textsuperscript{111} While many African-American leaders used the situation in Kenya to shy away from such violence, the Mau Mau uprising expanded the domestic conversation on racial politics and “helped crystallize the tactical questions and moved some toward accepting violence as principle,” particularly as so many white Americans remained defiant, even violently so, to desegregation after \textit{Brown v. Board}.\textsuperscript{112}

The Cold War intricately tied together race and civil rights, empire and decolonization, and domestic and international concerns about communism. According to Penny Von Eschen, the Cold War greatly changed African-American political leaders’ ability to continue to criticize American foreign policy. The NAACP, after witnessing the demise of the CAA and Paul Robeson, realized that the fight for civil rights had to take place within the framework of anti-communism and unquestioned support for American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{113} The difference in the representations of the Mau Mau and the issues both the \textit{Cleveland Plain Dealer} and the \textit{Cleveland Call & Post} presented demonstrated these complex connections between a greater political opening in

\textsuperscript{110} Meriwether, \textit{Proudly We Can Be Africans}, 142.
\textsuperscript{111} Quoted in Horne, \textit{Mau Mau in Harlem}, 117.
\textsuperscript{112} Meriwether, \textit{Proudly We Can Be Africans}, 144.
discussions of race and a closure of elite discourse away from prospects of radical change. While some feared the struggle in Kenya would last generations, anticommunism, the fight for civil rights, and the legacy of racial segregation did indeed impinge over future generations. The coincidence of these news stories demonstrates the resonance of decolonization as an episode in a long history of tensions over race and civil rights.

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114 Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 22, 1954.
Conclusion:
African Colonial Wars in Cleveland

As David Anderson wrote, “Kenya’s Mau Mau rebellion was by far the most violent, and most savagely fought of Britain’s many wars of decolonization after 1945.”\(^1\) Anderson might have written, instead, that it was the “most violent, and most savagely fought of Britain’s many” colonial wars since the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The two conflicts, despite being separated by time and place, had many similarities. Both wars were centered on opposition to British colonialism in order to establish, or reinforce claims to be, independent nations. Initial methods of warfare differed, i.e., there was a phase of the Anglo-Boer War which included “traditional” warfare through confrontations in open battlefields before the Boers turned to guerrilla warfare similar to the Mau Mau. The British methods of dealing with the guerrilla phases of the conflicts also were similar. Concentration camps were established which held tens of thousands of men, women, and children in poor conditions which led to malnutrition, starvation, disease, and death. Despite these similarities, the way in which the American public viewed these two conflicts, the respective opponents of the British empire, and the violent means employed differed greatly. White Clevelanders overwhelmingly sided with the Boer and held mass meetings in support of them and when conditions in the

concentration camps were published in the Plain Dealer, it added to the pro-Boer sentiment. However, during the Mau Mau uprising, concentration camps were never mentioned in the mainstream Plain Dealer, but were in the African-American Call & Post.

This leaves the question as to why American public opinion varied so drastically concerning these two conflicts. The Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising are excellent examples to examine how Americans perceived colonial conflicts through the lens of their own domestic and foreign concerns. Both conflicts were present to a large extent in the media; articles, letters to the editors, editorials, pictures and drawings, and even jokes and political cartoons covered these events, at least for the first year or two of the conflicts. The Anglo-Boer War was scarcely out of The Plain Dealer during the first of the three years of conflict, while the Mau Mau uprising was rarely absent from the pages of the Cleveland Call & Post for over two years of its eight years. Obviously, these conflicts were a part of everyday Cleveland news and discussions. The main elements with which they impacted American public opinion were concerns with their attendant fears or anxieties of racial violence. Public understanding of victimhood from colonial violence, and who are even allowed to be victims, were shaped by American anxieties of race.

Cleveland, Ohio was much like many other big Midwestern cities. Originally settled mainly by Germans and Anglo-Saxons, it became a large steel city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the time of the Anglo-Boer War, it was experiencing a large influx of non-Western European foreigners, particularly from
Eastern and Southern Europe. Although Cleveland did not have the Asian population of other large cities, particularly on the West Coast, this was still a remarkable difference with the mainly Germanic settlements in major cities of Ohio. Little Italy and Slavic Village, so named due to their residents, demonstrated the changing demographics of Cleveland.² Ohio’s African-American population also grew by the turn of the century, from 63,213 in 1870 to 186,187 in 1920.³ However, this still represented only a small proportion of the state’s population, with the majority of African-Americans living in Cincinnati.⁴ By the 1950s, the African-American “population in Cleveland increased substantially.”⁵ Along with the increased African-American percentage of its population, Cleveland experienced heightened racial conflicts centered on fair employment practices, fair housing, and fair education.⁶

During the Anglo-Boer War racialized anxieties took the form of white Americans’ identification with the Boers and their xenophobic exclusion of Uitlanders from voting. As immigrant populations in the United States shifted from mainly Western and Northern European origins to Asians and Southern and Eastern Europeans, the United States’ government was mostly concerned with defining who could and could not

⁴ Ibid., 243-244.
⁶ Ibid.
be American citizens. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred Chinese from obtaining American citizenship and, thereby, the vote, was one such policy. The identification with the Boers over the voting rights reclaimed immigration policy as a governmental national project through the selective inclusion of newcomers, even if the reasons for the Boers’ fears of newcomers were completely different. White Americans feared an increase in cheap labor, particularly of Chinese and other Asians, on the West Coast. The Boers, on the other hand, were afraid that giving the mainly British Uitlanders the right to vote would allow British nationals to vote for the South African republics to officially become a part of the British Empire. Nevertheless, both fears raised prospects of national destruction due to foreigners obtaining the franchise, regardless of how “foreigner” and “destruction” were defined.

Fear also fed the mainstream American understanding of the Mau Mau uprising, although this was a fear of communism as it related to domestic racial tensions rather than a fear of foreigners. With the war in Korea still in full fury at the start of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and Britain enduring a protracted colonial war in Malaya, in which the British fought another guerrilla war against the communist-backed Malayan National Liberation Army, it was easy for Americans to associate any war on Western powers with communism. This fear of communism quickly transcended racial borders in the United States. Not only were white Americans afraid of communism, African-American leaders were also cautious when approaching the topic as a lack of conformity could cause an accusation of communist sympathies. White America associated black radicalism with communism and in order to survive, African-American leaders needed to
disassociate themselves from both communist ties and black radicalism. The NAACP “passed a resolution excluding communists from its membership” and prominent African-Americans, such as entertainers Josephine Baker and Paul Robeson, were denounced as communist sympathizers for speaking out against racist American policies and the treatment of African-Americans. Such treatment did not go unnoticed by African-American leaders who realized that, to survive red-baiting in order to fight another day, they needed to lay low, avoid disagreements over American foreign policy, and even denounce other African-American leaders who were targeted by the United States’ government for possible communist sympathies. The friendship between Paul Robeson and Jomo Kenyatta, whom the British erroneously supposed to be the leader of the Mau Mau uprising, solidified governmental fears that the Mau Mau could be a communist-backed arm of a worldwide black radical conspiracy. Not only had Robeson been denounced as a communist, Kenyatta had spent several years in Moscow and the association between Robeson and Kenyatta was used as circumstantial, but not less frightening, evidence. Presenting stories regarding the Mau Mau uprising on the same page, and sometimes in the same article, as the Malayan “Emergency,” further reinforced among the white readers the impression that the situation in countries few Americans would otherwise give a second thought, was, in fact, another domino in the communist “war on democracy” and the American way of life.

This fear over communism, however, was not similarly echoed in the pages of the Call & Post. In its weekly pages, the paper consistently denied the connection of the

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8 Ibid., 61-78.
Mau Mau in Kenya to communism. Despite other African-American leaders denouncing the Mau Mau as communist and condemning leaders who might support the Mau Mau, the Call & Post did not back away from branding the rumors as such. At a time when many African-American leaders were folding under the pressure of anti-communist intimidation, the Call & Post continued to portray the Mau Mau as the victims of British imperialism, concluding that they had every right to fight their oppressors. However, the Call & Post did criticize the methods of the Mau Mau, reflecting domestic debates on “how extensively to use violence in resisting white supremacy.”

Both “white” and mainstream “black” America worried that if they “[a]ccept[ed] that Mau Mau had the right to use violent means to fight white supremacy and oppression in Kenya [it] held the distinct potential to grow into accepting that at some point violence could be necessary in the face of white intransigence in the United States.” This realization became stronger as more and more African-Americans, particularly in the South, fought against segregation and supported the civil rights movement.

The connection of xenophobia and communism leads directly to the main reason the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising were presented in drastically different ways by the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Gazette and the Cleveland Call & Post. This connection, however, was filtered through race as the main issue that drove the American understanding of both conflicts. There are in these newspapers’ coverage clear discursive lines leading to racial identity. During the Anglo-Boer War, white Americans rarely read about black Africans in South Africa in the pages of the Plain

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10 Ibid., 144.
Dealer. White Americans overwhelmingly chose to identify with the “plucky” Boer farmers fighting to throw off British imperialism, just as their forefathers had done 130 years earlier. Americans not only identified with Boers in their fight against British imperialism, but also as a people resisting all imperialism, even as the United States emerged from the Spanish-American War with its own colonial possessions. Editor Smith of the Cleveland Gazette, however, ran reprints that focused on the Africans’ oppression, regardless to who prevailed in the war. When he penned editorials, it was to highlight how the Boers mistreated Africans suggesting that the Boers should not expect American sympathy without righting the wrongs they had committed against Africans.

By the 1950s, the United States was experiencing the start of what would become the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Court cases over segregation were fought and in 1954, the United States’ Supreme Court struck down the “separate but equal” principle established in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Brown v. Board of Education forced all Americans to think about race and integration in ways that had been avoided since the end of Reconstruction in 1877. The most important news stories in the period of the Mau Mau uprising were the anti-communist war in Korea and Brown v. Board of Education. The Cleveland Plain Dealer presented the Mau Mau as black uncivilized savages. White readers would thus probably sympathize for the British, for no other reason than skin color and their role as a Western ally in the fight against communism. By attempting to dispel rumors of communist infiltration, however, the Call and Post also reclaimed the legitimacy of black resistance to white rule. These two wars demonstrate the connections of American public opinion with the racial identities of the participants in each conflict.
Echoing widespread national sentiments, the fears of white Clevelanders at the time of the Anglo-Boer War were directed toward immigrants from non-Western/Northern Europe, but the fear of the “Other” had been transferred to African-Americans by the 1950s, when racist laws were starting to be struck down by the higher courts in an effort to desegregate American society and make it more inclusive. Due to the courts striking down Jim Crow legislation, white fears mounted against African-Americans, as demonstrated by the long, hard fight for civil rights in the United States. This fear of African-Americans translated into the excruciatingly long time it took to desegregate public schools. Although Brown v. Board was decided in 1954, Cleveland Public Schools did not desegregate until a court order in 1976.\textsuperscript{11} For much of the twentieth century, Cleveland was one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States.\textsuperscript{12} This fear of African-Americans was clearly translated into a fear of all Africans, demonstrated by the words in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the images it chose to print as it commented on the Mau Mau insurgency.

This study is only a beginning. There are many aspects of the representations of these conflicts that need further research. For instance, these silences in the Gazette and Call & Post regarding African intellectuals and the apparent lack of connection between African-Americans and Africans beyond the identification of similar plights. While there was an active African elite in the Cape Colony, several of whom edited newspapers, these are absent from the pages of the Gazette. John Tengo Jabavu established and

edited *Imvo Zabantsundu*. There are conflicting understandings of Jabavu’s opinion of the Anglo-Boer War. Furthermore, Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje founded and edited several papers and gained fame for his participation during the battle of Mafeking.

Writer, editor, founder of the South African Native National Congress, and a founder of the African National Congress John Dube attended Oberlin College not far from Cleveland, Ohio. However, these and other African intellectuals in South Africa remained absent from the *Cleveland Gazette*. During the Mau Mau uprising, there was no mention in the *Cleveland Call & Post* regarding any African intellectuals in Kenya or their opinions.

The business of journalism and newspapers changed in the late nineteenth century. Due to new technology, information was available more quickly and what happened one day in South Africa could be printed in newspapers and sold to readers by the next morning. Large numbers of war correspondents, including such future

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prominent names as Winston Churchill,\textsuperscript{16} traveled to South Africa. Daily articles and political cartoons in the newspapers drew Clevelanders’ attention. Not only did the war captivate imagination by its actions, but also new war technology and humanitarian services, such as the Red Cross, increased the exoticness of the conflict and American, including Clevelanders, interest in it. However, the Mau Mau uprising was not provided the same extensive coverage by the mainstream press and Americans did not receive the same exposure to the conflict as during the Anglo-Boer War. While I argue that this is due to race, other explanations, such as news saturation with other conflicts such as Korea, are also likely.

Another area of research that needs to be further explored is to decipher ideological versus source censorship. Many of the articles in all three newspapers examined relied heavily on routing services, such as the Associated Press. What needs to be further understood is where did censorship occur. There was already British censorship during both conflicts, as they controlled most of the information entering and leaving the colonies. However, as demonstrated by the publication of concentration camps during both conflicts, information which made the British look cruel or inept still managed to leave the war zones. While the *Gazette* and the *Call & Post* were established as Republican newspapers, the decision to print or not print certain articles was left to editors who may or may not have wanted to follow Republican ideology. For instance, the *Gazette*, a Republican paper, may not have wanted to print anti-British articles as the

McKinley and Roosevelt administrations were “amicably neutral” toward Britain. Understanding where censorship occurred, whether British control of the export of information, news routing services, or ideological affiliations, are questions that need to be investigated further.

In the end, my study especially demonstrates that American “public opinion” cannot be neatly defined. There is not, nor has there ever been, one “public,” but rather several, as one can see in the different opinions regarding the two colonial wars I discuss and how they were presented in American newspapers. While books have been published regarding American public opinion during the Anglo-Boer War, rarely do the authors internally differentiate the “public” they are investigating. Even when knowledge of atrocities committed during wars for decolonization start to make their way into public opinion, there were still attempts to give them very different meanings. Only recently are atrocities committed by colonial powers against non-white colonized people becoming part of Western conversation, although more as a unifying discourse centered on apology. As with older divided discourses, current perceptions of colonialism are moved by domestic considerations, for example finding new ways to claim Western authority among its former colonies as the West declines and new

\[\text{\footnotesize 18 Mulanax, The Boer War in American Politics and Diplomacy.} \]
emerging economic powers, including old communist enemies like China, are on the rise. Issues regarding race and empire continue to shape the Western imagination of the formerly colonized.

In conclusion, understanding the reflection of global events in the “public opinion” must be set against the background of domestic issues and anxieties, which amplify the resonance of those events. The American society was experiencing turbulent times during both the turn of the century and the 1950s. Related anxieties concerning nation-building, race and the fate of democracy were transferred onto situations on the other side of the world. The media coverage of the Anglo-Boer War and the Mau Mau uprising speak to the troubles of American society as much as to those distant conflicts.
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