

The British Colonial Press Coverage of the Indian Rebellion of 1857-8 and its Relationship to
Local Concerns.

Ralph Stewart Loch

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the many aspects of identity, in the varied colonies and settlements of the British Empire. It achieves this through investigating the impact that the Indian Rebellion of 1857-8 had on perceived localised issues of identity, interests and the lands that they inhabited. It uses the colonial press copy on one of the Empire's primary news events, the Rebellion, as source material.

Much of the literature on the imperial press covers later periods during which the telegraph system was in place, news agencies were fully developed, and efficient mass printing presses had cut production costs. The newspaper had become a consumer item, as a consequence of the removal of taxes. The existing surveys of the press reaction to the Rebellion concern specific issues or are limited in location and number of journals utilised.

Each of the four substantive chapters of this thesis analyse different aspects of identity, by taking specific issues and relating them to colonies or the groups that inhabited them. In the first chapter the island of Ireland is used to examine the issues of religion and ethnicity followed by the divisions those created. The second chapter focuses on settler colonies and their desire to establish a place and position in the empire by contributing men, material and finances. For this set of concerns British North America, the Cape Colony and Australia were the examples. The Straits Settlements and Burma are also used as locations, in which the European population was seeking to replace East India Company rule with that of the British state. The third chapter uses as an example the colonies of British North America to examine the divided loyalties in settler colonies. The fourth employs several colonies with plantation economies to look at the need for labour and the threat that Indian labour, free or convict, might present. In the final chapter empire wide copy was utilised to compare and to contrast the two visions of the combatants, both European and Indian, and aspects of them to determine if a cross-imperial viewpoint was arrived at, or whether these were local views made homogeneous by the types of people who expressed them.

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Introduction

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the British Empire was a scattered body of disparate settlements, largely united by a common administrative language and an often tenuous or antagonistic link to the 'mother country'. Their purposes varied as much as their political and ethnic formats. Some were predominately European in population, with a small indigenous population; in others, Europeans were outnumbered by the native population; and in others there was a diversity of ethnicity in the make-up of the dominant European population. In format, they varied from quasi-European societies with substantial self-government, through plantation dominated economies, to small trading settlements under the control of commercial entities. All these differences to some extent affected how their populations viewed themselves and others as well as how they were administered. These settlements were governed, in the most part, in collaboration with their inhabitants, both European and indigenous, in order to ensure a peaceful and effective exercise of power.

Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British state had sought to decrease its land forces, relying on the navy to defend its domestic and international interests. The army became, in part, a colonial gendarmerie to put down -in the last resort- rebellions with exemplary force, as a deterrent to others. This policy had generally proved effective until 1857. The ultimate fear was that a number of rebellions would erupt at the same time, stretching the military system globally, to breaking point. What those living in these territories would commonly refer to as the 'Indian Mutiny' would affect all parts of this Empire. For some, it would generate fear. For others, it would highlight existing concerns. It would present opportunity to some, vindicate the established prejudices of others, and create ideological parallels for those seeking them. Through their newspapers, colonists could express their sentiments about this momentous event. These opinions were often coloured by the circumstances of each individual settlement, making newspaper reports which were ostensibly Indian¹ in topic, but domestic in meaning. This resulted in views of

¹ The inexact term 'India' will be used to describe the territory of present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and sections of Afghanistan, but not those East India Company possessions in South East Asia such

the Rebellion that would be filtered through local events and concerns throughout the Empire.

This thesis will examine these developing features of identity throughout the British Empire, using the colonial press as a medium for analysing opinion and the Rebellion as the focal point. This will be accomplished by looking at its impact on selected political issues and the ways in which matters of identity, interests and location affected perceptions of them. Each of the first four chapters will analyse different aspects of this; how the native populations were viewed; how they were perceived by the outside world; their views of others involved in the Empire; and how these in turn viewed themselves. The final chapter will compare and contrast the two visions of the combatants, European and Indian, in the Rebellion to determine if a cross-imperial viewpoint was arrived at, or whether these were local views, made homogeneous by the types of people who expressed them. This thesis will pay particular attention to the latter and will provide a variety of colonial points of view, which were alive with the hopes and worries, the tolerances and prejudices, of those who saw what was happening elsewhere and applied it to their own situations.

A clear commonality emerges from these vignettes of opinion. Whilst the perspectives of those writing for or corresponding with the colonial press were often depicted as Empire-wide or in global terms, their opinions always crystallised down to the local. It becomes apparent that after an initial reaction of concern and horror regarding what was transpiring in India, the common focus of the colonial press reporting these events shifted to highlight domestic issues, utilising the Rebellion as an analogue for local concerns.

Historiography

This thesis focuses both on the Rebellion, its nature, those who took part in it and how it was used as an analogue for local or regional issues. It also includes a consideration of the newspaper industry of the mid 1800s; how it was developing and how far it needed to

as the Straits Settlements, which will be treated as separate entities. 'Indian' will be used to broadly describe their inhabitants. The contemporary spelling of the names of settlements in the subcontinent will be used. The term 'East India Company' will be used to describe the 1600 English foundation.

travel to become what it was by the end of the century. The following is a synopsis of the literature on both those subjects.

The general historiography of the Rebellion, the East India Company, and the wider Empire in this period is extensive, often representing as much the concerns of the period in which they were written, as the events themselves. This is particularly apparent in the histories written in the few decades after the event. General histories of the Empire provide useful overviews of the Rebellion and its position in the history and development of what became loosely the British Empire.² Surveys of the other rebellions and conflicts of this period exist in Brown's *Resistance and Rebellion* and David's *Victoria's Wars*.³ These help to provide context for the ways in which such conflicts were handled or mishandled by the authorities. They also provide an essential background to the situation in certain settlements in the period, helping to explain some of the responses to the events in India. This has special relevance to possessions in British North America and Ireland, which had recently experienced conflicts of their own. Although these conflicts do not always inform the thesis directly, they help to provide the context in which uprisings were typically viewed, with the focus being on the home islands. There are issue-based surveys of the Empire, such as the role of religion, culturally and politically, in the Empire. This is examined in Ion's essay, "The Empire that Prays Together stays Together".⁴ These texts provide the general context in which the reportage of the Rebellion sits both in the subcontinent and empire wide.

Recent works on the Rebellion itself include David's *Indian Mutiny*, Wagner's *Great Fear of 1857*, and Dalrymple's *Last Mughal*. David's book provides a conventional military-

² Such as Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1995); Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A World History Perspective* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999); Ronald Hyam *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003); Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (London: Vintage, 2007).

³ Richard Brown, *Resistance and Rebellion in the British Empire, 1600-1980* (London: Clio, 2012); Saul David, *Victoria's Wars* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006).

⁴ A. Hamish Ion, "The Empire that Prays Together Stays Together: Imperial defence and religion, 1857-1956", in Greg Kennedy (ed.), *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856-1956* (London: Routledge, 2007).

focused examination of events, but this is heavily criticised by Wagner⁵ who, using primary Indian sources, investigates the effect of rumour in the build up and progression of the Rebellion. Dalrymple, too, focuses on the Indian experience of the Rebellion through seldom used local primary sources. The most detailed study of the violence of the Rebellion is conducted in Ward's *Our Bones are Scattered*.⁶ East India Company rule in the subcontinent is discussed in James' *Raj* which provides a general narrative examination of the Company, in India, including the Rebellion period. These texts help provide the context, in which the external press reports were formulated and an understanding of situation in those places directly controlled by the East India Company.

Although the literature is in general agreed over the events of the Rebellion, there has been a long running debate on how the topic should be examined, what the events should be classified as and the nature and causes of the Rebellion.

Two surveys of the historiography of the Rebellion, conducted some forty years apart, summarised how the topic was handled by historians. The first by Michael Adas, in the second half of the twentieth century, determined that there were four major approaches to the topic, that of an Indian nationalist, that of a Marxist, those who viewed it as a traditionalist uprising and those who conducted localised studies.⁷ A more recent, if somewhat opinionated, examination of the literature relating to the Rebellion can be found in Wagner's, *Marginal Mutiny*. He separated the literature into those who took an appropriate modern approach and those he deems as old fashioned.⁸ This thesis will

⁵ Kim Wagner, *The Great Fear of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* (London: Peter Lang, 2010), 20-1

⁶ Saul David, *The Indian Mutiny 1857* (London: Penguin, 2002); Kim Wagner, *The Great Fear Of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* (London: Peter Lang, 2010); William Dalrymple, *Last Mughal The Fall of a Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006); Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered* (London: John Murray, 1996).

⁷ Michael Adas, "Twentieth Century Approaches to the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58", *Journal of Asian History* 5, 1 (1971): 1-19.

⁸ Kim Wagner, "The Marginal Mutiny: The New Historiography of the Indian Uprising of 1857", *History Compass* 9, 10 (2011): 760-6.

examine the opinions of this neglected forum of opinion by conducting an empire wide survey of the British colonial press.

The nomenclature of what happened has proven to be equally divisive, as the appropriate approach to be taken towards it. The events of 1857 and 1858 have been accorded several different titles, depending on viewpoint and the period. There was no clear terminology used at the time colloquially or by either the British or colonial press. It was the ‘sepoys’ mutiny, uprising, revolt, war or rebellion, the ‘Great Mutiny’, ‘Indian Rising’, ‘the Revolt’, ‘the Mahomedan Rebellion’ or ‘the Indian Rebellion’ to provide a selection. Each uses a term designed to emphasise aspects that the author saw as important or relevant. Some wordings did acquire local dominance such as the term ‘Indian Insurrection’ gaining traction in the antipodean settler colonies.⁹ These terms were simply what the Rebellion was termed locally often based on the information available, a ‘mutiny’ based on early reports of military uprisings and ‘rebellion’ as it later became known. That would often come from the local press. Regardless, the term ‘Indian Mutiny’ would always be the most used term during and after the Rebellion. However as diverse people such as Benjamin Disraeli and Karl Marx would term the events in India as a ‘revolt’.¹⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century V.D. Savarkar described it as a ‘war of independence’¹¹ and although his choice of nomenclature has received criticism, even in the Indian academic community,¹² as well as the British it helped spark off a debate into the nature of what happened.

The nature of the Rebellion and its causation would become a key topic of debate in the literature,¹³ as much as it had been in the colonial press. Starting with the works of Sir John

⁹ Examples being *Empire*, 11 July 1857; *Hobart Town Mercury*, 11 September 1857; *Daily Southern Cross*, 13 November 1857; *Wellington Independent*, 9 December 1857.

¹⁰ Disraeli quoted in Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 8; Karl Marx in *New York Daily Tribune*, 14 August 1857.

¹¹ Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857* (London, 1909).

¹² Such as Ranbir Vohra, *The Making of India: A Historical Survey* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 70; Farhat Hasan “A Welcome Study”, *Social Scientist* 26 (1):149.

¹³ Saul David, *Devil's Wind* (London: Endeavour Press, 2018) Kindle Edition, Introduction.

Kaye¹⁴, who saw the Rebellion as the product of disaffected Indian soldiery persuaded into mutiny by agent provocateurs. The opposing view in Savarkar's,¹⁵ 'distinctly anti-British account'¹⁶, which portrayed what occurred as a popular uprising founded on the tenants of religion and nationalism. This demonstrates that opinions were divided. Such an argument is difficult to sustain considering that those rebelling, military or civilian, 'generated no coherent ideology or programme on which to build a new order'.¹⁷ The two arguments were also nuanced, with Kaye accepting that British misrule in India played a part in what had happened and Savarkar acknowledging that the sepoys had grievances based on their treatment. Other contemporary British historians such as Holmes saw the many failures in the management of the native troops as creating a situation in which a minor trigger, such as rumours about the type of grease used on cartridges, could produce wholesale mutiny.¹⁸ At the time of centenary in 1957 three studies of the Rebellion appeared. Sen posited that it was religion, not nationalism, that united the disaffected rebels in the cause of ridding themselves of a foreign administration and returning themselves to local hegemony.¹⁹ Majumdar's work of the same year supported Sen's assertion that religion was the primary cause of the Rebellion.²⁰ A fear of Westernisation and forced conversion to Christianity was how Chaudhuri determined the motivations of the rebel sepoys and the population as a whole, although he also saw it as a 'national outburst against foreign rule'.²¹ In *Aftermath of the Revolt*, Metcalf viewed the Rebellion, as a popular uprising, though agreed that the mistreatment and the religious fears of the sepoys played a major role in instigating the

¹⁴ Sir John Kaye, *Kaye's and Mangleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8, Volume I* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971).

¹⁵ Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence*.

¹⁶ Wagner, *Great Fear*, 12

¹⁷ Judith Brown, *Modern India, The Origins of an Asian Democracy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1994) 94.

¹⁸ T.R.E. Holmes, *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1883), 564-5.

¹⁹ Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1957).

²⁰ Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1957).

²¹ Sashi Bhusan Chaudhuri, *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies 1857-1859* (Calcutta: World Press, 1957), 298.

initial stages.²² A detailed study of the recently annexed former princely state of Oudh,²³ conducted by Mukherjee suggested that what started as a military mutiny propagated by concerns about religion and caste which then triggered discontent in the local population over East India Company rule. He also posits that the interrelationship between the garrison and the home, helped rumours spread each way.²⁴ In a similar regional study by Roy posits that the rebellious sepoys were attempting to replace foreign rule with a domestic one, simply shifting masters and in doing so, creating a polity rather than resurrecting one, that had previously existed.²⁵ This switching of allegiance, often at whim, had a long history in the locations in which the Company recruited and that the rebellious were simply using minor grievances, as a method of protecting their monopoly in recruitment.²⁶ As the local press viewed it the sepoys in service of the East India Company were ‘confident of their power to dictate terms to their masters’²⁷, whoever they should be. Marshall argues that those who ‘took up arms against the British’ did so for ‘diverse reasons’ but many others in the subcontinent fought for them as ‘the majority remained apparently acquiescent’.²⁸ The Rebellion was far from being universally supported. Certain sections of Indian society were unwilling to support ‘a backward Zamindar revolt’, as ethnic or religious groups like the Sikhs and the Gurkhas on the whole sided with the British. This lack of unanimity would prove vital in the countering, then suppression of the Rebellion.²⁹

²² Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857-1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

²³ Present day Awadh annexed in 1856 under the Doctrine of Lapse.

²⁴ Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* (Delhi: Permant Black, 1984)

²⁵ Tapti Roy, *The Politics of a Popular Uprising: Bundelkhand in 1857* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

²⁶ Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), supported in part by Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India 1770-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²⁷ *Friend of India*, 7 May 1857.

²⁸ Peter J. Marshall, “1783-1870: An Expanding Empire” in Peter J. Marshall, *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 50.

²⁹ John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 195.

Baucom argues that the descriptive terminology of the period highlights a failure of understanding of the constitution of the Rebellion.³⁰ This argument is balanced by contemporary histories like Kaye and Holmes' which show a lack of desire to investigate the causes.³¹ This is called into doubt though by the often excessive speculation, as to the causes of the Rebellion in both the Indian and further colonial press, which is outlined in this thesis. One of the most commonly voiced causes was possible external involvement, which will form the basis of the third chapter of this thesis. As a counter Moore suggests that explanations of the true nature of the Rebellion were actively suppressed.³²

There has been a changing approach towards the image of the British in the Rebellion. Early histories of the Rebellion presented those suppressing the rebellion, as almost universally 'heroes' and their opponents as the opposite, which was mirrored in the early reaction to the Rebellion but became more nuanced later.³³ Current historians of the Rebellion, especially those critical of British rule, have sought to emphasise the brutality of British reprisals³⁴, although contemporary reports and military histories often included reports of such reprisals.³⁵ Others have sought to highlight the cultural achievements of the Mughal court and its last ruler, and present this as something to contrast positively against the Europeans in the subcontinent.³⁶ This approach can simply have the effect, at least in part, of shifting the bias in the other direction.

³⁰ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 106.

³¹ Sir John Kaye, *Kaye's and Malleeson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8, Volume 1* (Westport, Greenwood Press: Westport, 1971), xii.

³² Grace Moore, *Dickens and Empire: Discourses of Class, Race And Colonialism In The Works Of Charles Dickens* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 146.

³³ Sir John Kay, *Kaye's and Malleeson's History*, xii.

³⁴ Some examples being Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Spectre of Violence: the 1857 Kanpur Massacres*, (Dehli: Viking 1998); Snigdha Sen, *The Historiography of the Indian Revolt* (Calcutta: Punthi-Pustak, 1992); William Dalrymple, *Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).

³⁵ Edward Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980), 129.

³⁶ William Dalrymple, *Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).

The relationship between the British and Indians has been interpreted in a number of ways. For the period before the Rebellion, when the balance of power lay with the Indians, rather than the British, Baron's *Indian Affair* highlights the haphazard nature of how Company rule had developed in India, with an emphasis on the more fluid attitudes towards race that characterised the period before the Rebellion.³⁷ Dalrymple in *White Mughals*³⁸ charts the movement from a commonplace European integration into the local culture, in the seventeenth century, to the separation that was developing at the time of the Rebellion. Metcalf in *Ideologies of the Raj* argues that the two strands of similarity and difference produced competing ideologies of how to administer India.³⁹ There are two ways of looking at the later period. Lake and Reynolds' *Drawing the Global Colour Line* provides a cogent examination of the rising tensions, from the late nineteenth century, between white and non-white populations in the Empire and from that the global hardening of attitudes towards race.⁴⁰ An alternate view comes from Cannadine who argues in *Ornamentalism*⁴¹ that class played a larger, if not dominant, role in how the British viewed those they governed and other European nationalities. Gilmour's *Ruling Caste* suggests that the image of the Indian was personal in focus, determined by those with whom Europeans interacted with and the situations and places in which they found themselves.⁴²

Over the last forty years, there has also been a general move away from examining the overarching themes and strategies of the state and the high politics that surround them to investigate popular opinion. The clearest evidence of popular opinion can be found in the copy printed by newspapers and the communications people had with them. The Rebellion, by becoming a global media story, allowed a spectrum of colonies both to report events as they wished, as well as to express their own opinions on a single narrative of events. This global focus was facilitated by the Rebellion coinciding with a major period of press

³⁷ Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: Abacus, 1997); Archie Baron, *An Indian Affair: from Riches to the Raj* (London: Channel 4 Publishing, 2001).

³⁸ William Dalrymple, *White Mughals* (London: Harper Perennial, 2002).

³⁹ Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴¹ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴² David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (London: Pimlico, 2007).

expansion. This had resulted from the reform of taxation, coupled with advances in paper production and printing, which made newspapers cheaper to produce and thus turned them into an affordable form of mass media.⁴³

Previously, historians have tended to pay comparatively little attention to the contemporary opinions expressed by those in Britain's colonies, except to provide additional support to metropolitan-focused arguments. The direction of inquiry had tended towards a focus on the views of the mother country, or of leading colonial officials. But as the relevant historiography has begun to shift, historians have looked beyond the limited opinions of the administrative class, and in order to discern the popular reaction to events newspapers have provided a useful source of material.

There is now indeed a substantial body of work relating to the press in the British Empire, although its focus is weighted towards the second half of the century. Potter's *News and the British World* investigates, from an imperial perspective, the press of settler colonies from a starting date of 1876.⁴⁴ This thesis will take such an approach and develop it in relation to the specific event of the Rebellion and widen the geographical scope to all colonies with a local press. Potter introduces the book as a 'study of imperial integration', formed by the expansion of the undersea telegraph system.⁴⁵ The Empire of the late 1850s was becoming similarly integrated, but at a slower speed, concentrating on news carried on the first ships arriving and leaving port. This helps to provide a localised distinctness, as opinion replaced factual reporting in the often long gaps between arrivals of information. It also provided time in which the newspapers of an individual colony could respond to each others reporting. Potter's edited *Newspapers and Empire*⁴⁶ also investigates the impact of the imperial press system on identity, through a number of monographs on various aspects

⁴³ Alan Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press, 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976); Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

⁴⁴ Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

⁴⁵ Potter, *News and the British World*. 3; Simon J. Potter, "Webs, Networks, and Systems: Globalization and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 46 (2007), 621-46.

⁴⁶ Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004).

and periods, including one specifically on the Rebellion discussed below.⁴⁷ There have been a number of surveys of literary responses to the Rebellion, outside the areas covered in this thesis including the French reaction summarised in Fournian's "Contemporary French Press".⁴⁸ These again provide a broader context, although this thesis will only feature external press reports, when they become the subject of debate in the colonial press, as with the New York press in British North America.

An 'imperial press' - a loose collection of newspapers defined by a common interest in imperial issues -, has become a central topic of interest to historians such as Startt, and India specifically, with Kaul, but again both for a later period.⁴⁹

The middle of the nineteenth century was at the cusp of substantial change in the British, and, by extension the colonial newspaper industry, whilst the removal of the stamp duty on newspapers plus taxation on items like newspaper circulation dramatically increased. This allowed current events to become more available to the average person. Changes in both the speed of communications and the methods used to gather and report news, were in process, but nowhere near complete.

The period was one in which development was anticipated but had not arrived. The advent of the telegraphic network, as part of the imperial communications system, allowed colonial metropolises to communicate almost instantly, with their connected colonies and with increased speed, to those areas still unconnected. This is highlighted by Standage's *Victorian Internet* and Wenzlhuemer's *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World*.⁵⁰ Both authors highlight how the underlying technology had been developed. but the infrastructure

⁴⁷ Jill Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight" in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 93-108.

⁴⁸ Charles Fournian, "Contemporary French Press" in P.C. Joshi (ed.), *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium*. (New Dehli: People's Publishing House, 1957), 313-21.

⁴⁹ James D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903-13* (New York: Greenwood, 1991); Chandrika Kaul, *Reporting the Raj: The British Press and India, c.1880-1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet* (London: Phoenix, 1999); Ronald Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

especially over distance or outside Europe, was not yet in place. Local networks existed and would allow disarming of potential rebellious units,⁵¹ though the undersea cable network was not in place. The links would be established to North America in 1866, India in 1870 and Australia in 1872. In the 1850s, the Empire still relied for its extra colonial news on what arrived on the latest vessel, dependent on third party schedules, the weather or which newspapers a captain, crew or passengers decided to acquire, if any. A common refrain from many journals throughout period of the Rebellion, was to the effect that no new information had arrived on the latest ships to reach port. This haphazard methodology for obtaining news, allowed for reports to appear out of chronological order. It also created pauses in information that needed to be filled, very often by speculation. Such speculation on subjects like the possibility of external involvement or the threat local Indians might pose will inform a number of chapters in this thesis. The expansion of the colonial railway networks and improvements in ship engines increased the speed of information and newspaper distribution. At the time of the Rebellion it could take the news from Australia three months to reach the British Isles. The introduction of steamship lowered that to 45 days.⁵² These mechanical and communication developments are examined in Daniel Headrick's *Tools of Empire*, which shows the effects that technological advances would later have on how the British expanded, protected, and controlled their overseas territories.⁵³ He argues that even relatively small technological advances created overwhelming advantage, such as that enjoyed by the East India Company had over the Chinese Empire, during the naval engagements in the Opium Wars. During the period of the Rebellion these advantages only had minor effects. With a widespread Empire and improved communications, news was in the process of becoming more global in focus, even if it would retain an intrinsically local dimension.

Newspapers both displayed and formed identity, which in turn allowed people to imagine a 'community' in a particular location as well as the Empire as a whole. It could also have the adverse effect of helping people to feel separate and distinct from a greater Imperial

⁵¹ David, *Indian Mutiny* xxi-xxiii.

⁵² Simon J. Potter, "Empire and the English Press, c1857-1914" in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004)

⁵³ Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire, Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

whole.⁵⁴ This sense of identity has heightened at times of major tests for the Empire, of which the Rebellion was one of the most prominent. This identity was also subject to the effects of locality, including domestic physical environments, which could determine the format of the society that developed.⁵⁵

The characteristics of each colony and their relationship with the Imperial centre influenced how they viewed the Rebellion. In Hyam's *Understanding the British Empire*, it is argued that empires occupy a space in the imagination as well as in the physical world, which was supported by the use of images being used to create a benign image of the Empire and those in it.⁵⁶ The ideological relationship between Britain and her colonies and between colonies and each other is covered in Lester's "Constructing Colonial Discourse", which argues that separate colonial identity was forged by interactions with native or subject populations. His *Imperial Circuits and Networks* centres on the interrelation between colonies. The "British settler discourse" examines the creation of an Empire-wide sense of settler solidarity on racial issues, almost invariably opposed to missionary and humanitarian opinion.⁵⁷ Hall's *Civilising Subjects* argues that ideas of Britishness were linked to being part of the Empire, a view supported by Cannadine, and Laidlaw's *Colonial Connections*, which shows how personal connections were the basis of how the Empire was administered.⁵⁸ Hall's *From Greenland's Icy Mountains* suggests that the concept of Englishness was seen by those who identified as being in that group, as a superior against

⁵⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), 24-5.

⁵⁵ Robert Winder, *The Last Wolf: The Hidden Springs of Englishness* (London: Little, Brown, 2017).

⁵⁶ Ronald Hyam, *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁵⁷ Alan Lester "Constructing Colonial Discourse: Britain, South Africa and the Empire in the Nineteenth Century", in Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan (eds), *Postcolonial Geographies* (London: Cassell, 2003); Alan Lester "Imperial circuits and networks: geographies of the British Empire". *History Compass*, (2003): 4, 1 124-141; Alan Lester, "British settler discourse and the circuits of empire", 54, 1 (2002): 27-50, Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁵⁸ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001); Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-1845* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 2006).

the other.⁵⁹ The obverse was true with those who were not ‘English’ being seen and seeing themselves, as separate, from those developing the Empire. This in turn created a conflict, as those from the periphery of Britain, such as the Scots and Irish played disproportionately large parts in the expansion and running of the Empire. It was a system that provided a managed stability, strong enough to survive times of international instability.⁶⁰

The role of Indians as an object of fear, source of labour, and personification of otherness plays a central role in this thesis. Indian labour was used to fill shortfalls caused by the abolition of slavery in settlements with large scale plantations, or the desire to develop them. General examinations of Indian immigration, both forced or willing, into other colonies can be found in Northrup’s *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism*⁶¹, Behal and van der Linden’s *Coolies, Capital and Colonialism*⁶², and Lai’s *Indentured Labor*⁶³. The form such labour took is covered in Tinker’s *New System of Slavery*⁶⁴, which shows the similarity of indentures to the old slave system, in the colonies of the Caribbean and South America. Local studies may be found in relation to Natal in Palmer’s *History of the Indians in Natal*⁶⁵, the Straits Settlements in Turnbull’s *Internal Security in the Straits Settlements*⁶⁶, the Caribbean in general in Brereton and Yelvington’s *Colonial Caribbean in Transition*⁶⁷, and Roberts and Byrne’s *Statistics on Indenture and Associated Migration*

⁵⁹ Catherine Hall, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains ... to Africa’s Golden Sand”: Ethnicity, Race and Nation in mid-19th-century England,” *Gender and History* 5 (1993): 219-21.

⁶⁰ Miles Taylor, 'The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire', *Past & Present* 166 (2000): 146-80.

⁶¹ David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the age of imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995).

⁶² Rana Behal and Marcel van der Linden (eds), *Coolies, Capital and Colonialism: Studies in Indian Labour History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶³ Walton Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London, Oxford University Press, 1974).

⁶⁵ Mabel Palmer, *The History of the Indians in Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957).

⁶⁶ C.M. Turnbull, “Internal Security in the Straits Settlements, 1826-1867”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1, 1 (1970): 37-53.

⁶⁷ Bridget Brereton and Kevin Yelvington (eds), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Post-emancipation Social and Cultural Life* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999).

Affecting the West Indies.⁶⁸ Trinidad in Singh's *Bloodstained Tombs*⁶⁹ describes the continuing concerns the European and former slave population experienced about the Indian immigration generated, by existing tensions between the communities and the effect it might have on the local labour market. In South America, British Guiana in Alapatt's *Indian Indentured Labour and Plantation Politics in British Guiana*⁷⁰ and Bronkhurst's *Among Hindus and Creoles of British Guyana*⁷¹ describe a similar picture to that in Trinidad. This evoked an interesting contrast to the press coverage; a black English language narrative that was universally critical of the 'coolies' who were competing with them for labour. The East India Company penal system in their Straits Settlements is examined in Turnbull's "Convicts in the Straits Settlements"⁷² and Company controlled Burma in Anderson's *Indian Uprising*,⁷³ which both argue that the sepoy convicts were seen as equally a threat and an opportunity. This created a tension that would play out in the domestic press. The possibility of sepoy convict settlements in Australia is covered in Nicholas' *Convict Workers*.⁷⁴ Lester's *Imperial Networks* shows the dependency that many colonies with existing Indian populations had on their labour and soldiery.⁷⁵ General summaries of inter-colonial population movements are found in McKeown's "Global

⁶⁸ George Roberts and Jocelyn Byrne, "Summary Statistics on Indenture and Associated Migration Affecting the West Indies, 1834-1918" *Population Studies* 1 (1966): 125-34.

⁶⁹ Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884* (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1988).

⁷⁰ George Alapatt, "The Sepoy Mutiny of 1847: Indian Indentured Labour and Plantation Politics in British Guiana", *Journal of Indian History* 59 (1981): 309-12.

⁷¹ H.V.P. Bronkhurst, *Among Hindus and Creoles of British Guyana* (London, Wolmer, 1888).

⁷² C.M. Turnbull "Convicts in the Straits Settlements 1826-1827", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 43 1 (1970).

⁷³ Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners, and Rebellion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007).

⁷⁴ Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁷⁵ Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Migration”⁷⁶ and its demographic makeup in Kuczynski’s *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*.⁷⁷ These issues will form the focus of Chapter Three.

Herbert’s *War of No Pity*⁷⁸ posits that the British were as shocked by their own violent response to rebel atrocities, as to those events themselves. Putnis in “Indian Insurgency of 1857 as a Global Media Event” suggests that the method of transmitting news, the reprinting of copy from other papers, allowed a singular narrative from the Indian press to influence the news, Empire wide.⁷⁹ This fails to take into account the fact that a substantial proportion of the debate occurring in locations like British North America, Ireland, and Australasia was intra-colonial, or that it came from third party sources, such as the copy from other colonial papers or letters from the subcontinent. The contents of colonial newspapers were responsive to Indian copy, but self generated. Chakravarty’s *Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* posits that narratives and images of the Rebellion mirrored the issues and concerns of the authors. Although his focus is on British-based material, the same is true of that produced in the colonies.⁸⁰ The effect of the Rebellion on British public opinion, and thus by extension colonial opinion, is covered in Bryne’s *British Opinion and the Indian Revolt*, which argues that reports of atrocities were exaggerated and lacked any substantiating evidence.⁸¹ This effect is not unique or limited to the Rebellion in this period, as even today suspect reports are often given undue weight, when there is a paucity of information. The more extreme reports were doubted at the time.

⁷⁶ Adam McKeown, “Global Migration, 1846-1940”, *Journal of World History*, 15, 2 (2004): 155-89.

⁷⁷ Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

⁷⁸ Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁷⁹ Peter Putnis, “The Indian Insurgency of 1857 as a Global Media Event”, in *I.A.M.C.R. 25th Conference Proceedings*, (Canberra: University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts and Design, 2007), 185–90.

⁸⁰ Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁸¹ James Bryne, “British Opinion and the Indian Revolt” in Priti Joshi (ed.), *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium*. (New Dehli: People’s Publishing House, 1957).

Stories, real or imagined, of the rape and abuse of women during the Rebellion have been a topic of some discussion. Karen Beckman in *Vanishing Women*⁸² suggests that violence against women reflected a widespread fear that the white man could not adequately protect his womenfolk. Sharpe's *Allegories of Empire*⁸³ investigates images of the alleged abuses of white women by Indian men. The association of Indians with rape, in later British literature, is investigated in Paxton's "Mobilizing Chivalry". Rape in Rebellion narratives became a major focus in popular accounts of the Rebellion.⁸⁴ Paxton takes a similar approach in her *Writing under the Raj*⁸⁵, as does Hand's "In the Shadow of the Mutiny".⁸⁶ Scully's "Rape, Race, and Colonial Culture"⁸⁷ provides a vignette of the attitudes of the mid nineteenth century towards rape drawing on race and class. Although the article relates to a rape trial in the Cape Colony, it shows how race and indirectly class affected attitudes to both the accused and their accuser.

The Empire of the period was both fragmented and interrelated. The cross-imperial community used existing networks and personal relationships, as shown by Lester with reference to the British settlers in the Eastern Cape of South Africa and the Australian colonies.⁸⁸ The singularity of colonies as entities, with local interests, rather than there

⁸² Karen Beckman, *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁸³ Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

⁸⁴ Nancy Paxton, "Mobilizing Chivalry: Rape in British Novels About the Indian Uprising of 1857", *Victorian Studies* 36 (1992): 5-30; Jenny Sharpe "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency" *Genders* 10 (1991): 232.

⁸⁵ Nancy Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

⁸⁶ Felicity Hand, "In the Shadow of the Mutiny: Reflections on Two Post-Independence Novels on the 1857 Uprising", in Susana Onega (ed.), *Telling Histories: Narrativizing History, Historicizing Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 61-70.

⁸⁷ Pamela Scully, "Rape, Race, and Colonial Culture: The Sexual Politics of Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony, South Africa", *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 335-59.

⁸⁸ Alan Lester, British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire, *History Workshop Journal*, 54, 1 (2002): 27-50.

being an imperial unit, as posited in Bates and Carter's Empire and locality. They show that localised demands for labour could trump domestic and imperial concerns about security.⁸⁹ These texts provide the local contexts through which the Rebellion would be interpreted.

The position of the Irish in the Empire would also play an important part in how they and others viewed the Empire. Jill Bender's "Mutiny or Freedom Fight"⁹⁰ suggests that the Rebellion gave the Irish a method of discussing the place their island had in the Empire, but that no coherent answer was found is confirmed in the author's "The Irish Sepoy' Press".⁹¹ This thesis will posit that the opposite is true and multiple contradictory answers would appear. There is a vibrant historiographical debate into what constituted Irish identity during this period. Kinealy's "At Home with the Empire"⁹² sees the Irish as largely discordant in their response, while Cook argues in the *Irish Raj*⁹³ that they played an active part in ruling India and by extension the Empire. This involvement was often contradictory, as is shown in Kennedy's *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland*⁹⁴, and Crosbie's *Irish Imperial Networks*⁹⁵ which demonstrates the influence of Irish culture and ideas on the Empire. Holmes' "The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism"⁹⁶ shows that the attitude of Irish was often a general

⁸⁹ Crispin Bates, and Marina Carter, "Empire and locality: a global dimension to the 1857 Indian Uprising", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 51-73.

⁹⁰ Jill Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight" in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 93-108.

⁹¹ Jill Bender, "'The Irish 'Sepoy' Press: Irish Nationalism and anti-British agitation during the 1857 Indian Rebellion'" in Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson (eds), *Ireland and the Irish Antipodes: One World or Worlds Apart?* (Sydney: Anchor Books, 2010), 241-51.

⁹² Christine Kinealy, "At home with the Empire: the example of Ireland" in Catherine Hall, Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006) 77-100.

⁹³ Scott B. Cook, "The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian Civil Service, 1855-1914", *Journal of Social History* 20, 3 (1987): 506-29.

⁹⁴ Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast: Queen's University, 1996)

⁹⁵ Barry Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks: Migration, Social Communication and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁹⁶ Michael Holmes, "The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism", in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow: Longman, 2000).

attitude shared European racism towards Indians. In comparison Nie's *The Eternal Paddy*⁹⁷ highlights the view of British newspapers, that the problems faced by the Irish, were the product of their own Irishness. The ambiguous position of the Irish, and other European minorities, will be the focus of the Fourth chapter.

Buckner's edited collection, *Canada and the British Empire*⁹⁸ provides helpful perspectives to British North America of this period and its often turbulent relationship with the United States, the homeland and its minority groups. Martin's *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation*⁹⁹ examines the political situation in the mid-nineteenth century, culminating with the transition to self government with further material on the relationship with the United States in See's "Variations on a Borderlands Theme".¹⁰⁰

As shown above no wide-ranging survey and examination of the colonial press has been undertaken of the Rebellion, but rather local or regional, often issue based, investigations. Likewise of the format, methods and limitations of the colonial press system of the period has not been covered in any detail.

Contribution of thesis

This work will contribute to our knowledge of the Rebellion and of the imperial press more broadly in two distinct ways: firstly, in the scope and depth of the primary source material that it draws upon; and secondly, in how it utilises that material as a lens through which to view the not immediately linked dominant local issues. It will also help to expand the coverage of colonial opinion during this less scrutinised period of British imperial history, which is to say from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the last three decades of the nineteenth century.

⁹⁷ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press 1798–1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

⁹⁸ Philip A. Buckner (ed.), *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁹⁹ Ged Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ Scott W. See, "Variations on a Borderlands Theme: Nativism and Collective Violence in the Mid-Nineteenth Century", in Stephen Hornsby and John Reid (eds), *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons* (Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 157-158.

The existing literature that uses the British colonial press as a source for material for opinion on the Rebellion falls primarily into two categories, which both suffer from the same issues. These are, firstly, quotes to provide additional material or vignettes to the main text of a book, be it in a general history or a text dealing with a complimentary issue like the identify of the Irish in the British press or Indian labour on the island of Trinidad¹⁰¹; and, secondly, in local or regional appraisals of the reportage. These though more detailed examinations of specific localities are still fundamentally topic based. Examples of this are Bender's work on South Africa, which focuses on the then governor of the Cape Colony, and Ireland, in which the focus is identity.¹⁰² Simply if material falls outside the scope of the topic of inquiry it is not included, making the surveys inherently partial.

As outlined in the previous section, the literature on the Rebellion itself is substantial, but it tends towards narrative histories of the events, which is only occasionally supplemented with external opinions, as anecdotes, or to add emphasis to a point. Most of these are from either local Indian journals or the British press. Domestic opinion has become increasingly well covered. Wagner's recent survey of the literature suggests that the source material, and by extension the debate, has expanded from the European to include the previously overlooked, ignored or discounted indigenous commentaries and narratives.¹⁰³ This is not entirely true, but it does highlight the existing scope for increasing the number of viewpoints on the events in the Indian subcontinent. Whilst commenting on the limitations of past and recent works, Wagner's recent survey does not focus at all on the growing body

¹⁰¹ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 2004); Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884* (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1988).

¹⁰² Jill Bender, "Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the unmaking and making of an imperial career" in Crispin Bates and Marina Carter (eds), *Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins*, (London: Sage, 2009); "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 93-108; "'The Irish 'Sepoy' Press: Irish Nationalism and anti-British agitation during the 1857 Indian Rebellion'" in Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson (eds), *Ireland and the Irish Antipodes: One World or Worlds Apart?* (Sydney: Anchor Books, 2010), 241-51.

¹⁰³ Kim Wagner, "The Marginal Mutiny", 760–62.

of work that focuses on varied external viewpoints of the Rebellion, both inside the empire and outside it. Narrative histories of the Rebellion often use quotations from metropolitan and other non-Indian journals to flesh out their arguments, to contextualise reactions, or to provide the motivation behind third party reactions. Other authors use the material in their associated, but not Rebellion-centred works, for similar but less direct purposes. An example of such an approach can be found in Anderson's *Indian Uprising* which uses the *Singapore Free Press* amongst other local journals to provide examples of the reaction of the European population of the island to the Rebellion. This is done in relation to East India Company convict policy, which is the focus of her book.¹⁰⁴ Literature on the imperial press tends to focus on the later decades of the nineteenth century, when the internal press systems had become more advanced, in terms of the production, dissemination and influencing of the news.

This thesis consists, therefore, of an Empire-wide survey of the imperial press reaction to the Rebellion and as such is both more expansive than other surveys of its type. The majority of those in the English language have been conducted recently by Jill Bender. These are location limited examinations of the coverage; first for Ireland; second that of four specific colonies, being Jamaica, Ireland, New Zealand, and the Cape Colony; and finally in the Cape Colony, singularly, in relation to the actions of the then local governor, Sir George Grey.¹⁰⁵ These type of reviews of sections of the colonial press also exist as part of a larger chronological survey as in Regan's *We could be of service*¹⁰⁶ and Martin's

¹⁰⁴ See for example Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners, and Rebellion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007), 108.

¹⁰⁵ Jill Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 93-108; "'The Irish 'Sepoy' Press: Irish Nationalism and anti-British agitation during the 1857 Indian Rebellion'" in Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson (eds), *Ireland and the Irish Antipodes: One World or Worlds Apart?* (Sydney: Anchor Books, 2010) 241-51; *Fears of 1857: The British Empire in the wake of the Indian Rebellion* (Unpublished PhD. thesis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College, 2011); expanded upon in *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); "Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the unmaking and making of an imperial career" in Crispin Bates and Marina Carter, *Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins*, (London: Sage, 2009).

¹⁰⁶ Jennifer M. Regan, "'We Could Be of Service to Other Suffering People': Representations of India in the Irish Nationalist Press, c. 1857-1887," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 41 (2008), 61-77.

“Representing the ‘Indian Revolution’”¹⁰⁷ which both focus on the Irish nationalist press. A common difficulty with these surveys is that they are generally limited to the main and most generally used newspapers of these locations. Regional journals that often existed for a few years, before folding or morphing into other papers, are generally excluded. Thus, the focus is on the reporting of the dominant not the complete. It serves in removing the complexities of opinion in all facets and areas of the colonies. This thesis will not be limited to an external narrative contemporaneous history of events in India. Nor will the focus be narrow, relying mainly on the major newspapers of each colony. This will enable an investigation of the views of the whole colony and all its facets.

In summary, the arguments are that newspaper copy, regarding the Rebellion, cannot be viewed outside of their local contexts in which it was formed and the predominate issues that affected each. The Rebellion, as an event, provided a forum in which domestic issues could be discussed at one step removed and provided ammunition, positive or negative, in those debates. Historiographically speaking, this phenomenon has been touched on in several the locally based or issue-based surveys, but it has yet to be examined in an empire-wide format. This is what this thesis will endeavour to accomplish.

Sources and methodology

This thesis is based on a qualitative analysis of primary source data, using the British colonial press, as its material base. These allow a historian to examine how an event was viewed by contemporaries, as it unfolded, by comparing different viewpoints. It is thus subject to the vagaries and often paucity of that material. The inherent weakness with the source material is not enhanced by the Rebellion occurring at a time of flux for the colonial press, with newspapers appearing and disappearing sometimes in months. Present day major regional newspapers had yet to be created or existed in a format wholly different from those today. As source material newspapers will only express the views of those who write for them and correspond with them. This might intimately suggest a limitation in relation to class and ethnicity. Such an assertion would be incorrect, however, as the newspapers of the period were designed for and read by a diverse group of people. There

¹⁰⁷ Amy E. Martin, “Representing the ‘Indian Revolution’ of 1857: Towards a Genealogy of Irish Internationalist Anticolonialism,” *Field Day Review* 8 (2012), 126-47

was a working class and black press of the Caribbean, like the *Working Man* and *Creole* in British Guiana; an Irish press in British North America including newspapers like the *New Era*; journals for every section of the sectarian divide in Ireland from the nationalist *Nation* to Protestant *Belfast News-Letter*; papers as fervently against the local administration in the Straits Settlements and Burma, such as the *Straits Times* and the *Rangoon Chronicle*; plus in every location voices for and against on most matters, with the greatest diversity in settler colonies.

As sources, especially in the mid-nineteenth century, due to communication difficulties, newspapers tend to be second hand reporting of news coupled with comment and opinion. This makes them poor material for determining what happened in actual events but good as a way of ascertaining the opinions of the period. Newspapers were the product of the context of the period and the inherent biases of who wrote them and who they were writing for.

This thesis builds on a Masters dissertation the reaction of the British press to the events of the Rebellion and is informed by difficulties that arose when preparing it. When collecting data for the dissertation, several issues had come to attention that suggested that it was vital to determine the primary source material, to assess the workability of the thesis and determine what difficulties might exist when collecting and analysing data for this thesis.

The methodology used to make such a determination consisted of a partial survey of the colonial press and the existing works on the journalistic response to the Rebellion. A partial survey of the colonial press was undertaken to scrutinize the available material, in order to determine possible problems and assess its strengths and limitations. This established firstly that by limiting the scope to single events, such as the massacres at Kanpur or classes of events, such as massacres of Europeans by Indians, would not provide enough sources on which to base any worthwhile conclusions. Restricting the survey to specific events would have produced a reliance on a couple of articles in some locations and given enormous weight to limited journals. Secondly, it also showed that due to the inherent limitations in the relevant copy, as large a data set as possible was required to avoid precedence being given to specific areas, journals, issues, or ideologies. Examining only the white press of the Caribbean would create a false impression of near universal agreement regarding the importation of Indian labour; failing to cover the Irish press of

British North America would create a distorted view of unity; omitting to analyse the full scope of the nationalist and unionist press in Ireland allows the most virulent voices to crowd out the more nuanced; more generally to rely on the official gazette of any colony provides only the colonial administration's policies without the criticism of them that often existed in other independent journals. Without such a wide survey being undertaken, the voices of those in settler colonies would swamp those from smaller settlements, with small European populations and by extension smaller presses. Thirdly, due to possible errors in translation and understanding of context, foreign language newspapers are only used in how they elicited responses from the English language press. Fourthly, it showed the need to avoid the misrepresentation of volume of copy as importance. Small regional newspapers that produced a large amount of copy on the Rebellion, obviously would not have the same significance of one in a large population centre that published less material.

Existing academic works were also scrutinised to determine what newspapers, material, and regions had already been investigated with a focus on the reporting of the Rebellion. This brought to light a commonality in approach and ultimately a weakness. Other surveys of the colonial press regarding the Rebellion and other major events proved to be limited, largely to the major newspapers of a colony or tradition. Bender's "Mutiny or Freedom Fight" is primarily focused to three newspapers, *The Nation*, *Dublin Evening Mail*, and the *Belfast Daily Mercury* although other journals are cited.¹⁰⁸ Her "The Irish Sepoy' Press" is also narrow in the scope of source material.¹⁰⁹ With a similar focus, Regan's *Could We be of Service* is further limited to the major Irish nationalist newspapers of the period.¹¹⁰ Leigh Stone's survey of the Canadian press, *Perceptions of an Imperial Crisis*, is again restricted, but to the journals of the major population centres of eastern British North America.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Jill Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight" in, Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 93-108.

¹⁰⁹ Jill Bender, "'The Irish 'Sepoy' Press: Irish Nationalism and anti-British agitation during the 1857 Indian Rebellion'" in Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson (eds), *Ireland and the Irish Antipodes: One World or Worlds Apart?* (Sydney: Anchor Books, 2010), 241-51.

¹¹⁰ Jennifer M. Regan, "'We Could Be of Service to Other Suffering People': Representations of India in the Irish Nationalist Press, c. 1857-1887," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 41 (2008), 61-77.

¹¹¹ David Leigh Stone, *Perceptions of an Imperial Crisis: Canadian reactions to the 'Sepoy Mutiny' 1857-8*, (Unpublished MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984).

Data was collected using online collections of historical newspapers and those stored in various collections, mostly in the Bodleian and the British Library. Two commercial online sources were used. These were the Gale British Newspapers 1600-1950 archive website¹¹² which provided access to a limited number of Irish newspapers, and *Paper of Record*,¹¹³ which gave access to a large selection of contemporary Canadian journals and a selection of United States and South American journals, of which only the *Nassau Guardian* from Bahamas was used. Three relevant nations have digitised, in various formats, parts of their newspaper archives through their national libraries. These are the *Trove* website of the National Library of Australia¹¹⁴, *Papers Past* from the National Library of New Zealand¹¹⁵ and the National Library of Singapore's online collection¹¹⁶. These online resources were used to facilitate a broader survey of the colonial press without the time or access restraints that come with examining physical collections. All possessed a 'search' function which varied in accuracy and functionality across the collections. Using this facility on the three sites helped improve the efficiency and comprehensiveness of the data collection, but required careful attention to avoid error. The British Library holdings of historical newspapers were stored on microfiche or in bound volumes. The relevant copy was then transcribed by hand and then typed into a word processing package. The Bodleian and its associated libraries held other hard copies of journals.

The collected data had to be examined carefully to determine origin and uniqueness. As it is not uncommon for newspapers of the period to only partially, or fail totally to acknowledge third party sources, the correct attribution had to be discerned carefully. The search function of the online archives assisted with this task, as they assisted in a consistent checking of text to avoid any false attribution. Text transcribed from microfiche or bound volume was cross referred using a word processing package. The collected data was then analysed to find common themes and arguments, both in the newspaper's own coverage and inside a colony's press.

¹¹² <http://www.gale.com/19th-century-british-library-newspapers-part-1/>

¹¹³ <https://paperofrecord.hypernet.ca/default.asp>

¹¹⁴ <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

¹¹⁵ <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

¹¹⁶ <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/>

Chapter Outlines and Arguments

The first chapter provides a necessary, if limited, summary of the relevant events of the Rebellion, including the nature and development of East India Company rule in the subcontinent; the environment in which the press of this period operated, the interrelations between colonies and with Britain; and finally, by way of contrast, how other significant press events were reported.

An Empire-wide survey of the reaction to the Rebellion in the colonial press, allows an analysis of how their contributors saw themselves, those they governed, and the world around them. A discussion of the immediate political context in each colony is included, to illuminate the circumstances inhabited by either those writing for, or corresponding with, the newspapers and this will form the basis of the next four chapters of the thesis.

The second chapter will examine the press coverage on the island of Ireland. The chapter will use such copy to examine the issues of identity and internal division, with a focus on Ireland, where discussions regarding identity already existed. The island of Ireland during this period had significant ethnic and religious diversity and had recently experienced rebellions, in which the press had played a notable part. These rebellions, though suppressed, had been agents of local social and political change, as they had elsewhere in the Empire.¹¹⁷

Part colony and part coloniser, an already existing series of disputes between two ethnic groups, who were often more nuanced in their viewpoints, than their more extreme components would immediately suggest, obtained a Rebellion flavour. Both sides used similar methods in order to tarnish each other, likening events in India to domestic issues and seeking to use the Rebellion and its players as analogues for their homeland.

¹¹⁷ Richard Brown, *Three Rebellions: Canada 1837-1838, South Wales 1839 and Victoria, Australia 1854* (London: Clio, 2013).

The nationalists linked what they saw as ‘British’ misrule in India to British rule in Ireland, seeing their island, not as a colony, but as a nation under Imperial rule.¹¹⁸ For them the causes of the Rebellion were similar to grievances in Ireland. The Protestant unionist press used their nationalist opponents’ commentary, in order to link them to those in rebellion in India. Terms such as ‘sepoy’ would be bandied around, as an insult but used as much in relation to Irish matters as Indian ones. Criticism of the British military became difficult for the nationalist press, as so many Irish Catholic soldiers were serving in the subcontinent. The focus then changed to cover the apparent mistreatment of Catholics in India specifically those in the armed forces. Debates of a similar focus would exist in other colonies with Irish émigré populations. For those papers within the Empire that were critical, the Rebellion was a forum through which to air previous generally local grievances and to examine criticism towards those views.

The third chapter seeks to examine how diverse colonies highlighted their position in the Empire by providing aid, both financial and logistical, towards the suppression of the Rebellion and the alleviation of suffering of its European victims. Pride was engendered by the ability to raise financial aid for those Europeans in need in the subcontinent tempered by a concern that it might not prove adequate.

The Rebellion came to be seen as an opportunity, by a number of colonies, to emphasise their own material resources so that they could prove that they were part of the Imperial whole. In the Cape Colony the governor Sir George Grey provided military aid. His proposals received conditional support from the local government and press. Local groups congregated to provide financial relief but also to show sympathy for those who were suffering.¹¹⁹ The local soon became apparent. Contributors to journals would identify themselves, as part of the Empire, by their desire to offer aid and how horrified they were by any reported atrocity and as such emphasise their position in the Empire. Others voiced concerns that military aid might open their colony to internal or external native threat. A

¹¹⁸ Matthew Kelly, “Irish Nationalist Opinion and the British Empire in the 1850s and 1860s”, *Past and Present* 204, 1, (2009): 127-54.

¹¹⁹ Jill Bender, “Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the unmaking and making of an imperial career”, in Crispin Bates and Marina Carter, *Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins* (Sage: New Delhi & London, 2009), 199-218.

similar situation developed in British North America, where a regiment was raised to fight in India which was never actually deployed in the subcontinent, but this action still showed an ability to contribute when required. As elsewhere issues of cost and security would be the regular counterpoint to the desire to support. Proposals even to raise a ‘colored’(sic) regiment show that contributing to the struggle was seen as a way to become part of imperial society.¹²⁰ In Australia the focus would be on the provision of financial support to those made destitute by the uprising, through fund raising drives, lectures, and public meetings. Throughout all of this was an undercurrent of doubt, that their fellow colonialists were not contributing as expected and that the aid would not be sufficient.

The events in India became a method for those Europeans who lived under East India Company rule to transition to British state control. Those who felt that the response to the Rebellion domestically, like the Company's ‘gagging act’, infringed their rights, were quick to highlight it. This was part of a larger campaign by those in Company controlled territories to transfer control to the Imperial government. On the frontier of the Cape Colony, the colonial authorities’ ability to deal with a local threat from an indigenous population, was given added import, by the insurrection in India.

The fourth chapter examines the coverage in British North America in the first half of the nineteenth century that had experienced two major rebellions, in which newspapers and newspapermen had again played active roles.¹²¹ Having a critical French language press, coupled with disparate, though equally critical, English language voices, the colonies that formed British North America were as divided as Ireland.¹²² In addition there was the constant perceived threat from the United States, highlighted by a number of border disputes that had a potential of escalation.

¹²⁰ *Quebec Gazette*, 16 October, 1857.

¹²¹ Richard Brown, *Rebellion in Canada, 1837–1885: Autocracy, Rebellion and Liberty*, Volume 1 and 2: *The Irish, the Fenians and the Metis* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2012).

¹²² David Leigh Stone, *Perceptions of an Imperial Crisis: Canadian reactions to the ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ 1857-8*, (Unpublished MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1984), further background on the Canada’s press is provided by Wilfrid H Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1967).

The chapter expands the idea of an external threat to look at the press speculation, that a third party agency, had been involved in the planning and instigation of the Rebellion. This was based on the belief that the format and timing of the insurrection showed external planning and the fact that there were ample nations, with a reason to want to foment such an uprising. Although a plethora of perceived threats were mooted by the colonial press, the spotlight fell primarily on Russia, China, and Persia, being nations with whom Britain had recently been in conflict. Other nations and groups were presented as potential threats to Britain and the Empire in a sea of speculation, including recent allies like the French. In colonies the external risk became centred on the nearest of threats, meaning existing fears were coloured by the Rebellion.

When offers of support from other foreign powers to suppress were mooted, the response was that accepting would show weakness and suggest that the British were not a first rate power. That would be countered especially in colonies with local threats, such as from the Metis community in British North America, that would erupt into rebellion a few decades after India. In the Canadian provinces, the United States provided both a perceived security threat to comment on and an external English language press that was critical of British policy in India. Other foreign and non-English language colonial coverage was sought by journalists from the colonial press for criticism, so it could be countered. Positive reports in such journals were lauded. The local French language and Irish press received similar scrutiny and was generally found wanting by editors, journalists and correspondents of the colonial press.¹²³

The importation of labour, in all its forms, into colonies that wished to develop plantations and improve their infrastructure is investigated in the fifth chapter. With slavery abolished throughout British-controlled territory in 1834 and the post-emancipation apprenticeship period concluding four years later, a labour shortage emerged primarily in those colonies with developed plantation systems. This shortage curtailed settlements that wished to expand or establish plantations. A solution was found in these colonies in the importation

¹²³ Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 23.

of Indian labour, both indentured and convict. The process of labour importation had been in place decades before the Rebellion but quickly became a topic of division.¹²⁴

On one side there were those who saw, or felt they could use, the implications of imported labour both for security and employment. This approach was not a blanket fear but something more nuanced. Many who were able to see the bravery or loyalty of specified individuals or classes of Indians, still generalised negatively by the ethnic group as a whole. The position forwarded by advocates of indentured labour, often in the English language press, as opposed to the French language press in locations like Mauritius or British North America, was that labour was required and India was the only viable source. They saw such labour as a solution to worker shortages on the plantations, and as a method for their expansion and development.

There were also those who regarded Indians as a threat including those already in the country, but not solely for reasons cited above. Highlighting the perceived threat of imported Indian labour was an effective method of protecting the economic position of local labour. This viewpoint was often repeated on any occasion that local ethnic turmoil tensions might trigger. This discourse only intensified when the idea of using Indian convict labour was advocated. Surprising alliances developed, with some of the most fervent voices against Indians not found from British colonialists, but from other Europeans or other minority groups. These were the most economically threatened groups.

Other voices used the issue as a vehicle to criticise colonial authorities for a number of outstanding issues. Those colonies primarily controlled by the East India Company, which already had convict populations, used the issue to combine the implicit threat with other grievances against Company rule. Insecurity was linked to how separate they felt from the administration and impotent on how administration was organised locally. Criticism was not aimed at the Imperial Government or individual Europeans in India but primarily at the Company. It was a method of voicing negative opinions without seeming disloyal.

¹²⁴ Crispin Bate and Marina Carter, "Empire and locality: a global dimension to the 1857 Indian Uprising", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 51–73.

The final chapter will examine the contrasting images developed by those who contributed and wrote for colonial newspapers who were involved in the Rebellion. It also shows how a cross-imperial image of the Europeans fighting in India was created, that was almost universally positive, as opposed to those that developed of the East India Company and the British State. Through the copy of the colonial press, it is possible to construct a representation of how their fellow colonialists felt in India. This view would be as much a vision of how they saw themselves, as of actual people fighting or in peril in India.

A second image was produced by the press of those in rebellion. This image of 'the other' would not be universal or consistent, but, like the first, certain themes were created on a cross-imperial basis. It was imagined more specifically in, but not limited to the settler colonies. The commonalities in reaction suggest a similarity in viewpoint, both towards those rebelling in India and towards non-Europeans in general. This is not the product of the emergence of a cross-imperial viewpoint, but the standard view of seeing the enemy negatively and one's own side with positivity.

A general image would develop of the Indians as a class of people. Terminology became loaded with critical significance. To be 'Asiatic' was to be depicted as inherently terrible and corrupting. The religions of India were accorded negative connotations and their adherents were depicted as backwards savage by them. Contradictory copy was produced when individual Indians did something worthy of credit. or proved their loyalty.

Rebellion stories that focused on the murder and rape of innocents hardened attitudes towards Indians.¹²⁵ They had another effect. Some narratives of atrocities and rapes would also produce scepticism that some of the portrayed events actually occurred. The native populations as depicted, lacked the behaviour and values that made people civilised and the actions of those in India was presented as evidence of that. Newspaper reports focused on a few individuals. The rebel leader Nana Sahib was viewed as responsible for two of the most horrific, from the British perspective, massacres during the Rebellion and the titular Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II for failing to protect those who sought shelter with him. Passing the general the image of the other would focus back onto local issues and

¹²⁵ Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), Chap. 7.

perceived dangers, but also opportunities for those seeking labour, wishing to develop their settlements or break from East India Company administration.

Ultimately, the Rebellion provided an Empire-wide event that became a conduit through which local prejudices, concerns, and fears would be played out. In each location the existing issues were provided with an analogue through which to be aired. What was imperial was likewise local and would be expressed in this way.

Chapter 1: The Rebellion and the Imperial Press, Background and Context

‘All over this vast territory were Europeans, officers and civilians, gentle ladies and little children flying, conceding themselves, threading their way through jungles, insulted by scoundrels who had three months before crouched at a glance’.¹²⁶ This was New Zealand’s *Daily Southern Cross*’ view in April 1858 of the situation facing those in India during what would, to many at the time, become known as ‘the Indian Mutiny’. A year earlier India had barely warranted mention in that paper apart for shipping schedules, and the occasional article highlighting the threat to the subcontinent from imperial Russia.¹²⁷

As the Rebellion became a major news story, and for some time the primary story in the colonial press, it became a cipher through which those living in the disparate parts of the empire could discuss their opinions of themselves, the others involved in the imperial project, those they ruled, and the world around them. These views would all be both local and global in scope, with each geographical entity linked, yet often separate to the other. Thus, a local issue would become imperial, and those would affect how domestic issues were viewed. Such is the general nature of the argument that will be advanced here; but to understand these complex processes of imperial reporting, interpretation and informational exchange, it is first necessary to describe the events with which the thesis is directly concerned.

This chapter will thus set the scene for the thesis and provide the context for the news copy analysed. It will give a summary of the history of East India Company rule in the subcontinent, its governance of the territory and an outline of the Rebellion, to provide a framework in which to situate the press coverage and the reaction to events by specific groups, like those under Company rule in Burma and the Straits Settlements. It will continue by introducing the press of the period. The chapter will conclude with a survey of events that achieved local press notoriety, but did not engender Empire wide coverage, coupled with reactions to native uprisings of the same period.

¹²⁶ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1858: “*Retrospect of the Year*”.

¹²⁷ *Daily Southern Cross*, 3 March, 1857; 27 February, 1857.

The Rebellion in itself, it should be emphasised, was not an isolated event, but just one of many similar uprisings that occurred before and after it.¹²⁸ All previous rebellions had been successfully put down, but an initial failure to suppress effectively a mutiny by native troops at Meerut allowed things to escalate. The original, relatively small mutiny proliferated, triggering off other uprisings and in so doing creating an outlet for all those with a grievance, that cascaded into a large-scale revolt of both the native troops and local civilians. Events that could have ended in a night, exploded into a ‘clash of old and new on the material, ideological, and religious planes ... the last passionate protest of the conservative forces in India against the relentless penetration of the West’.¹²⁹ Company misrule and its failure to deal with the original rebellion would be a basis for all those newspapers, that had grievances against the Company or the British state, to concoct negative copy. Though frequently viewed as a unified whole, the Rebellion proved to be a series of localised rebellions, a ‘revolt of the hinterland’. It primarily focused on local issues with no clear nationalist objective.¹³⁰ Regardless of its format, it was an ‘extraordinary crisis’ of the East India Company’s own making and challenged their complacency and self-confidence.¹³¹ This feeling of challenge would not be limited to those in India or in the home islands, but appeared in varying levels in every settlement with a minority European population.

This self-confidence had been dented already. The mid-1800s had proven to be a difficult time for Britain and her colonies with a series of crises. It had been a time of conflict. The nation itself had been at war with Persia, China, and Russia. The East India Company had conducted two wars against the Sikhs, and had conflicts against the Burmese, and its own involvement in the Opium Wars. Colonies had experienced a miners’ rebellion in Victoria in 1854, a Chinese rebellion in Sarawak in 1857, rebellions in the two Canadas in 1837, and the Young Irelander rebellion in Ireland of 1848, along with border disputes with the United

¹²⁸ Such as the Kandy Rebellion of 1848, and the Blue Mutiny of 1862.

¹²⁹ Percival Spear, *India: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 270.

¹³⁰ Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 134.

¹³¹ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 54.

States and the Xhosa in the Cape Colony.¹³² It was also a period of transition in the empire with movements towards self government in the settler colonies, with scope to extend the process to native populations, something brought to a quick halt by the Rebellion, as did the further concept of moving towards an ultimate goal of autonomy. Often haphazard in origins, efforts were made to determine if a colony was suitable for self-rule, including the welfare of indigenous groups.¹³³ The internal and external threats would provide the framework in which the Rebellion was viewed. It was against this background that the Rebellion would erupt.

The Origins of the Rebellion

In India a series of uprisings occurred in early 1857. At the end of February, the indigenous troops of the Nineteenth Bengal Infantry refused to use the new cartridges that had been issued. They believed these were greased with animal fat that was derived from either pork or beef. The method of opening the cartridges, with the teeth, raised the possibility of the consumption of meat products proscribed for either Hindus or Muslims. Rumours that the cartridges were thus greased had been circulating for over a year and, although denied by those producing them, had not abated. To attempt to diffuse the problem the Company replaced the cartridges with new ones. They also tried to encourage sepoys to make their own grease from beeswax and vegetable oils, but the rumour persisted. In India, as in Nova Scotia, plus much of coastal Canada, it was generally accepted that the cartridge issue was just an excuse for 'displaying long-cherished discontent'.¹³⁴ As new dress regulations had supposedly caused a mutiny in Vellore in 1806, the grease used was simply a trigger for resentment over a whole gamut of other issues concentrated on social and political change, which were being imposed in an often heavy handed manner.¹³⁵ For this act of insubordination the regiment concerned was disbanded and the issue seemed to be defused.

¹³² Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 145-7.

¹³³ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 51-2.

¹³⁴ *Halifax British Colonist*, 1 September, 1857.

¹³⁵ Arthur Cotterell, *Western Power in Asia: its Slow Rise and Swift Fall, 1415-1999* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 98.

In March 1857, events would take a violent turn. Mangal Pande, a sepoy of the 34th Native Infantry stationed at the military encampment in Merrut, called for rebellion and in so doing attacked two European officers. Unperturbed by the fact that Pande was probably intoxicated on locally grown narcotics, at the time the matter was taken seriously. The local commander ordered a jemadar (^{lieutenant}) to arrest Pande but was met with refusal. Pande was finally arrested and after a failed suicide attempt was executed, alongside the disobedient jemadar. The whole regiment was dismissed as a collective punishment. Its fate was publicly proclaimed at every military station in Company-controlled India. The first stirrings of mutiny had been dealt with easily by simply disbanding the units concerned. Although Pande's name would become synonymous with rebellion, his call to arms proved ineffective. The Company considered this pre-emptive approach the most effective method of showing the cost of dissent and disarming potentially rebellious troops. It did have a series of drawbacks, since being disarmed was a sign of dishonour to some, and it generated local hostility and ridicule; and as some feared what might happen once they were disarmed rather 'than submit and hand over their muskets, [the sepoys] would make the first move'.¹³⁶ In May a regiment of the Oudh Irregular Infantry mutinied in Lucknow, but were disarmed by European troops equipped with cannons. Another possibly dangerous situation had been contained by a forceful response by the local authorities. Although in parts of the Punjab and Hindustan there were incidents of arson and discontent, the Company again thought trouble had again been averted.

A week later, Meerut was again the scene of protest, when eighty-five troopers of the Bengal Light Cavalry refused to use the new cartridges. These troopers were arrested, court-martialled and sentenced to ten years hard labour. That night most of the Light Cavalry mutinied, first seeking to release those who had been imprisoned and then to kill their European officers. They expanded their victims to include any Europeans or native Christians they could locate, not stopping when their victims were women and children, something that would warrant a great deal of comment throughout the Rebellion.¹³⁷ Inflated tales of

¹³⁶ Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: Abacus, 1997), 238.

¹³⁷ *Empire*, 11 July, 1857; *Hobart Town Mercury*, 19 October, 1857.

atrocities and destruction may have coloured that opinion.¹³⁸ This violence was not simply ‘hideous butchery’¹³⁹, but had specific purposes. By killing Company servants, the mutineers had also ‘destroyed the mystique of Company supremacy’ that had protected Europeans from violence.¹⁴⁰ This provided credibility to a prophecy which claimed that the Company's rule in the subcontinent would end after a hundred years, a period that begun with the Battle of Plassey in 1757. It is to the history of that rule we now turn.

The East India Company In India.

There had been an East India Company presence in India for over two hundred years. It had expanded from small trading establishments to the control of large areas of the subcontinent, fulfilling the Company’s 1689 resolution to make them ‘a nation in India’, a mercantile nation.¹⁴¹ In particular the East India Company had been founded by 280 merchants on New Year’s Eve 1600, and were presented a Royal Charter, giving a fifteen-year monopoly for ‘traffic and merchandise to the East Indies, the countries and ports of Asia and Africa, and to and from all islands, ports, towns, and places of Asia, Africa, and America, or any of them beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza ^(Good Hope) and the Straits of Magellan’.¹⁴² The Company’s original purpose was to break into the trade in spices from the East Indies, with its first expedition leaving London in the February of 1601. This and subsequent expeditions proved to be unsuccessful, due to the Dutch rival the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie’s often violent interference in their trade and the failure to establish a base in the Islands.¹⁴³

This blocking of their trade led in 1608, more by accident than design, to the Company establishing a trading base at Surat. India proved to be a much more profitable market for the Company, and one they could obtain access to. Their main competitors in this market, the

¹³⁸ *Empire*, 11 July, 1857; *Islander*, 24 July, 1857; *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

¹³⁹ *London Times*, 30 August, 1857.

¹⁴⁰ James, *Raj*, 239.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Giles Milton, *Nathaniel’s Nutmeg* (London: Sceptre, 1999), 355.

¹⁴² Quoted in Milton, *Nathaniel’s Nutmeg*, 76.

¹⁴³ As detailed in Milton, *Nathaniel’s Nutmeg*.

Portuguese, were as equally entrenched as the Dutch were in the East Indies. The difference between India and the East Indies was that there was a third player, the Mughal Empire. Aided by local patronage, the Company soon replaced the Portuguese, as the main trading power in India and it expanded its business and heavily fortified trading bases. From these bases the Company's reach extended from the Persian Gulf to China, where it established a trading post at Canton in 1711. The Company's tea trade in China became a useful alternative commodity, when the cotton goods trade declined in the middle of the century. The Company also expanded its territories in India becoming by the start of the eighteenth century, de facto the second largest state in the subcontinent. To protect this territory and their trade interests the East India Company recruited an army. This 'private army ... crucial to its business' was intended to be recruited from Company expatriates, but due to a lack of manpower was recruited locally.¹⁴⁴

As the East India Company expanded, its competitors started to fail. Volcanic activity and earthquakes destroyed the Dutch spice trade. The Company responded by establishing nutmeg plantations on the Malayan peninsula and Ceylon, depriving the Dutch of their Spice Islands monopoly. The Company lost one competitor only to gain another. France had replaced Portugal, as the Company's major competitor, with frequent skirmishes between the two for control of trade and territory. European conflicts between Britain and France were played out on the subcontinent, culminating in the Seven Years War. This global war would dramatically lessen French influence and placed the subcontinent on the road to Company domination. This change would not occur before the war provided two events, the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' and the Battle of Plassey, that would bookmark the conflict and provide two major news stories. The Nawab of Bengal, with French acquiescence, attacked the Company settlement at Calcutta. According to one narrative, he proceeded to capture one hundred and forty-six Europeans, whom he had placed in the dungeon of the settlements' Fort William over night. When the guards returned the next morning, they found that the majority of those imprisoned had died during the night. This version of events was based solely on John Holwell's, one of the survivors, account, 'A Genuine Narrative of the Deplorable Deaths of the English Gentlemen and others who were suffocated in the Black Hole'. This account has been challenged and it is now believed that only about sixty-four

¹⁴⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (London: Penguin, 2003), 29.

people entered the 'Black Hole', of which twenty-one survived.¹⁴⁵ This was not a deliberate attempt to kill the Europeans, but the result of the unwillingness of the Nawab's guards to act without their sleeping leader's consent. The 'Black Hole' incident was to create a formula that the Company could use to their advantage in India from then onwards. It was one way of justifying to an outraged British and colonial public that the apparent acts of savagery would be revenged.

Three thousand Company troops, only a third of them European, met a Bengali army of fifty thousand Indians and a few French allies on 23 July, 1757 and gained an overwhelming victory. The battle, known by the British corruption of the village's name, Plassey, was won more with a mixture of cunning and a poor opponent than military strategy. Robert Clive, the Company commander, had not left things to chance. He had bribed several the Bengali generals, but victory was mainly down to Siraj-ud-Daula fleeing the battle, before his troops had been properly engaged. To those fighting it, Plassey was 'a solution to local difficulties', but also ended the ambitions of the French.¹⁴⁶ Apart from a few coastal enclaves the Company was the only European force on the subcontinent. It now sought to remove the domestic competition.

After Plassey, the Company consolidated its power in India. The then Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, crushed any serious local rivals. The already declining Mughal Empire suffered the greatest from the Company's territorial expansion. Its growing weakness had created a political vacuum, that had allowed small states like Oudh to break away and become fairly independent. Soon the Mughal Empire was an empire in name only. By the start of 1857 the territory that the Company controlled had directly or indirectly spread from the borders of Afghanistan to Ceylon. This success always came with a tinge of threat. One of the major players in Indian affairs since the victory at Plassey, the Company by 1856 was the dominant power in the subcontinent. Lord Canning voiced his concerns about the situation stating 'I wish for a peaceful term of office, but I cannot forget that in the sky of India, serene

¹⁴⁵ J.H. Little, 'The Black Hole - The Question of Holwell's Veracity', *Past and Present*, 12 (1916): 136-71.

¹⁴⁶ James, *Raj*, 36.

as it is, a small cloud may arise, no larger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst and overwhelm us with ruin'.¹⁴⁷ A hundred years from Plassey, those clouds would appear. The dating provided the Rebellion with an immediate religious aspect.¹⁴⁸ This 'false' prophecy was being used by dispossessed Indian rulers to 'delude' the rebels into supporting them.¹⁴⁹ Elsewhere, one of the Rebellion's bogeymen, Nana Sahib, would choose to make the battle's anniversary the date for an assault on the Kanpur, so much had Plassey 'assumed a supernatural significance'.¹⁵⁰ It also formed a bond of unity between the mutineers, who would all share the same fate execution if captured. Having looked at how the Company came to control large swathes of the subcontinent we will now examine how it was administered.

The Nature of Company Rule.

The East India Company had originally ruled the parts of India it controlled, in much the same way, as any local Indian prince would have done. It had more interest in maintaining the status quo and trade than reform. The Company chose to use the indigenous systems they found in place, encouraging the expansion and codification of local legal systems, expanding the European study of Hinduism and Islam, and maintaining the existing taxation system. The Company even claimed to be a vassal of the Mughals, whilst developing its power base in their territory. The policy was integration by those on the ground and as little interference as necessary.

This situation changed in the nineteenth century with an appointment of a new Governor General in 1848. Lord Dalhousie was an 'aggressive Westernizer and reformer' and his appointment marked a major change in policy. Dalhousie 'embodied the progressive go-ahead spirit of the Victorian Age' and was greatly influenced by the ideas of the Industrial

¹⁴⁷ William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Its Peoples, History, and Products* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 488.

¹⁴⁸ *Otago Witness*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁴⁹ *Empire*, 8 September, 1857.

¹⁵⁰ James, *Raj*, 37.

Revolution and sought to institute the reforms that he believed necessary.¹⁵¹ Reform in British-run territory was not a new concept. It had worked effectively in New South Wales, where the ‘old India hand’, Governor Lachlan Macquarie, had transformed the colony by introducing central planning and control, and in Canada where, after the Earl of Durham’s report of 1839, local self-government and an improved legal system replaced ineffective control from Britain. There was, however, a major difference in India. Most of those affected were not all Europeans. The traditional method of doing things was anathema to Dalhousie. He challenged the established political order by using a method of both expanding Company territory and replacing local with Company administration. He rode ‘roughshod over Indian customary law’¹⁵², using the ‘Doctrine of Lapse’, a ‘pseudo-legalistic triumph of expediency over tradition’¹⁵³, which held that on the death of a local ruler without an heir, the Company should refuse to sanction the adoption of an heir. The Company would then declare that the territory had lapsed to the sovereign power. One of these lapsed states was the Muslim State of Oudh, which was to become central to the Rebellion.¹⁵⁴ Oudh’s aged ruler Baji Rao had adopted an heir, Nana Sahib, to avoid the Doctrine of Lapse, but Dalhousie had ignored this. On annexation the Company not only replaced the former ruling dynasty, but also their administrators and civil servants. In one move the Company alienated whole sections of the local elites.

The Company, in order to consolidate its control on this newly annexed territory introduced western innovations. The Doctrine was backed up by the ever-present threat of force from the Company’s armed forces. With a string of successful military engagements to its credit, it took a brave ruler to challenge the Company, its Doctrine or its effects. The Company soon learnt the truth of Sir Charles Napier statement that ‘every nationality prefers to be misgoverned by its own people than to be well ruled by another’.¹⁵⁵ The effect that the Doctrine had in persuading Indians to rebel was doubted at the time. The use of the Doctrine to annex Indian principalities might have changed the attitude of some against Company rule,

¹⁵¹ Spear, *India*, 264-5.

¹⁵² James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 226.

¹⁵³ David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Part of the modern Indian State of Uttar Pradesh.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria's Little Wars* (London: Wordsworth Edition, 1999), 31-2.

but it did not cause the massacres of the Rebellion. As much of the Rebellion occurred in areas unaffected by the Doctrine it could not be used as an excuse.¹⁵⁶ The Muslim rulers of states taken over by the East India Company using the Doctrine of Lapse were suffering for the sins of their fathers.¹⁵⁷

The Company seemed to be on 'a civilising mission, the triumph of civilisation over barbarism', but it was their version of 'civilisation'.¹⁵⁸ Cultural practices the Company objected to, such as suttee, child marriage and the Thuggee cult, were abolished or stopped by force. The motivation of much of these reforms was often 'the welfare of the common people of the country'. This though was from a European point of view. Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sindh, when told that suttee was an 'immemorial' Indian custom replied: 'My nation also has a custom. When men burn women alive, we hang them. Let us all act according to national customs'.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore the introduction of a Company educational system was seen as a threat to the Indian culture as it seemed to belittle indigenous culture. The use of English was seen as damaging the study of Sanskrit and Arabic texts and the teaching of European science and medicine was at the 'expense of oriental learning'.¹⁶⁰

Another 'national custom' that the Europeans appeared to want to alter was religion. Evangelical Christians missionaries, who had little understanding of and respect for India's indigenous religions, broke with the non-interference policy of the previous century. Many Indians came to believe that the British intended to convert them to Christianity. This impression was based in part on the 'aggressive attitude of the Christian missionaries'.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ *Empire*, 7 August, 1858.

¹⁵⁷ *Otago Witness*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁵⁸ Damodar Singhal, *India and World Civilisation* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1969), 198.

¹⁵⁹ Jan Morris, *Heaven's Command, an Imperial Progress* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 180.

¹⁶⁰ Percival Spear and Vincent Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1958), 665.

¹⁶¹ Navaratna Rajaram, *Christianity's Scramble for India and the Failure of the Secularist' Elite*, (New Delhi: Hindu Writers Forum, 1999), 38.

These missionaries did not wonder at what they saw in India, as previous generations did; they had an ‘almost universal contempt shown towards India’s existing culture and religions’.¹⁶² This attitude just added to the widespread belief that the Company were involved in a conspiracy to convert India to Christianity. Such an impression was increased further by new laws such as the Case Disabilities Act of 1850, which enabled Christian converts to inherit property. This, and other similar legal reforms, were seen as direct attacks on the Hindu religion and part of a plan to force Christianity onto its adherents. Although most of the blame was attributed to the East India Company, the religious zealotry of some such as an unnamed ‘Scottish Free-Kirk woman’ had caused resentment in the local population because of their attempts to Christianise them.¹⁶³ With so many people having this mind-set, it was very easy for them to perceive the issues relating to cartridge grease as ‘proof of an insidious missionary plot to defile them and force their conversion to Christianity’.¹⁶⁴ This had added significance, as some Indian Muslims had forced Hindus to convert to Islam, by making them swallow beef. An Indian broadsheet at the time commented that; ‘it is well known that in these days all the English have entertained these evil designs - first, to destroy the religion of the Hindustani army and to make the indigenous people by compulsion Christians’.¹⁶⁵ This new breed of European in India did not have enough experience of the people and the land to judge what was baseline ‘semi-barbarous’ behaviour and the signs of an uprising in the offing.¹⁶⁶

Other changes affected the sepoys directly. Their pay was relatively low. It was supplemented when Company troops received extra pay for service in territory that was considered ‘foreign’. That changed with the capture of Awadh and the Punjab. This territory was classed as part of India and the sepoys no longer received the extra pay, which caused financial hardship to some. The Company forces changed socially, as it started to recruit Indians of other castes than the Rajputs, the traditional warrior caste in India.

¹⁶² James, *Rise and Fall*, 221.

¹⁶³ *Saturday Review*, 25 July, 1857.

¹⁶⁴ Stanley Wolpert, *New History of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 233.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Bernard Porter, *The Lion’s Share: A Short History of British Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1995), 31.

¹⁶⁶ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 16 July, 1859.

The late 1850s was both a period of administrative and cultural change in Company-controlled India. We will now move onto how the events of the Rebellion occurred.

The Unfolding of the Rebellion.

The commonly held perception had been that any threat to Company rule in India would be external and that it would come overland from Tsarist Russia, or via the sea from another European power. Foreign involvement would become a major part of the debate about the nature of the rebellion, but the true threat would come from the sepoys, who accounted for eight out of ten of all soldiers in the Indian Army. With only a nucleus of Europeans, plus a contingent from the British Army, the ratio of native to European decreased further, just as the threat increased. From 1849 British units were reduced on cost grounds. By 1852, only thirty-nine European army infantry regiments existed in the whole of India. This trend increased further when the British entered the Crimean War in 1853 and there was a need for troops. This produced a situation whereby there were only twenty-four European regiments left by 1856. When the Rebellion started in 1857, these regiments, the core element of the Company's European troops, had been further reduced to only twenty-two.¹⁶⁷ The official historian of the British Army, Sir John Fortescue, estimated the numbers of the three Company Armies as follows: the Bengal Army with 118,663 Indian troops, and 22,698 Europeans, the Madras Army was made up of 49,737 Indians and 10,194 Europeans, and in the Bombay Army there were 31,601 Indians and 5,109 Europeans. (These figures are contradicted by the Royal Commission, appointed after the rebellion, which put the figure, at over five thousand higher). The European soldiery were not concentrated at the time the Rebellion started, elements were either abroad in Aden, Persia, and Burma. Most troops in India were not on the plains of the Ganges when needed, but in the Punjab.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ J.F. Lee and F.W. Radcliffe, *The Indian Mutiny up to the Relief of Lucknow* (London: Rawalpindi, 1858), 9.

¹⁶⁸ John Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Volume XIII (London: Macmillan 1930), 243.

The rebels of Meerut were quickly joined by groups of disaffected locals. Fearing an attack by the nearly 2,000 European troops stationed in the garrison, they marched towards the walled city of Delhi. Initially, Company troops did not pursue them, which enforced an already growing impression of their weakness. Previous mutinies had failed because of timely military responses. The failure to act was surprising as Meerut had the highest ratio of European troops to Indian ones of any military base in India, the Company forces having recently been reinforced by some from the British Army.¹⁶⁹ It would also become the source of much criticism with allegations that European troops had not raised ‘an arm to check the unresisted slaughter’ of women and children.¹⁷⁰ That would come as the Meerut mutineers killed any Europeans that they found in the city and moving to the Red Fort offered their services to the titular Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II. Bahadur Shah, though not averse to plotting against the Company, was unprepared for the Rebellion. After some persuasion, he reluctantly agreed to become the nominal leader of the rebellion. The next day sections of the local population joined the rebel sepoys in an orgy of killing inside the city. The sepoys and their supporters proceeded to kill every European and Christian they could find in the city. Those few that were taken prisoner or had sought the protection of Bahadur Shah were later murdered on 16 May in the courtyard of the royal palace.¹⁷¹ The surviving European population of the city sheltered in the Flagstaff Tower, a fortified position at the north of the Delhi Ridge. The capture of Delhi triggered a cascade of local mutinies across the northern plains of India. This created a situation in which scattered groups of Europeans all over the vastness of India were surrounded and outnumbered by ‘tens of thousands’ of Indians in ‘savage hordes’.¹⁷² Some would be able to hold out, and some were overrun and killed. Both groups would provide stories for the colonial press.

Initially, the Company forces were slow to react to events in Dehli, but soon two columns of troops were dispatched from Meerut and Simla to recapture the city. Seeing how grave the situation had become the British hastened the return of troops that had served in the Crimean

¹⁶⁹ David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 78.

¹⁷⁰ *Empire*, 11 July, 1857.

¹⁷¹ Dalrymple, *Last Mughal*, 223–4

¹⁷² *Nelson Colonist*, 26 January, 1858.

War. Troops from Lord Elgin's China expedition independently turned back at Singapore to boost European numbers in India.¹⁷³

At the beginning of July, local European forces started to besiege Delhi. A second column of Company forces, under the command of John Nicholson, made slow progress towards Delhi, fighting and hanging any mutineers they found, and setting fire to villages that were believed to have supported mutineers. After a march of two months, these Company forces, supported by Sikh and Gurkha brigades, arrived at Delhi and drove a force of mutineers that attacked them back to the walled city. Making camp on a defensible position near the Delhi ridge, the European forces and their local allies, found themselves as under siege as the city itself. Both sides had advantages. The European forces were better equipped with heavy siege artillery but were outnumbered four to one by the sepoys. The siege became a war of attrition, with the mutineers regularly attacking Company positions and British forces breaching the city's walls twice, but, outnumbered were unable to press home their advantage.

After a protracted siege on 14 September, Company and allied troops led by Nicholson, broke through the Kashmiri Gate and entered Delhi. Though Nicholson was mortally wounded in the attack it proved successful. Company forces stormed their way into the city but then faced a week of bitter house-to-house fighting to reach the Red Fort. What little restraint that had existed dissipated in the fighting. On reaching the Red Fort the European forces found that their primary quarry, Bahadur Shah, had fled to a Mughal mausoleum complex outside the city with three of his sons. With their location betrayed, they were taken prisoner by irregular light cavalry force commander William Hodson. The next day outside the city walls Hodson took it upon himself to have Shah's sons stripped, shot, and the next day had their heads presented to their father. The successful siege proved to be an important victory for the Company, as Delhi not only held the largest army of mutineers, but was also the home of the Bahadur Shah, the only 'counterweight to the authority' of the British.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Saul David, *Victoria's Wars* (London: Penguin, 2006), 359-402.

¹⁷⁴ James, *Raj*, 258.

Stories of atrocities conducted against Europeans and Christians in Delhi were presented as worse than those that had gone before and became common; but there was one event that totally changed the press' approach to the Rebellion, the massacres at Kanpur.¹⁷⁵

Kanpur (Cawnpore)

In October 1857 death notices of those 'murdered at Cawnpore, under circumstances of great brutality'¹⁷⁶ started to appear in the Australian press and continued through the remainder of the year into the next.¹⁷⁷ The sepoys in the garrison town of Kanpur mutinied in June after rumours circulated, that the Company had mined their parade ground. They had, at least, the tacit consent to rebel from the deposed local heir Nana Sahib to rebel. Sahib picked his time for rebellion well as there was a rumour of a prophecy that the Company's rule would end after 100 years. The Europeans of the garrison with their dependants sought refuge in a partially constructed entrenchment and found themselves immediately under siege. The siege lasted three weeks under the summer sun with minimal water and shade, until the besieging troops sent two European female civilians carrying terms. Rejecting the first offers, the garrison commander General Sir Hugh Wheeler received an offer from Nana Sahib of safe passage to the Ganges and boats to take them down to the relative safety of Allahabad. Wheeler with little food, and water only from a well under constant fire, had little choice but to accept. As Nana Sahib was known to the Europeans of Kanpur, as a frequent visitor to social events, Wheeler must have felt he was trustworthy. That was a belief that would prove to be horribly wrong. When the Europeans boarded riverboats, at the Satchiura Ghat just outside Kanpur, their pilots fled setting fire to the boats, and an exchange of fire ensued. The Indians fired on the boats with grapeshot killing most of the Company troops. Only four men managed to escape. The surviving women and children were led back to the city and placed in the Bibi-Ghar or 'House of the Women', the former residence of a Company officer's Indian mistress. On 15 July, a group of men, local butchers in fact, as the rebel sepoys had refused the task, entered the Bibi-Ghar armed with knives killing those there and 'the

¹⁷⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July, 1857.

¹⁷⁶ *Melbourne Argus*, 17 October, 1857.

¹⁷⁷ *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, 23 November, 1857; *Melbourne Argus*, 22 January, 1858; *Empire*, 8 March, 1858.

bleeding remains of dead and dying ...dragged to a neighbouring well and thrown in'.¹⁷⁸ This well would become infamous in Rebellion lore.¹⁷⁹

Kanpur became a turning point in attitudes, as it destroyed the case for those who supported or were sympathetic towards the political advancement of Indians and acted as a vengeful war cry for the rest of the conflict. The events warranted the response and were not dissimilar to other massacres during the Rebellion and elsewhere. The papers also were reflective of the views expressed by those in theatre and their horror and revulsion at what they saw. Press reports were graphic containing unlikely details but that were also not unusual for the period. A New Zealand paper reported that the victims 'were butchered while screaming for mercy, and as time pressed, the dead, the wounded and the children were cast alive into a well' without a source. The paper went on to describe the scene in graphic detail: 'the floor of that ill-fated room, when the avengers arrived, was found ankle [sic] deep in blood, filled with bits of dresses, and of bibles, and tresses of long dark hair. Children's feet cut off and ranged in mockery were also discovered'.¹⁸⁰ It has been argued that Kanpur was 'rendered infamous by English propagandists'.¹⁸¹ The similarity between such reports and later published first party narratives points to a communality of reaction not propaganda.¹⁸²

British revenge was not long in coming. When European forces retook Kanpur in June 1858 the British and Company soldiers after seeing the 'terrible sights' took their sepoy prisoners to the Bibi-Ghar and forced them to lick the bloodstains from the walls and floor.¹⁸³ Then they hanged them. These actions had general support, in response to Colonel James Neill's

¹⁷⁸ J.T. Wheeler, *India* (New York: Collier, 1899), 738.

¹⁷⁹ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 136.

¹⁸⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1858: *Retrospect of Year* (Continued from Supplement of April 23).

¹⁸¹ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 104.

¹⁸² Such as Garnet Wolseley, *The Story of a Soldier's Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 272-3.

¹⁸³ A Highlander's letter published in the *Aberdeen Chronicle*; October, 1857 quoted in James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 191.

‘blood lick’ rule *The Times* wrote that it ‘has gained him great credit’.¹⁸⁴ It was unpleasant work but the ‘God of Battles’ would ‘Steel [the] Soldiers’ Hearts!’¹⁸⁵ So horrified were the British about what had happened that the site ‘became a sort of a shrine, to which soldiers were taken ... where as it were they consecrated themselves to the task of retribution’¹⁸⁶ and ‘Remember Cawnpore!’¹⁸⁷ became as much of a rallying cry as the ‘Remember the Alamo!’ had been to Texans a few decades earlier.

The bloody start of the rebellion and massacres at Kanpur gave the soldiery a justification to feel that they were right in acting in the same way as their opponents. Soldiers took very few prisoners. Those they did capture were interrogated and then executed. Any settlement with perceived sympathies for the mutineers were burnt and the British adopted the old Mughal punishment for mutiny, sentenced rebels were lashed to the mouth of cannons and blown to pieces. This practice had religious significance, because by destroying the body, it deprived the victim of any hope of entering paradise. This was not the only example of British vengeance turning to barbarity, however. There were incidents when troops piled up dead or wounded Sepoys, poured oil over them, and then set them on fire. Violence bred violence even for the ‘civilised’ Victorians.

Lucknow

Where Kanpur would provide tales of horror, it would be the nearby garrison of Lucknow that would provide the basis for many a story of heroism under siege. Although most of the sepoy in Oudh mutinied, not long after those in Meerut and Delhi, the local commander Henry Lawrence had enough time to muster the European and loyal sepoy forces at his disposal, to fortify the thirty-three acre Residency compound, before coming under siege. That siege became ‘the Mutiny’s most celebrated episode’, a British garrison holding firm

¹⁸⁴ *Times*, 21 September, 1857.

¹⁸⁵ *Punch*, 10 October, 1857.

¹⁸⁶ James, *Raj*, 253.

¹⁸⁷ *Times*, 19 September, 1857.

against all the odds surrounded by a brutal opponent with far superior numbers.¹⁸⁸ Lawrence had 1,700 men, including loyal sepoys to protect over a thousand non-combatants.¹⁸⁹ Rebel numbers would top thirty thousand at their height.

The besieged survived the initial assaults by rebel forces, and then the artillery and musket barrage that followed them. Lawrence was one of the first casualties, mortally injured by a shell fragment, but resistance continued. The siege then took on a medieval air. The mutineers attempted unsuccessfully to breach the walls of the compound with explosives. They then tried mining under the walls, leading to vicious underground fighting when the besieged countermined. This ploy proved equally unsuccessful.

After ninety days and heavy losses, those in the Residency heard gunfire on the outskirts of the city, that signalled an approaching relief force. Having recaptured Kanpur, a relief force under Major General Henry Havelock had made their first attempt to reach Lucknow on 20 July, but though militarily successful losses from illness forced a withdrawal. The second attempt to relieve the Residency proved more successful Lucknow and its garrison were relieved on 25 September by soldiers under the joint command of Havelock and Sir James Outram. Unable to evacuate safely those in the Residency, the relief column found itself also under siege, awaiting the arrival of a second group of soldiers under the command of Sir Colin Campbell. Campbell had taken over in the Lucknow theatre in October. Campbell's force moved towards Lucknow in mid-November, making their way towards a section of the Residency. Campbell sought to evacuate the Residency compound rather than to capture it. On 18 November the force reached the Residency and carried out Campbell's plan. It would not be until March of the following year that Lucknow was finally captured by Campbell.

By the winter of 1857, the Company had started to recover ground and in the next few months, reversed many of their losses. As with the second relief of Lucknow, major besieged populations had been relieved, and the Company could move from reacting to events to putting down the Rebellion itself. The Rebellion, geographically, was limited to the Punjab,

¹⁸⁸ Ferguson, *Empire*, 148.

¹⁸⁹ David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 227.

Ganges valley, and central India with the whole of Southern India, central and east Bengal and Rajputana remaining peaceful. The last theatre of conflict was primarily focused generally on the East India Company's Central India Agency, ending with the capture of Gwalior in June 1858. Though most of the rebels were defeated after Gwalior, sporadic fighting continued into 1859. A 'State of Peace' was finally officially declared on 8 July 1859, even though fighting was still going on and it was not until 28 July that the Governor-General Charles Canning could finally proclaim: 'War is at an end. Rebellion is put down'.¹⁹⁰

Bahadur Shah was tried for a number of offences: he was unsurprisingly found guilty and then sent into exile in Rangoon. That act formally ended the Mughal Dynasty. There was only one winner: 'Neither Mughal, Maratha, or the Company was the real victor of the struggle. It was the pervasive spirit of the West'¹⁹¹ - or rather the British. The East India Company was dissolved, and the British Crown assumed direct rule over India, beginning the period commonly known as the Raj. The new directly controlled India was headed by a Governor General, the Viceroy, who acted as the direct representative of the Crown and embodied the supreme legislative and executive authority in India. He would not be responsible to shareholders but to the Secretary of State for India, a cabinet member. The Army was also able to regain some of the prestige it had lost in the Crimean War. Despite the severity of the reprisals, a measure of conciliation had been introduced to administrative policy. In 1877, Queen Victoria was crowned Empress of India, filling the position of the Mughals.

The shock of what had happened and how they had responded to the Rebellion was the cause of much self-examination as to why it had occurred and the response to it. The Rebellion had 'taught the British caution' in subsequent dealings with their Indian subjects, beginning with the removal of policies that had produced resentment.¹⁹² The expansionist policy of replacing the old regimes of the subcontinent with British administrators was replaced with one that viewed 'the established order much more favourably, and as something that ought to be

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 374.

¹⁹¹ Percival Spear, *India: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 273.

¹⁹² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848-75* (London: Cardinal, 1975), 152.

promoted and preserved'.¹⁹³ Integration of the higher castes and princes was now considered important, land policy was revised, and any plans for radical social change were shelved. A revolt partially against reform would end in a resumption of the status quo. It marked the 'swan song of [the] old India'¹⁹⁴, the death of both the East India Company and Mughals as rulers in India.

It was also a period of change in the technologies that allowed information to be transmitted, such as the electric telegraph and improved maritime engines that coincided with an expansion of the British and colonial press. These developments are what we will examine next.

The Revolution in Communications and the Press

Although the limits imposed by law and taxation were removed, the issue of distance proved to be more difficult to solve. Improvements were introduced to improve communications in India. The first telegram was sent between the Indian cities of Agra on the Ganges Plain and Calcutta, the then capital of Company India, on March 24, 1854, taking two hours to travel the eight hundred miles. As the reforming Governor General Dalhousie saw himself as responsible for improving communications, it took only two years for the sections of Company India to be connected by telegraph. This communication network would be vital during the Rebellion. It provided the Company with information, before it arrived by other means. This information gap gave the Company time to disarm potentially mutinous troops, before they became aware of the mutiny in Meerut, which caused one Company official to comment; that the 'Electric Telegraph has saved' the European cause' but to a mutineer on the way to his execution, the telegraph was 'the accursed string that strangles' him.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 41.

¹⁹⁴ Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1893), 271.

¹⁹⁵ Donald MacLeod, Financial Commissioner for the Punjab, quoted in David, *The Indian Mutiny*, xxiii; quoted in Ferguson, *Empire*, 168.

Another effect of the introduction of telegraphs was that news reports could arrive with increased speed, even to those areas not yet connected. Dalhousie, working through provincial governments, sought to improve the physical communications, producing a dramatic increase in the number of metalled roads and the introduction of the railway into India. The first railway line in Asia was built from Bombay to Thana in 1853 and by 1856, 288 miles had been built. Railways did not play a major part in the Company response to the Rebellion, but as they had the effect of bringing people physically together, they posed a threat to the caste system. Their routes crossed sacred rivers or passed by religious sites. They also represented a physical sign of foreign control. The introduction of these new technologies and the effect it had on India, created a negative impression in the minds of many Indians. The effect was cumulative. The ‘appearance at the same moment of the steam engine and the telegraph wire seemed to reveal a deep plan for substituting [a British] for an Indian civilisation’.¹⁹⁶ It provided a method of control as well as a conduit through which information could be transmitted.

The news situation in the middle of the nineteenth century was substantially different from that of the present day press. It was a period of limited state but strong personal control, and a paucity of information. Newspapers were the product of those who wrote for them, those who published them, those who read them, and those who provided them with their information. All four interpreted events through their own prejudices, hampered by limited information, embedded in their own culture, creating a distorting lens that shows as much of the viewer than that which is viewed. Information was edited to create a version of events that often suited the required argument.¹⁹⁷

News gathering was in its infancy. Existing news agencies like Reuters only ‘collected official pronouncements and passed on reports of events’.¹⁹⁸ Some newspapers would do

¹⁹⁶ William Wilson Hunter, *The Indian Empire: Its Peoples, History, and Products* (New York: A.M.S. Press, 1966), 288.

¹⁹⁷ Baucom, *Out of Place*, 104.

¹⁹⁸ Donald Read, *The Power of News* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 29.

likewise, reprinting copy directly from ‘the Government’.¹⁹⁹ Reportage of earlier events often only consisted of ‘reproducing stories from local papers’ or ‘questionable depositions, muddled accounts, dubious journals, and the narratives of shell-shocked survivors with axes to grind’.²⁰⁰ With such a system, reports could be biased or a falsehood could be amplified without any real editing. Summaries of the copy of other journals became a common way of detailing the Indian news, as with the *South Australian Register* that in mid-January 1858 created a narrative from Indian, British, and Australian copy.²⁰¹ Summaries of Indian papers in one colony’s papers would then be summarised in another.²⁰² This allowed local newspapers to have influence on how stories were reported as they were often the primary sources for other journals.²⁰³ Previous military engagements had been reported in this fashion until the Crimean War. The Crimea’s relative closeness, allowed war reporters to travel to the war zone and thus not rely on government reports or local newspapers for their information. Although third party first-hand accounts were still regularly used, they were not the sole source that they had been in the past. Coupled with on-site reporters, came on-site sketch artists whose drawings allowed readers to feel more engaged in the reported stories. Colonial newspapers would often be where many learned of the survival or death of loved ones and those they knew. In the autumn of 1857, lists of the dead were published, including those who fell at Kanpur, next to lists of disarmed regiments and places to which the Rebellion was spreading.²⁰⁴ Some victims of the Rebellion were also named.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ *Colonist*, 9 April, 1858.

²⁰⁰ Lawrence James, *Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Abacus, 1994), 190; Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered*, (London: John Murray, 1996), 555.

²⁰¹ *South Australian Register*, 12 January, 1858.

²⁰² E.g. Summary of Indian papers up to 5 August in *Straits Times*, up to 18 August, 1857 in *Inquirer & Commercial News*, 14 October, 1857.

²⁰³ Peter Putnis, “The Indian insurgency of 1857 as a global media event”, in *I.A.M.C.R. 25th Conference Proceedings*, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra (2000), 185-90.

²⁰⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October, 1857; *Taranaki Herald*, 21 November, 1857

²⁰⁵ *Cape Argus*, 8 and 26 August 1857. Further examples can be found in Jill Bender “Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the unmaking and making of an imperial career”, in Crispin Bates, and Maria Carter (eds), *Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins* (London: Sage, 2009).

The press of the colonies was not static and insular. There were interrelationships locally and with Britain. British journalists would work in the colonies and those in the colonies would head in the opposite direction.²⁰⁶ This allowed a cross pollination of ideas and forms of doing journalism. The 1850s would see an expansion in the number of titles in settler colonies with New Zealand gaining four papers, the *Auckland Register*, the *Hawke's Bay Herald and Ahuriri Advocate*, the *Taranaki News* and the *Nelson Colonist* in the year of the Rebellion. Some would last, and some, like the *Register*, would be closed in a few years.

News was far from instant in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in many colonies was dependent on the shipping schedule. This lack of information, especially at the start of the Rebellion, allowed reports however speculative, to be reprinted time and again. Copy became the product of what information could be obtained. From the North Island of New Zealand, the *Taranaki Herald* complained that their news about the Rebellion was ‘derived from two or three stray papers, picked up’ from steamers and thus ‘fragmentary’. Unable to obtain enough information from the newspapers on the steamer ‘Simla’ they started interrogating the passengers. One of the passengers gave them both news about reinforcements coming from Britain to support those in India and details of the ‘butcheries of the wives and children of the Company officers by the native troops’ which the paper deemed as ‘too horrible for publication’.²⁰⁷ Thus opinion could be coloured by very little actual information. In settled colonies such as Australia and British North America ‘intelligence of the most painful’, but also ‘exciting character [had] been received’ and was carried in domestic Indian newspapers, personal letters regularly reprinted, or in British newspapers.²⁰⁸ New Zealand’s *Hawke’s Bay Herald* bemoaned the fact that news from India came in blocks, creating a ‘dearth of matter’ followed by ‘a perfect plethora’ of material.²⁰⁹ Newspapers would even have difficulties obtaining news from other parts of their own colony.²¹⁰ Summaries of the Indian news in the Australian papers soon found their way into the New Zealand press and vice versa.²¹¹ If

²⁰⁶ See Simon Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 16-27.

²⁰⁷ *Taranaki Herald*, 3 October, 1857.

²⁰⁸ *Hobart Courier*, 10 July, 1857; *Islander*, 24 July, 1857.

²⁰⁹ *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 20 March, 1858.

²¹⁰ *Lyttelton Times*, 26 June, 1858.

²¹¹ *Otago Witness*, 24 October, 1857.

papers in these colonies did not comment directly, they reprinted copy that did from British newspapers like *The Times*.²¹²

This created a certain level of confusion with reports from colonial papers being reprinted in *The Times* and with these articles then being reprinted in the colonial press. Papers would also gain reports from a whole selection of other papers, like the *Melbourne Argus* on 5 September 1857, that had the ‘Calcutta papers to the 20 July; Bombay to the 30th of the same month; Ceylon to the 7th August; and Singapore to the 14th July’.²¹³ Colonial papers would often repeat inaccurate claims by British papers with examples like *The Times*’ erroneous reports that Delhi had been destroyed ending up in Canadian newspapers.²¹⁴ Without their own journalists on the ground, those who wrote accounts of events in their letters home, became the first historians of the Rebellion. The coverage of certain sections of the Rebellion often consisted of ‘reproducing stories from local papers’²¹⁵ or ‘questionable depositions, muddled accounts, dubious journals, and the narratives of shell-shocked survivors with axes to grind’.²¹⁶ Others were factual accounts and surmises by worried people in troubling times, which showed a surprising degree of good faith reliance in the reports of others.²¹⁷

Readers would send letters from relatives in India to the paper they read, which would then be reprinted, increasing the effect that certain narratives could have. A letter from a Daniel Tracey a soldier in the 84th to a colleague in India was first printed in the Indian newspaper the *Englishman*, and then reprinted in the *Otago Witness*, and the *Taranaki Herald*²¹⁸ in New Zealand. A letter from a Colonel Arthur Cotton was forwarded by a relative to the *Hobart Town Mercury*. In the letter Cotton gives an account of the salient aspects of the Rebellion through his eyes. He believed that he did not need to cover the ‘horrors’ of the Rebellion, as

²¹² E.g. *Perth Gazette*, 30 October, 1857.

²¹³ *Melbourne Argus*, 5 September, 1857.

²¹⁴ *Pilot*, 29 July, 1857.

²¹⁵ James, *Rise and Fall of the British Empire*, 190.

²¹⁶ Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered* (London: John Murray, 1996), 555.

²¹⁷ *Ballarat Star*, 22 October, 1857.

²¹⁸ *Englishman*, 11 August, 1857; *Otago Witness*, 21 November, 1857; *Taranaki Herald*, 21 November, 1857.

they were already in the papers.²¹⁹ Cotton's report was reprinted in other Australian papers.²²⁰ A letter extracted in the *South Australian Register* was equally as lacking in facts in their atrocity reports.²²¹ Another letter published at the same time written by the sons of a Brisbane resident was equally free of atrocity stories, save what had happened in Kanpur²²², as were ones sent to relatives in Sydney.²²³ The press understood the weakness of some of its sources of information and wanted their readership to know. The *South Australian Register* warned its readership to treat with caution the information that they had been able to glean from other papers and the material published in them. The concern was based on the 'very scanty data' from India and the crossing of copy, not its inherent accuracy.²²⁴ Other letters published were free of tales of atrocity, and were simply accounts of what was happening with a little commentary on subjects that interested the writer.²²⁵ With such a system, reports could be biased, or a falsehood could be amplified without any real editing. The letters received from India had generated a reaction. These atrocity stories, real and invented, had generated a cry for vengeance had risen 'even from the pulpit'.²²⁶

When reports did not give the required level of detail, a paper would create them. The *Daily Southern Cross*' 'Retrospect of Year of 30 April 1858', as mentioned earlier, gave details about events in Kanpur that the paper could not possibly in reality, have had.²²⁷ These editorial flights of embellishment were not limited to the *Southern Cross*.²²⁸ It was also common to use emotive language to scene set and exaggerate the importance of events. The *Empire* claimed a 'process of extermination' and 'was being waged against the Europeans of India'²²⁹ by rebels in a 'state of frenzy' who had 'shot and burned and ravaged whatever came

²¹⁹ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 21 October, 1857.

²²⁰ *Melbourne Argus*, 28 October, 1857.

²²¹ *South Australian Register*, 26 October, 1857.

²²² *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 October, 1857.

²²³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September, 1857.

²²⁴ *South Australian Register*, 19 October, 1857.

²²⁵ *Melbourne Argus*, 29 December, 1857.

²²⁶ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

²²⁷ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April 30, 1858.

²²⁸ *Islander*, 24 July, 1857; *Port Phillip Herald*, 8 July, 1857.

²²⁹ *Empire*, 11 July, 1857.

in their way' as the *Port Phillip Herald* claimed.²³⁰ The *Hobart Town Mercury* declared that never 'before has such cruel and inhuman barbarity been perpetrated'.²³¹ The actions of the rebels were seen as the most extreme or barbaric.²³² Inflated language was used for the British but in reverse. The *Cape Argus* reported that the news from India was full of 'exciting incidents, gallant deeds; and brilliant successes' whose lustre was shaded by 'the most mournful loss our army there has yet sustained', that of General Henry Havelock.²³³ They could show pride in the actions of their colony and other colonies. New Zealand's *Lyttleton Times* was proud that locally there had been a lot of support for those in India following what was happening in Britain. They became increasingly pleased when they read in the press from neighbouring colonies that a similar thing was happening there.²³⁴ Papers in the Cape Colony and Australian colonies expressed a similar view though some worried that not enough effort was being made.²³⁵

Communications between India and Britain had a lag time of around six weeks, which produced an artificial situation, in which events that had occurred weeks ago were being discussed and speculated upon, as if they were near recent occurrences. The Queen herself remarked that '[t]he lag of time between the Mails is very trying & must be harrowing to those who have...relations in uncertain & dangerous places'.²³⁶ This changed with the introduction of the telegraph. The first news that was transmitted by telegram was the news of the birth of Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred, in August 1844. The telegraph substantially decreased the time news took to be transmitted. No longer was the news linked to the speed of trains, horses and steamers. No longer was copy written 'in a shaking train carriage or stage-coach'.²³⁷ It also allowed the centre to communicate within moments with the remotest

²³⁰ *Port Phillip Herald*, 8 July, 1857.

²³¹ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

²³² *Freeman's Journal*, 8 September, 1857; *Islander*, 24 July, 1857.

²³³ *Cape Argus*, 16 January, 1858.

²³⁴ *Lyttleton Times*, 17 March, 1858.

²³⁵ *Cape Argus*, 11 November, 1857; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March, 1858; *Melbourne Argus*, 23 January, 1858.

²³⁶ Queen Victoria quoted in Charles Allen, *Glimpse of the Burning Plain: Leaves from the Indian Journals of Charlotte Canning* (London: Michael Joseph, 1986), 79.

²³⁷ Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper, An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 127.

colonies as long as they were part of the network.²³⁸ The establishment of a telegraph system broke the monopoly of national newspapers in reporting news, as it allowed provincial newspapers to receive copy on the same day as events occurred. In October of 1851, the Reuters News Agency opened in London just a month before a cable was laid across the channel. The first reports of the Rebellion arrived on 27 June 1857 with official telegrams expected by July 12. Even with the reduction in this lag time caused by the introduction of the telegraph, a feeling of impotence, both for the reader and for the journalist, still existed. Another innovation resulting from the Crimean War was a dramatic decrease in communications' times, from the two weeks by the fastest steamer to two days, using the newly installed telegraph office in Balaklava in the May of 1855. There was a certain irony in the fact that the first transatlantic news dispatch by telegraph in August 1858 included the text 'Mutiny being quelled, all India becoming tranquil'.²³⁹ The line went silent at the beginning of September.

The Rebellion would occur before the infrastructure of news had been fully established with, and internally, in India. Land-based telegraph lines to India would proliferate in the 1860s, with undersea cables being installed a decade later. Local correspondents would 'combine planting, racing, and journalism'.²⁴⁰ Journalists, in country, mostly worked for local journals. Reporters would be sent to cover major events but in an ad hoc almost accidental manner. News agencies, later to become dominant in India, would tentatively start operations in the subcontinent during the dying days of the Rebellion, sending their first news telegrams from the subcontinent in 1858.

Efforts were made to control what was printed both by the journals themselves, but also by colonial authorities linked to the East India Company. Newspapers would suggest that they were self-censoring. For instance, in October 1857 New Zealand's *Taranaki Herald* reported

²³⁸ David Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 129.

²³⁹ Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 676.

²⁴⁰ Lionel James, *High Pressure, being some Record of Activities in the Service of the Times Newspaper* (London: John Murray, 1929), 3.

‘butcheries of the wives and children of the British officers by the native troops are too horrible for publication’.²⁴¹ This restraint rarely survived the first item of gory news that the paper received. The *Herald* reported the account of a ‘gentleman writing from Calcutta’ who three months later claimed the rebels were murdering Europeans by ‘cutting of the skin round the neck and then stripping it over the head of the victim, leaving the face and skull bare’.²⁴² The *Nassau Guardian* reported the Kanpur massacre in detail. A ‘soul harrowing spectacle which there presented itself to [Havelock’s troops] beggars description’, the courtyard ‘swimming in blood’; women and children ‘barbarously slaughtered’; the women ‘stripped naked, beheaded, and thrown into a well’, the children ‘hurled down alive upon their butchered mothers, whose blood yet reeked on their mangled bodies’.²⁴³ This sort of language was mirrored in memories of the period.²⁴⁴ Later the summary executions of rebels were reported in considerable detail.²⁴⁵

In settlements run by the East India Company the organisation itself came in for general criticism in the local newspapers. These territories had populations which felt that their rights were being eroded and that their safety was being challenged by increased Indian immigration. These views coloured the reporting of the Rebellion. When attempting to limit possible incitement to revolt, the Company introduced a ‘Gagging Act’, it just added to these already held opinions. Unsurprisingly there was a commonly held belief that the Company was not equal to the task of dealing with the suppression of the Rebellion.²⁴⁶ Similarities also obviously existed between the metropolitan coverage of the Rebellion and that found in the colonies, though both took unique often differing stances on certain issues.

²⁴¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 3 October, 1857.

²⁴² *Taranaki Herald*, Supplement, January 16, 1858.

²⁴³ *Nassau Guardian*, 14 October, 1857.

²⁴⁴ Garnet Wolseley, *The Story of a Soldier’s Life*, Vol. 1 (London: A. Constable & Co, London, 1903), 272-3.

²⁴⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 13 March, 1858.

²⁴⁶ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

Conclusion

The mutiny of native troops in an Indian garrison town would cascade into a wholesale revolt against East India Company rule, when discontented soldiery and a local populace, that resented outside interference, determined that they could revolt without apparent comeback. As the revolt spread, a series of atrocities against Europeans and Christian natives, counterpointed by heroic besieged garrisons provided the background to what was to become an Empire-wide media event. This chapter has provided an outline of these events, how India was administered plus the format of the press of the period. It has also provided a series of other major press reports of the period to act as a counterpoint to the Rebellion coverage.

This chapter has detailed the origins of the Rebellion formed by the decline of local administration and the increasing power of an external one. It then outlined how that external power, the East India Company, achieved dominance in the subcontinent and including now to see how its territories were administered. Moving on the chapter then looked at how the Rebellion unfolded providing a basis to the copy to be examined in coming chapters, with added focus on two key events, the siege and later massacres at Kanpur and the siege and reliefs of Lucknow. Finally, it provided a summary of the developing revolution in communications and the press which reported on the Rebellion highlighting how it was transforming the dissemination of information. Attention was also drawn to the weakness that still existed, such as the substantial gaps in the expanding cable networks.

Chapter 2: Ireland: Division, Religion, And Ethnicity

This chapter will analyse how the Rebellion brought to the fore the relationship between Britain and her empire, and the relationship that its inhabitants had with her and each other. It would help to voice both a local identity and an Imperial one. Focusing on Ireland, it will demonstrate how the discussion of events in India provided a forum, in which existing internal conflicts could be debated and how it allowed for an examination of the various viewpoints, both supportive and critical of the empire and its administration. As we shall see, claim and counterclaim flew between the sides in Ireland, with what was happening in India quickly becoming a metaphor for internal struggles, but not the central issue. No conclusions would be reached as every group had its own distinctly domestic view.

The chapter will begin by providing a summary of Irish history in the period, which will display the social, political, and religious divisions that would be played out in the coverage of the Rebellion. It will then move on to look at how the Catholic Irish, in general, would have the term and the characteristics of ‘sepoys’ attached to them and their press would be given the same epithet. In return, the mildest of support for the grievances of the native populations from the nationalist press was classed as ‘sepoyism’ and portrayed as support for the rebels. This was simplistic as nationalist papers themselves understood that criticism during a period of emergency might not be appropriate and understood that Irish lives were in peril in India. Religious differences in Ireland were played out using India and the Rebellion as analogies. The Catholics would be directly linked to the sepoys and the Indians as a whole. The perceived poor treatment of Catholic troops would inevitably be counterproductive in terms of recruitment and retention of soldiery. It also suggested marked similarity to how the sepoys had been treated. The apparent mistreatment of native populations in India was likened to that of the Catholic Irish. Local animus would play a part, where disputes would eventually lead to one paper campaigning to exclude another from the Commercial News Room in Belfast. The campaign led to the paper in question being expelled from other news rooms in Ulster. The Irish in India, their involvement in colonial expansion and apparent negative treatment by the East India Company, will be the next area of investigation, showing that the topic provided internal contradictions which added to the confusion. Titling it

‘English misrule of India,’²⁴⁷ the nationalist press would liken what it saw as poor administration in India to that on its home island. Atrocities would first be doubted, linked to recent events, and then create difficulties for the nationalist press, as criticism was out of place when Irish people were at risk in the subcontinent. It will conclude by looking at the tensions created over the position of Ireland as a coloniser and, in the opinion of some, a colony.

The press of Ireland split on sectarian lines with journals on both sides covering the spectrum from the moderate to the extreme. This chapter will primarily focus on the coverage of six major newspapers covering both traditions and the two main population centres, Dublin and Belfast. On the nationalist side there was the Dublin based *Nation*, a radical nationalist newspaper which had members of staff involved in the 1848 Young Irelander rebellion, causing it to be temporarily banned. The *Freeman’s Journal*, the oldest nationalist newspaper in Ireland took a more moderate stance, and the *Ulsterman*, a Belfast based nationalist paper that took a reactive position against the more virulent unionist press in the north. On that side there was the *Belfast Daily Mercury* that was ‘the Whig Party newspaper’²⁴⁸ of Ulster whose readership were ‘conservatively minded Protestant Liberals’²⁴⁹, the *Dublin Evening Mail*, a conservative unionist evening paper of the landed elite and the *Belfast News-Letter*, a vocal and often belligerent unionist journal printed in Belfast but distributed island-wide.

The reaction of the Irish press to the Rebellion was heavily coloured by the recent history of the island. It is thus important to start by providing a brief summary of that history.

²⁴⁷ *Ulsterman*, 28 October, 1857.

²⁴⁸ Oram, *The Newspaper Book*, 72.

²⁴⁹ A.T. Harrison (ed.), *Graham India Mutiny Papers* (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1980), 142.

Ireland: A Land of Division

The Rebellion was a news event that allowed debate of the identity of European national groups inside the Empire. Arguably the clearest example of this occurred in Ireland, although similar discussions would occur in areas with French speaking populations.²⁵⁰ The reporting of the Rebellion in Ireland is punctuated by a tit-for-tat war of words between the more fervent parts of the nationalist and unionist press. While both sides were generally agreed on events and the seriousness of the Rebellion, they used the Rebellion as a way of continuing domestic disputes between the two communities. Both sought to do this by creating analogies between events in India, and to what was happening in Ireland and their opponents on one side or the other in the conflict. These analogies were full of contradictions, as were the arguments that flowed from them.

The decades prior to the Rebellion had also proved difficult for the inhabitants of Ireland. Famine, internal strife, and internal divisions had created an environment in which all foreign news was often filtered through domestic issues. This makes Ireland an effective forum in which to investigate how those on the island viewed each other. Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century was a land of division. A population divided on religious and ethnic grounds was also internally divided on political ones. In the early nineteenth century, the establishment of British and Irish Protestant authority, over a largely Catholic indigenous population polarised Irish society. These divisions were mirrored in the Irish press. The laws that governed Ireland became increasingly discriminatory against the Catholic population. A series of rebellions at the turn of the nineteenth century led indirectly to change. Ireland became the focus of attempts to accommodate the disparate views of the population, while maintaining the peace. The British saw a solution in repression followed by an attempt to assimilate Ireland.²⁵¹ The Act of Union of 1800, viewed by some as the ‘legislative conquest of Ireland’²⁵², was imposed on the Dublin Parliament, linking Britain with Ireland in an

²⁵⁰ Jill Bender, “Mutiny or Freedom Fight”, in Simon Potter (ed.) *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 102.

²⁵¹ Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (London: Vintage, 2007), 116.

²⁵² John Porter, “Ireland: The Union of 1801”, in *The Economist*, 5 October, 1844, 1281.

‘imperial-cum-metropolitan unity’.²⁵³ Seen as a way of removing the dangers of self-governance it made Ireland both an integral part of the imperial metropolis, and part vice regal dominion, a model soon replicated in most of the settler colonies.²⁵⁴ As if to highlight the unique position that Ireland had, it was ruled in the Monarch’s name by a viceroy, a de facto governor-general, something the other kingdoms existed without.²⁵⁵ With this political unity came a control over Ireland’s economy, which was essentially colonial in nature.²⁵⁶ This confused status would play a key role in the debate over Ireland’s role, both in the Empire and in the Rebellion, inside communities, as well as between them. Imperial conflicts were used by both communities, as a forum to discuss the situation in Ireland and its place in the empire.²⁵⁷ Attempts were made to reform Ireland’s governance but had limited success. Catholic emancipation in 1829 was only partially successful. The Catholic Relief Act of the same year, that allowed Catholics to sit in Parliament and become eligible for most public offices, increased Catholic participation in the body politic in Ireland and increased those seeking information. Issues left unresolved soon came to the fore, the financial support of an imposed Anglican hierarchy by a Catholic population produced the ‘Tithe War’ of the early 1830s. Existing economic grievances between a Protestant elite and the Roman Catholic majority were only to be exacerbated by what came next.

A third of the Irish potato crop was destroyed by fungal infection in 1845, and the next year the crop failure had become nearly total. When the famine that this caused ended, as many as a million and a half people had died and another million emigrated and severe economic hardship had been caused to many.²⁵⁸ This famine was handled so badly by the British authorities, that in some eyes it was almost genocidal.²⁵⁹ An alternate view was that it was a

²⁵³ David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

²⁵⁴ Christine Kinealy, “At Home with the Empire: The Example of Ireland”, in Catherine Hall, Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 78.

²⁵⁵ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 15.

²⁵⁶ Hudson Meadwell, “Breaking the Mould? Quebec Independence and Secession in the Developed West” in Sukumar Perival, *Notions of Nationalism* (Budapest: Central European University, 1995), 145.

²⁵⁷ Jill Bender, “Mutiny or Freedom Fight”, 107.

²⁵⁸ W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish Historical Statistics, Population, 1821-1971* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978).

²⁵⁹ See William Rubinstein, *Genocide: A History* (London: Longman, 2004), 85-9.

mix of indifference and ineptitude, with the British authorities requiring relief organisations to sell food, rather than give it away to the starving to avoid dependence. Although much of the Irish press would have agreed with the *Dublin Evening Mail* which suggests that it was ‘impossible for a nation to subsist on state alms’, both sides thought this a bad idea.²⁶⁰ The authorities also allowed food to be exported from Ireland and supported the eviction of half a million tenants. This behaviour ignited violence from the Irish, both at home and abroad. Some even argued that the famine was a punishment from God for sin, an argument that was used later to explain the Rebellion itself.²⁶¹ For much of the nationalist press, such as the *Nation*, the answer was clear; the evils of the famine ‘might be mitigated, or turned aside’ if Ireland was ‘governed by its own people’.²⁶² The self-government argument would become common. Each time external events gave the nationalist press a chance to comment on Ireland. Land reform, always an issue, was highlighted by the famine and its aftermath. The British in 1849 used the Encumbered Estates of Ireland Act to change the landlords on bankrupted estates, rather than reform the land ownership system, leading nationalists to ask for ‘a *real*, not a sham’ reform.²⁶³

Coinciding with the worst years of the famine, the Young Irelander rebellion of 1848 was easily contained by military action by the ‘almost over-prepared’ British.²⁶⁴ It had a larger effect on the public consciousness, as it established both that the Irish were still plotting rebellion and, at least in the eyes of Protestant journalism, that parts of the Catholic press were deeply involved themselves. With the involvement of two of the founders of the *Nation*, Thomas Davis and John Blake Dillon, and a major contributor, Michael Doheny, it was suggested that the paper was the ‘journalistic arm’ of the movement.²⁶⁵ Both the paper and the movement were an attempt ‘to make Ireland a nation’, and as the *Nation*’s first editor, Charles Gavan Duffy put it, ‘the name [of the paper] would be a fitting prelude to the

²⁶⁰ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 28 July, 1847.

²⁶¹ Denis Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 3.

²⁶² *Nation*, 1 November, 1845.

²⁶³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 5 April, 1849.

²⁶⁴ Jan Morris, *Heaven’s Command* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), 168.

²⁶⁵ Jill Bender, “Mutiny or Freedom Fight”, 94.

attempt'.²⁶⁶ The involvement of Irish Catholics journalists in rebellions would emerge in Canada as well. Inter-community tensions remained high, with sectarian rioting in Ulster less than a month after news of the Rebellion began to filter through. These disturbances in Ulster might help to explain the vitriol used in some of the copy from the likes of the *Belfast News-Letter* and the *Ulsterman*. With the inclusion of nationalist and Catholic papers,²⁶⁷ the Irish press by the middle of mid nineteenth century was one of the most diverse in the Empire, second only to mainland Britain.²⁶⁸ This diverse press, expanding in scope and voice, was aided by the abolition of taxation on the newspaper itself in 1855 and by its key components like advertisements in 1853 made newspapers a cheaper commodity. This in turn led to an increased interest in both domestic and foreign affairs, and expanded a readership previously limited to the upper and middle classes.²⁶⁹ As Jill Bender states, 'there seemed to be a newspaper to suit just about any reader'.²⁷⁰ The unique position of Ireland in the Empire, coupled with the linking of Ireland to England by telegraph cable in 1853 fostered an increased interest in foreign affairs.²⁷¹

As the news of the Rebellion reached Ireland in the June of 1857, this context of rebellion, poor British administration, and a divided press and populace found echoes in Ireland and its contemporary history. It provided both communities with a way to debate Ireland. The nationalist press saw the Rebellion as simply another rebellion against British rule and an excuse to criticise the East India Company, and through it British rule in Ireland. Believing that England's difficulty was Ireland's own opportunity, this tradition of using foreign difficulties as a way to highlight Ireland's, continued up to its own independence. Indeed, it became common currency in many parts of Irish society and thus it is not surprising that similar arguments appeared in the nationalist press. The difficulty came, as it did in future

²⁶⁶ Quoted in Charles Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850* Reprint (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1881), 48.

²⁶⁷ Hugh Oram, *The Newspaper Book, A History of Newspapers in Ireland, 1649-1983* (Dublin: MO Books, 1983), 77.

²⁶⁸ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 93.

²⁶⁹ William Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 14.

²⁷⁰ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 93.

²⁷¹ Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet* (London: Phoenix, 1999), 71.

conflicts, when the Irish, nationalist and Unionist were fighting on the side of the British.²⁷² Although the Irish contingent had been decreasing, those fighting the rebellious sepoys produced a split in emphasis between two of the major nationalist newspapers; the *Freeman's Journal* which saw the Rebellion as a threat to the Europeans, especially the Irish, in India and more, and the *Nation*, which saw it as a struggle for freedom regardless.²⁷³ Another contradiction developed in the press, as nationalists wanted to both achieve autonomy for Ireland, but also in many cases to maintain British rule over India. Irish nationalists could serve abroad to alleviate poverty, but still favour domestic self-government. Employment won over belief. We will now move on to see how the Protestant press of Ireland attempted to link the nationalist community to the rebels in India and the response to them doing so.

Irish Sepoys

The Protestant press generally argued that the Irish were brave and loyal, as evidenced by their disproportionate involvement in India. In Ulster that press was more defined upon ethnic lines. The unionist press of Ulster tended towards being critical of the Catholic community and its press. They still had a willingness to critique the views of Protestant newspapers when they published copy with which they disagreed. One of the most vociferous approaches taken against the nationalist press was by the *Belfast News-Letter*. In a September 1857 article entitled 'The Indian Mutineers and their Irish Sympathisers' the *News-Letter*, after two paragraphs of praise for the Irish, accused 'a few miscreants at the Press' who 'assume to represent the people of Ireland' of feeling differently while ignoring the Irish in danger in India. In a passage full of purple prose the paper accused the nationalist press of gloating 'over every fresh massacre in India with a joy as fiendish as that of the fallen angels when man's eternal ruin was accomplished'.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Barry Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks: Migration, Social Communication and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85.

²⁷³ Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks*, 81.

²⁷⁴ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857.

One of the oldest and conservative unionist papers in Ulster, the *News-Letter*, was first published in 1737, as a weekly until it became a daily in 1855 and is still in existence today. Its editorial policy, a source of ‘consistent Toryism’, was designed to appeal to the Protestant commercial and land-owning interests of Ulster and thus it focused more heavily on mainland, and foreign news.²⁷⁵ This focus made the paper surprisingly outward looking for a paper with such vigorous criticism of local nationalists. Although the *News-Letter* increased its emphasis on domestic affairs, during the nineteenth century, it was still interested in how Ireland was portrayed on the mainland. The *News-Letter* was concerned, throughout period, that a false impression of Irish opinion was being created by a few extreme nationalist journals. This fear was warranted because faced with a paucity of news colonial papers would use what they could find. This led to odd copy links with copy from the Irish nationalist, the *Nation* being reprinted in the conservative Australian newspaper the *Melbourne Argus*.²⁷⁶ The *News-Letter* did not apply the same concerns to what it printed, often expressing views outside that of the base Protestant, or unionist opinion. Later in its 8th September article the *News-Letter* listed the two nationalist papers it thought most guilty of supporting those mutinying, ‘The *Nation* and the *Dundalk Democrat*’. It claimed that the papers were ‘more guilty than the actual perpetrators’ for the reasoning that they rejoiced ‘over the butcheries’ in India. Evidence of the two papers doing so did not appear in the article. What the *Belfast News-Letter* did include was a veiled threat that even in a ‘free’ nation like the United States, an icon of freedom from British rule, anyone behaving like these papers would have ‘had a personal visit from Judge Lynch long ago’.²⁷⁷

These assertions were made consistently during the period of the Rebellion. Papers like the *Belfast News-Letter* published almost weekly attacks against the nationalist press stating how ‘sick’ they were ‘of Sepoyism both at home and abroad’.²⁷⁸ By suggesting that the longer that the Rebellion went on ‘the more wicked treachery of the Home Sepoys seems on the increase’, a direct correlation was made between the nationalists, and the mutineers in

²⁷⁵ Henry Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers, Chapters in the History of Journalism*, vol. 2 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1887), 366.

²⁷⁶ *Melbourne Argus*, 27 November, 1857.

²⁷⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857.

²⁷⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September, 1857.

India.²⁷⁹ Sections of the unionist press presented as ‘disloyal and hellish sentiments’,²⁸⁰ which supposedly increased as the Rebellion continued.²⁸¹ The involvement of *Nation*’s publishers and journalists in the Young Irelander Rebellion added some credence to these allegations. This linkage was not limited to just the *Nation*, the Dublin based *Freeman’s Journal* was ‘nurtured by a committee of United Irishmen’.²⁸² The *Journal* was first published as a Protestant paper in 1763 but with an ownership change it started mixing a Catholic viewpoint with ‘constitutional nationalism’.²⁸³ The paper remained in existence until the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922.

Under the headline ‘Treason in Crayon’, the *News-Letter* complained that the editors of what it termed ‘Ultramontane journals’,²⁸⁴ a term used as an insult by the unionist press, seemed to both ‘take a fiendish delight in contemplating the barbarous cruelties practised by the rebellious Sepoys towards the Europeans placed in their power’.²⁸⁵ The paper continued and claimed that opponent editors ‘contemplate[d] with unmixed satisfaction, the overthrow of British power in India’.²⁸⁶ There was some basis to the *News-Letter*’s claim, as parts of the nationalist press believed that that the British would lose India. Others such as the *Ulsterman* believed that the British would succeed in crushing the rebellion.²⁸⁷ Inconvenient copy in the nationalist press was ignored, the *Freeman’s Journal* reported what it described as the ‘diabolical barbarities of the Indian mutineers’²⁸⁸, but were still accused of supporting them.²⁸⁹ A minor provocative nationalist act could become an empire-wide story, such as the reporting of placards in Cork linking the Rebellion to the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion,

²⁷⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 23 September, 1857.

²⁸⁰ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September, 1857.

²⁸¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 23 September, 1857.

²⁸² Alexander Andrews, *The History of British Journalism: From the Foundation of the Newspaper Press in England to the Repeal of the Stamp Act in 1855, with Sketches of Press Celebrities*, Vol. 1 (New York: Elibron Classics, 1899), 294.

²⁸³ Oram, *The Newspaper Book*, 65.

²⁸⁴ A philosophy within the Roman Catholic Church that places emphasises the powers of the Pope.

²⁸⁵ For example: *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 August, 1857; *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September, 1857.

²⁸⁶ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September, 1857.

²⁸⁷ *Ulsterman*, 8 July, 1857.

²⁸⁸ *Freeman’s Journal*, 8 September, 1857.

²⁸⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

which reached as far as the antipodes.²⁹⁰ The focus then narrowed down to the nationalist press, the Sepoy Press.

The Sepoy Press

While the *News-Letter* embodied an extreme, other Belfast-based unionist journals also sought to link the nationalist press to the rebellious sepoys. Referring to opposing newspapers as ‘sepoy journals’, the ‘Liberal’ *Belfast Daily Mercury* expanded the insult to describe those who wrote for journals as ‘Irish demons who gloat over such atrocities’.²⁹¹ The *Mercury*, which had been first published as the *Belfast Mercury*, shed its usual impartiality on this issue.²⁹² Pre-empting the *News-Letter*, the *Mercury* went on to ask if these journalists did not have ‘fouler minds and blacker hearts than any Sepoy?’²⁹³ This ‘worse than’ argument persisted in the Belfast unionist press well into the next year. The *News-Letter* claimed that articles in the nationalist press were ‘expressive of the sympathy of the authors with the Sepoys of India’, with the *Nation* at the ‘foremost’ of it.²⁹⁴

Both sides expanded their criticism from each other, to the communities that they represented or at least claimed to. Old arguments were repeated but with a new Indian twist. In many Protestant eyes, Ireland and India were linked by rebellion and this view was reflected in the papers they read. Ireland, a ‘thousand years more nearly assimilated’ than India was still conspiring against ‘the detested Saxon’.²⁹⁵ From the other tradition the *Nation* wanted to

²⁹⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 22 May, 1858; *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, 15 March, 1858, amongst others.

²⁹¹ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 5 September, 1857.

²⁹² Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks*, 168.

²⁹³ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 5 September, 1857.

²⁹⁴ *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

²⁹⁵ Alfred Lyall in letter to family, 1857-60, quoted in David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 17.

instil in the Irish a sense of heritage, which affected how it editorialised about the Rebellion linking it to an Irish context.²⁹⁶

Having covered those who worked at nationalist newspapers, the *News-Letter* moved its criticism onwards. Its target was the Catholic clergy, claiming that ‘circumstances have lead [the paper] to believe that Irish Sepoyism is indulged in by the majority of members of the Church of Rome, and by almost all the Romanish priesthood’.²⁹⁷ Nationalist papers responded critiquing the unionist attempt to suggest ‘that the Catholic clergy and the Catholic people prayed night and morning for the success of the mutinous army, and gave God thanks whenever intelligence reach of the murder of an English infant, of the violation of an Englishwoman, or of the overthrow of a British garrison’.²⁹⁸ When the Protestant press claimed that ‘the Cardinal Archbishop’ had ‘sympathy with the brutalities of the Sepoys’ it got the intended reaction. The *Freeman’s Journal* stated that he was being attacked ‘because he had the manliness to express his honest opinions regarding some of the evil deeds of the Indian Government...’ To misrepresent that as support for the mutineers was a ‘foul imputation on his character’.²⁹⁹ The *News-Letter* suggested that as the religious leader India was responsible for those in its flocks rebelling so the Catholic priests in Ireland were for those in theirs, who support the sepoy in Ireland.³⁰⁰ The focus of the alleged ‘sepoyism’ moved from nationalism to religion which provoked a response from British North America. Catholic papers in a number of the settler colonies echoed the ‘creditable rebuke’ that was coming from the Catholic Irish press against these sectarian allegations.³⁰¹ This is evidence of the strong relationship between Catholics as a class of people, and Ireland and its people abroad. This did not hinder the Protestant press from its slights that the rebellious sepoy got the ‘full congratulations of their Romanish friends in Ireland’.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ Christine Kinealy, “At home with the Empire: the example of Ireland”, in Catherine Hall and Sonya O Rose (eds) *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 85.

²⁹⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

²⁹⁸ *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 September, 1857.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

³⁰¹ *The True Witness & Catholic Chronicle*, 18 October, 1857.

³⁰² *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October 1857.

The word ‘Sepoy’ soon became a term of abuse in the form of ‘Irish Sepoy’, and its variants³⁰³, were a common term of abuse towards the Irish and in the British, as in the colonial press.³⁰⁴ It was not just found in copy but also in letters the unionist press chose to print, or in the news from other papers that they chose to reprint.³⁰⁵ This was repeated in places with large Irish communities such as Nova Scotia in Canada.³⁰⁶ The term developed a life of its own with unionist papers such as the *Belfast News-Letter* using it as a pleonastic code for nationalism and thus using it on a regular basis.³⁰⁷ It was also commonly used to target the nationalist press directly. In September 1857 the attacks until then primarily aimed at nationalist papers and their editors, moved onto the journalists. In two editions³⁰⁸ the *Belfast News-Letter* went on the offensive stating that they had to ‘soil’³⁰⁹ their columns with reports of their ‘Sepoyism’ from journalists, whom it described as ‘Monsters in human shape’.³¹⁰ The *News-Letter*, with its usual embellishment, started claiming that they were laughing ‘with diabolical glee as they read how brave men have been hewn to pieces – how young and lovely women have been violated and afterwards slain – how children have endured tortures...’.³¹¹ By September 1857 the nationalist press, clearly annoyed at being called ‘Sepoy journalists’³¹², responded by claiming that the unionist press invented or misrepresented what the other side was printing, and then criticised them for what they had never written. This led the *Freeman’s Journal* to argue that they ‘could understand’ such a unionist press reaction towards them only if ‘it were, indeed, true that the Irish nation

³⁰³ Such as Popish Sepoy, Roman Sepoy, Romanish Sepoyism, Home Sepoyism, and Irish Nanaism.

³⁰⁴ For example, *The London Times*, 28 December, 1857; and the *Glasgow Herald*, 14 October, 1857.

³⁰⁵ For example, the letter of G.W. Smyth printed in the *Belfast News-Letter*, 29 January 1858.

³⁰⁶ Scott W. See, “Variations on a Borderlands Theme: Nativism and Collective Violence in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, in Stephen Hornsby and John Reid (eds) *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons* (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 157-8.

³⁰⁷ For example, the *News-Letter* used the term on average every third day in October 1857, and every week the next month.

³⁰⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857; 15 September, 1857.

³⁰⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 22 September, 1857.

³¹⁰ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857.

³¹¹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857.

³¹² *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 September, 1857.

rejoiced in the brutal murder of British officers by the native Indian troops’, but that was not happening.³¹³

The nationalist press started with denial, reporting that a ‘few obscure and miserable prints have in performance of their contract with the Tory party, promulgated the barbarous doctrine that Indian Sepoyism and Irish patriotism were identical in principle and object’.³¹⁴ This view of a planned project to discredit Irish nationalists reached the letters column. Correspondents to the *Freeman’s Journal* suggested that ‘a government spy, or police officer clothed in the garb of a “patriot”’ was purposely trying to create the impression that nationalists were supporting the sepoys.³¹⁵ This was not too far from the truth, as government and security service money was used to finance supportive papers, overtly through ‘the publication of proclamations and official advertisements’,³¹⁶ or through covert financing.³¹⁷ During this period the *Freeman’s Journal* was a Protestant paper that before a change of ownership received subsidies for the publication of official proclamations.³¹⁸ The second method used was turning things on their head to argue that the ‘real ‘Irish Sepoys’ were the British, and ‘their pitiful mimics’ the unionist press. The *Nation* argued that the sepoys of India were in ‘the hire of England’. That ‘hire’ had been ‘wrung out of the blood and tears of their own kindred’ to be used ‘to slaughter their own fellow countrymen’. The *Nation* ended with a question aimed at the unionists: ‘To what class of Irishmen will that description apply?’³¹⁹ The *Nation* first expanded and then applied the claim to the British barbarity as a whole.³²⁰ The paper then added its own variant of ‘Sepoyism’, that being ‘British Sepoyism’.³²¹ The Protestant Irish were involved in the maintenance of British rule in Ireland, and the Imperial project but they did not see the contribution as negative. It was something that the unionist

³¹³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 September, 1857

³¹⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 September, 1857.

³¹⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 17 October, 1857.

³¹⁶ Marie-Louise Legg, *Ireland: Politics and Society through the Press, 1760-1922* (Reading: Primary Source Microfilm, 2000) <http://microformguides.gale.com/Data/Introductions/10110FM.htm>

³¹⁷ See Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press, circa 1780-1850* (London, Home & Van Thal, 1949), 121.

³¹⁸ Bender, “Mutiny or Freedom Fight”, 94.

³¹⁹ *Nation*, 10 October, 1857.

³²⁰ *Nation*, 12 September, 1857.

³²¹ *Nation*, 21 November, 1857.

press wanted to reinforce to ‘the people of England’ rather than deny.³²² Having morphed the term ‘sepoy’ to fit unionists they then sought to decontaminate the term for themselves. For part of the nationalist community ‘Sepoy’ had become a ‘glorious and honourable title’. Arguing that the sepoy had ‘arisen from his thralldom; he has returned to his allegiance to his country, he no longer strikes *for* his country’s oppressors, but *at* them’, the *Nation* spoke to the Irish that fought for Britain.³²³ While in some Irish, the Rebellion produced an increase in racism³²⁴, in others it was one of the first times that white Europeans saw common cause with non-whites.³²⁵ The same article suggested that the sepoys were fighting for their “‘Immortal Green’”, their Ireland free of the British.³²⁶ It must be noted that while parts of the nationalist press linked themselves with the native population in India, others saw things differently when reports of their behaviour reach Ireland.

The problem for the nationalist press was obvious. As around a half of the East India Company’s European troops were Irish, both Protestant and Catholic, with the addition of substantial numbers of Irish civilians in India, those nationalist papers could easily alienate their readership, if they were too critical, but also alienate their more nationalistic readers if they were not.³²⁷ However nationalist they were in sentiment, it was unlikely that families with sons fighting in India, or with relatives at risk, would agree with using the Rebellion as a way to further the nationalist cause. They would be tempted to agree with the Protestant press that ‘the murderers should be traced, taken, and straightaway hung by the neck until dead’ than praise them.³²⁸ Those who had lost family in India were likely to favour the unionist call for retribution.³²⁹ Readership determined how far a paper was willing to go: the more nationalist the readership, the less likely they were to have a family member in the British or Company forces. This dichotomy between a loyal and involved Catholic populous and an

³²² *Belfast News-Letter*; 7 August, 1857.

³²³ *Nation*, 10 October, 1857.

³²⁴ Robert Miles, *Racism (Key ideas)* (London: Routledge, 1989), 83.

³²⁵ Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 160.

³²⁶ *Nation*, 10 October, 1857.

³²⁷ Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 104.

³²⁸ *Northern Whig*, 6 February, 1858.

³²⁹ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 8 September, 1857.

extreme nationalist press was highlighted in other parts of the Empire which had a substantial Irish population, such as Canada and Australia. The *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, of Victoria in Australia, contrasted in florid language the ‘loyalty and patriotism’ of the ‘vast majority’ of the Irish against the ‘unprincipled, cowardly demagogues’ who wrote for the *Nation* and New York based Irish journals. These journalists were ‘noisy, malicious, conceited, empty-headed creatures who [were] a disgrace to Ireland’.³³⁰ Indeed, the term ‘sepoysism’ eventually became a general insult for those who disrupted society, be it Irish Catholics or those who derailed trains in Canada.³³¹ It was also used to describe troublesome factions in colonial administrations.³³² What would follow was a debate about how the Irish, specifically the Catholics, were being treated in India by the Company and other Europeans. This is what we will look at next.

The Irish in India

The discussion moved into the arena of what was happening to the Irish contingents in the subcontinent. The disagreements between the nationalist and unionist press had a long history but it would be wrong to imagine that it was universal. These internal struggles in the nationalist press produced some cross-community unity last seen at the time of the Famine. Both the nationalist and Protestant press criticised the handling of the famine and the attitude of the British press towards it, especially *The Times*.³³³ This consensus soon collapsed leaving one side making accusations of hyperbole³³⁴ and the other of indifference.³³⁵ Regardless, this willingness still existed to find common cause by the time of the Rebellion. This was partially the standard way of dealing with a common critic or enemy, often the mainland press. It was also in part the product of living in the same land. When they felt that the Catholic press was on the right track, unionist papers happily quoted them. An example of this was when the *Freeman’s Journal* wrote that all Irishmen find in ‘one feeling ... patriotic

³³⁰ *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, 15 January, 1858.

³³¹ *Pilot*, 13 February, 1858.

³³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August, 1860.

³³³ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 24 February, 1847.

³³⁴ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 12 April, 1848.

³³⁵ Bew, *Ireland*, 194.

indignation against the savages who have so outraged our countrymen and countrywomen'.³³⁶ While the *Belfast Daily Mercury*³³⁷ chose to attack the *Nation*'s claims that Catholic Irishmen were regretting joining the army in India directly, it joined forces with the *Dublin Evening Mail* to highlight an article in the *Freeman's Journal* as an effective and 'honest' counter to the fellow nationalist's claims.³³⁸ The *Evening Mail*, which was founded in 1823, represented a more traditional conservatism than the unionist papers of the north. It started as 'ultra-Tory' and was virulently anti-Catholic in its views.³³⁹ Its copy had mellowed by the time of the Rebellion, though it still remained both conservative and Protestant and was willing to accept Company rule may have been causal.³⁴⁰ As the quoted section was published by the *Journal* under the heading 'Commercial Intelligence' and represented the 'feeling in the mercantile world', it may not have been as patriotic as the two unionist papers envisaged it to be.³⁴¹ In an 11th September 1857 article titled 'The Catholic Soldier in India' the *Freeman's Journal* countered these claims, arguing that the Catholic soldier will carry on his long tradition of service in India and 'do his duty with honour and with undaunted courage'. The *Journal* went on to highlight the willingness of the Catholic population to enlist and refill the posts of those killed in India. This for the newspaper was evidence that the 'Catholic population have shown no disloyalty to the throne'. Both claims would have easily countered the negative unionist copy but for what came next. But this universal loyalty was apparently conditional on their presence being needed 'for the safety of their brethren and the defence of the honour of the Irishwoman'.³⁴² Such conditional loyalty was not an argument used only by the *Journal* but was one most used.

The conflicting religious relationship in Ireland was repeated in who ran and defended India. In 1857 there were approximately forty thousand European troops, both the regular British Army, and Company troops, stationed in India. Neither nationality, nor religion had stopped

³³⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 31 August, 1857, quoted in *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 September, 1857.

³³⁷ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 4 September, 1857.

³³⁸ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 2 September, 1857.

³³⁹ Bew, *Ireland*, 228; Oram, *The Newspaper Book*, 49.

³⁴⁰ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 16 October, 1871.

³⁴¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 31 August, 1857.

³⁴² *Freeman's Journal*, 11 September, 1857.

Irishmen forming a large proportion of the European forces in India at the time.³⁴³ This did not prevent sections of the British press claiming the opposite was true. This produced the obvious reaction from the nationalist side, stating that those claims were untrue. In the middle of the nineteenth century Ireland provided nearly as many soldiers, from both sectarian groups, as the rest of the United Kingdoms combined.³⁴⁴ The same could not be said for the administration of India. There was a separation of roles in the Irish involvement in India, between those who did the fighting, and those who did the administration. It is estimated that of the one in twenty Civilians³⁴⁵ from Ireland, the majority were Protestants from the north.³⁴⁶ The numbers of Irishmen recruited into the administration of India increased dramatically in the mid 1800s. A quarter of those recruited to administer India between 1855 and 1863 came from Irish universities, as compared with five percent coming from Ireland in the first half of the century.³⁴⁷ These recruits were still predominately Protestants³⁴⁸ coming from the professional classes.³⁴⁹ Irish universities pressured by the unionist press instituted courses to support such an increase.³⁵⁰ The universities had limited immediate success. In the Empire a class divide between the Irish, Protestant administration and officer classes, and Catholic soldiery and the famine induced diaspora. Ulstermen were prominent in both the army leadership and Indian administration, and their Catholic neighbours were equally involved but in lower positions.

Although it was clear that Irish troops were heavily involved in trying to hold onto India, the debate continued. Stung by the inaccurate criticism that the Irish Catholics were not doing their bit, the *Freeman's Journal* even went as far as to calculate their numbers in comparison

³⁴³ A Hamish Ion, "The empire that prays together stays together: Imperial defence and religion, 1857-1956", in Greg Kennedy *Imperial Defence: The Old World Order, 1856-1956* (Routledge: London, 2007), 197.

³⁴⁴ See also Patrick Cadell, "Irish Soldiers in India", *The Irish Sword*, 1 (1953): 79.

³⁴⁵ European civilians' servants.

³⁴⁶ David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 35.

³⁴⁷ Bernard Cohn, "Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India. 1600-1860", in Ralph Braibanti (ed.), *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 108.

³⁴⁸ Scott B. Cook, "The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian Civil Service, 1855-1914", *Journal of Social History* 20, 3 (1987): 516.

³⁴⁹ Cook, *The Irish Raj*, 515.

³⁵⁰ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 99.

to those from England and Scotland.³⁵¹ The ‘non-sectarian and passionate nationalism of the Nation often hid its logical suggestions inside a covering of hyperbole.’³⁵² Irish Catholic troops were, according to the paper, ‘the great reservoir from which England has but too often and too easily recruited her armies’.³⁵³ The *Freeman’s Journal* emphasised how many Irish Catholics fought in the Rebellion.³⁵⁴ Their loyalty should not be questioned argued the *Nation*, who further stated that they would ‘not prove untrue to Ireland did she need their aid’.³⁵⁵ Conflict inside the European forces in India was not new or limited to the Irish. There was as much animosity between the regular army in India and Company forces, based on class.³⁵⁶

As news of the Rebellion reached Ireland, the *Freeman’s Journal* wrote about the Indian troops fighting with the British. It linked the loyalty of native troops to the success of the campaign, arguing that the British had to be careful in their treatment of the native troops who had not mutinied. The *Journal* summed it up by writing that the ‘hope of England lies in [their] loyalty’. Using repetition to emphasise their point, they argue that on the loyalty of the native forces rested a great deal, because if the Rebellion was to become universal it would be the ‘end to the Indian empire’.³⁵⁷ In this June 1857 article the *Journal* made no overt attempt to link poor treatment of both Irish and Indian troops. That approach would not last for long. The *Journal* and much of the nationalist press found analogies between the British treatment of the Irish, and their treatment of the Indians.³⁵⁸ The *Nation*, the liberal nationalist weekly published in Dublin from 1842, was conceived as a way of promoting ‘nationality of the spirit as well as the letter’.³⁵⁹ It took these analogies and built upon them, by linking past

³⁵¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 September, 1857.

³⁵² Bew, *Ireland*, 154.

³⁵³ *Nation*, 5 September, 1857.

³⁵⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 September, 1857.

³⁵⁵ *Nation*, 10 October, 1857.

³⁵⁶ Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 25.

³⁵⁷ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 June, 1857.

³⁵⁸ *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

³⁵⁹ “The Prospectus of The Nation”, quoted in P.A. Sillard, *The Life of John Mitchel: With an Historical Sketch of the '48 Movement in Ireland* 3rd Edition (Dublin, James Duff, 1908), 3.

atrocities by the British to present ones committed by the rebellious sepoy.³⁶⁰ In response the Protestant press tried to link the nationalist press, and, by association, Catholics in general to the rebellious sepoy in India.

Unable to criticise those Catholics serving in India, parts of the nationalist press took another approach. They started highlighting the possible threats to those the soldiers left behind. The *Nation* started listing the possible threats to those that they left behind, being unable to find work, or becoming the victims of unscrupulous landlords.³⁶¹ Continuing to allude to the possible dangers to those left behind by Irish Catholic casualties, the nationalist press reprinted reports about the apparent poor treatment of Catholic orphans in India and covered the conversion of Catholic widows.³⁶² The nationalist press then moved to examine the conditions of the Irish soldiery. In September 1857 the *Freeman's Journal* was arguing that it was the behaviour of the British authorities towards the Irish Catholics, that was hindering recruitment and thus helping the rebels in India. In an editorial entitled 'The Catholic Soldiers – Religious Equality' the *Freeman's Journal* published its reaction to a *Times* article that suggested Irish support for 'Nena Sahib'. As they did with claims of 'Sepoyism', they reversed the blame. The *Journal* argued that *The Times* did not 'notice the aid given to the Indian mutineers by the authorities at the Horse Guards, and in the Admiralty, and by the British Senate, who seem resolved, by a continuous course of injustice, to place every barrier in their power against the enlistment of thoughtful and prudent Catholic recruits'.³⁶³ At this time their criticism was limited to the British state which was not the governing power in India. The British press unknowingly added to the impression of British contempt for the Irish with a certain tactlessness in some of their reporting. Some writers started linking the British military leaders in India, like Henry Havelock, to Oliver Cromwell, which could only have infuriated Irish Catholics, considering the methods he had used to put down an Irish rebellion in the mid-seventeenth century.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰ *Nation*, 24 October, 1857.

³⁶¹ *Nation*, 29 August, 1857.

³⁶² *Madras Examiner*, 10 June, 1857, quoted in *Freeman's Journal*, 27 July, 1857; *Nation*, 19 December 1857.

³⁶³ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 September, 1857.

³⁶⁴ Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 44-5.

The unionist press saw a way to indirectly challenge the loyalty of the Irish by pointing out the threat that native troops posed. With thousands of Irish troops in India the unionist press started to comment on native troops as a class. They were not to be trusted regardless of their past behaviour, ‘not withstanding the glories in which the Sepoy troops have shared, they have always been looked upon with an eye of distrust by some of the wisest of Indian Statesman’.³⁶⁵ In light of that the British Government was warned about: ‘the necessity of increasing the proportion of British as compared with native forces’.³⁶⁶ It is hard not to read this coming from the *Belfast News-Letter* as a comment on all native forces that the British employed. That would include the Irish. It is universally acknowledged that in the past ‘too much confidence was put in the Sepoys’.³⁶⁷

The cause of the Rebellion for the *Belfast News-Letter* was not the poor treatment of sepoys but rather that they had been allowed too much freedom. This had had the effect of allowing the ‘Bengal army [to] come to regard itself as a praetorian a janissary force, irresponsible, too proud to obey, save as their humour might inspire; too powerful to be punished’.³⁶⁸ Their conversion into an over mighty force whose power should have been curbed was an argument accepted by journals on both sides. No attempt was made in this July 1857 article to portray the sepoys as the Irish. As the Rebellion progressed, though, the *News-Letter* became less restrained. The paper suggested that no ‘kindness can conciliate the Bengal Tiger, and no favours can tame the Romanish wolf’.³⁶⁹ It was not just the sepoys who were being allowed too much freedom. Another supposed betrayal of British ‘generosity’ to the Irish people was nationalist journalists who enjoyed ‘the blessings of British rule, while they so grievously abuse the liberty of the Press’.³⁷⁰ The Protestant press argued that the fact that the nationalist press could publish what they saw as anti-British copy even at a time of emergency ‘was further proof of the liberty granted by the imperial connection’. They also suggested that the

³⁶⁵ *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 July, 1857.

³⁶⁶ *Belfast News-Letter*, 9 July, 1857.

³⁶⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 December, 1857.

³⁶⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July, 1857.

³⁶⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

³⁷⁰ *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 September, 1857.

nationalist press was lucky as other governments would not have been so tolerant during a time of crisis.³⁷¹ With Irish of both persuasions fighting in India it was clear who the nationalist press saw as the dominant player, and the one with the most to lose: ‘The News from India is of a nature in every way calculated to fill the English ...with dread’.³⁷²

Although the unionist press announced that discussion about the causes of the Rebellion was ‘for future consideration’, they happily started to discuss the issues in detail often using them to attack their political opponents.³⁷³ The oldest nationalist newspaper in Ireland, the *Freeman’s Journal*, was clear about who it thought was to blame for what was happening in India, both the East India Company who were on ‘trial, and the verdict is not likely to end in acquittal’. The *Journal* argued that the acquisitive nature of the East India Company, which ‘goes on annexing, robbing, centralising’ would be the cause of its own downfall. They believed that the Company was a monolithic structure that would ‘tumble with its own weight without the aid of revolt at all’.³⁷⁴ Though accepting that the Company had ‘done some good’ it was clear to the *Journal* that ‘evil largely preponderates and we see some of its fruits in anarchy, mutiny, disordered finances, and universal dissatisfaction at home and abroad’.³⁷⁵ The Unionist press did not try and defend the Company as their counterparts in Canada did, but chose to concentrate on the rebellious sepoys.³⁷⁶ These were ‘the 30,000 traitors, to whose guardianship [we] have blindly entrusted an Empire’ who the East India Company had foolishly ‘pampered their persons and their prejudices with an unfounded generosity’.³⁷⁷ They agreed with the nationalists on the ‘imperfect military organisation and command’ of the East India Company.³⁷⁸

³⁷¹ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 4 September, 1857.

³⁷² *Ulsterman*, 29 June, 1857.

³⁷³ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 19 August, 1857.

³⁷⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 22 October, 1857.

³⁷⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 22 October, 1857.

³⁷⁶ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

³⁷⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July, 1857.

³⁷⁸ *Belfast Evening Mercury*, 30 June, 1857.

This was a common Irish view on how the East India Company had ruled India. In the Montreal paper *New Era* its editor Thomas D'Arcy McGee wrote that the Irish 'have disapproved the East India Company's war and aggressions in Hindustan'.³⁷⁹ Regardless of that, McGee, concerned he might be negatively portrayed by the Tory press, was clear that nobody with any decency could support the supposed murders of children and violation of women occurring in India.³⁸⁰ The *True Witness* saw a commonality of purpose over the sectarian divide. It argued it was not a Catholic against Protestant battle, but one of Christian against Hindu and Muslim.³⁸¹ But it also saw a commonality between Catholics based only on their faith. In an editorial the paper argued that 'Catholicity is of no nation, of no particular shade of politics'.³⁸² Both sides could also agree on a negative accepting that the grease used on cartridges was only the 'immediate cause'³⁸³ for the Rebellion, and not the most important. The *Ulsterman* simply claimed that the 'English' had 'wantonly provoked' the rebellion without a full explanation as to why.³⁸⁴ That was something that they would deal in detail with later. The short-lived Belfast based newspaper aimed at the Roman Catholics of the region existed as the *Nation* of Ulster.³⁸⁵ Those who ran it showed the curious cross-pollination between the communities of the Ulster in their press. The proprietor and editor of the *Ulsterman*, Denis Holland, had unionist origins having edited *the Northern Whig* for a short time. The *Northern Whig*, founded in Belfast in 1823, was unionist, but seen as 'Pro-Roman Catholic'³⁸⁶ by parts of the Protestant press in Ulster. The unionist press accepted that mistakes had been made in India, but not relating to the treatment of the native population. The *Belfast News-Letter* suggested that Bengal had been 'almost destitute of European troops' and that had created a perfect situation for revolt. The *News-Letter* continued stating that this was a 'grand blunder no one defends'.³⁸⁷ This was just an aspect of the poor way

³⁷⁹ *New Era*, 24 September, 1857.

³⁸⁰ *New Era*, 24 September, 1857.

³⁸¹ *True Witness*, 25 September, 1857.

³⁸² *True Witness*, 18 June, 1858.

³⁸³ *Ulsterman*, 1 July, 1857.

³⁸⁴ *Ulsterman*, 8 July, 1857.

³⁸⁵ A.T. Harrison (ed.), *Graham India Mutiny Papers* (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1980), 144.

³⁸⁶ *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 October, 1857.

³⁸⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 19 December, 1857.

India was supposedly being administered and would, as we will now see how, be linked to British rule in Ireland.

‘English Misrule of India’³⁸⁸

One cause of the Rebellion that the nationalist press was agreed upon was the British permitting a commercial company to rule India. This method of control was not novel or one that would end with the Rebellion. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries commercial interests expanded areas under their control.³⁸⁹ In India the *Ulsterman* argued that the British had ‘flung a great empire and a people into the hands of a sordid commercial company to be plundered...’³⁹⁰ They clearly delineated which part of Irish society would object to the ‘English misrule of India’, the Catholics. It was something that ‘the Catholic people of Ireland will never sanction it’. This was a message the *Ulsterman* deemed so important that they repeated it in the same article, defining ‘the misrule of India’ as a ‘gigantic crime, which will never receive the sanction of the Catholic people of Ireland’.³⁹¹ This ‘misrule’ was, as the *Ulsterman* claimed, with its usual flair for the dramatic ‘a hideous abomination, with God’s curse upon it’.³⁹² This critical view of Company rule was not uncommon, but rarely expressed elsewhere in such colourful language. The ‘Whig’ wing of unionism concentrated on the need to reorganise how India was run. The *Belfast Daily Mercury* commented on the East India Company’s ‘imperfect military organisation and command’ in India and argued for direct control by the British Government.³⁹³ In this they echoed what was becoming the established view on the mainland.

A litany of accusations about the British treatment of their native forces and the general population started to fill the nationalist press. On the day that Nana Sahib was proclaimed the

³⁸⁸ *Ulsterman*, 28 October, 1857.

³⁸⁹ Headrick, *The Tools of Empire*, 206.

³⁹⁰ *Ulsterman*, 29 July, 1857.

³⁹¹ *Ulsterman*, 28 October, 1857.

³⁹² *Ulsterman*, 28 October, 1857.

³⁹³ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 30 June, 1857.

new Peshwa of Bithur, an editorial in the *Ulsterman*, which had isolated itself from the Protestant and liberal press of Belfast by refusing to welcome Queen Victoria's 1853 visit, stated that 'the English in India treat the natives as dogs; even dogs will turn and bite when they are so cruelly used'.³⁹⁴ Later they continued their criticism claiming that the 'English neglected India' and that they 'despised the Indians'. The behaviour of the sepoys was not ignored. The paper also reported in its 'Summary of News' the general destruction of property, and the killings of Europeans, regardless of age or sex by the 'rebellious soldiers'.³⁹⁵ The *Ulsterman* argued that what had stopped the English from winning the affection of the native populations had been their poor behaviour towards them. The paper claimed that the British had isolated themselves from the indigenous society, regarding them with contempt.³⁹⁶ Things were not as clear cut as the Irish soldiery had a reputation for being more racist towards minorities than their mainland colleagues.³⁹⁷ Such a progression could easily be applied to Ireland and the paper hoped that their readers would do so. It was the expected response with so many of the nationalist papers trying to create comparisons between the two.

The increased number of stories, at first doubted, led to a change in how the nationalist press reported the Rebellion, as it was difficult to support rebels who were acting in such a way and that part of their readership was the Irish families of those in peril overseas.

Atrocities

The *Ulsterman* hoped that its readers would see comparisons between India with Ireland, and Indians with Irish. Difficulties with this strategy emerged when reports of Indian atrocities started to appear in the press. With the increasing reports of 'ferocities' flooding in, the *Ulsterman* had to nuance its approach. This it did but only slightly. While the paper pitied

³⁹⁴ *Ulsterman*, 1 July, 1857.

³⁹⁵ *Ulsterman*, 1 July, 1857.

³⁹⁶ *Ulsterman*, 21 September, 1857.

³⁹⁷ Michael Holmes, "The Irish and India: Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism", in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 241-2.

‘the victims of those ferocities’ it also cast doubt on the veracity of many of the reports of what was happening in India. It was suggested by the *Ulsterman* that ‘the accounts of [atrocities] were wilfully and grossly exaggerated’ and knew who to blame, ‘the lying servants of the East India Company’.³⁹⁸ This came in late October, even after there was general acceptance on both sides that atrocities were happening in India. Even considering ‘exaggerated descriptions’ of massacres at Delhi the less fervent *Journal* had earlier accepted that the situation was ‘a great crisis’.³⁹⁹ Attempting to link the two the *Nation* equated Company rule to the tenant system at home.⁴⁰⁰

As the reports of murders, real or invented, started to come in, the earlier nationalist copy was used effectively against them. What had first appeared as simple rebels turned into something a lot less palatable. When the first reports of the Rebellion arrived in Ireland the *Nation* saw possibilities in what was happening. Although there were reports of violence towards non-combatants they were not as detailed and universal as they would become. That produced a period in which the nationalist press could view the Rebellion as an analogy to their own situation. The *Nation* asked that after ‘thirty thousand Sepoys have flung [Britain’s] authority to the winds’ could ‘such a day ever arise for Ireland?’⁴⁰¹ It was hardly a subtle approach, but one that could be sustained when the reports indicated a simple mutiny. By September 1857 the situation had changed and that allowed the unionists to link the *Nation*’s journalists to a murderer of women and children. Summarising the ‘Home Sepoyism’ of the *Nation* they ended, ‘and thus speaks the newspaper, which has ever exhibited a frantic desire to do to British power, at Dublin, what Nana [Sahib] would do for that power in Delhi...’⁴⁰² There was no wonder that the *News-Letter* saw Sahib, someone it believed had betrayed from within, as the perfect person to link the *Nation* to. The nationalist press during this period sought to criticise the methods but not the purpose. The *Freeman’s Journal* suggested that the rebels’ case was worthy of merit. It argued that they had just a complaint regardless of ‘the means of redress resorted to’.⁴⁰³ The paper accepted that atrocities had ‘deprived [the

³⁹⁸ *Ulsterman*, 28 October, 1857.

³⁹⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 June, 1857.

⁴⁰⁰ *Nation*, 6 September, 1857.

⁴⁰¹ *Nation*; 18 July, 1857.

⁴⁰² *Belfast News-Letter*, 23 September, 1857.

⁴⁰³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

rebellious sepoy] of the sympathy' which the journal believed would 'otherwise attend the efforts of an injured race'.⁴⁰⁴

The approach of the *Nation* engendered comment in other colonies such as Victoria in Australia. The *Ballarat Star* could not accept the *Nation*'s description of the Indian rebels as patriots, as it was alien to the Indian 'race' and they were simply out to take whatever they could from European and Indian alike.⁴⁰⁵ The *Star* argued that 'license, rapine, and plunder were the chief inducements' of the rebels not patriotic fervour.⁴⁰⁶ A week later the same paper was outlining a dispute the *Melbourne Age* was having with the *Argus* over supposed copy of 'a violent and maniacal anti-English character' from the *Nation*. The *Age* argued that it was in fact from the *Dundalk Democrat*. The *Argus* responded by reprinting copy from the *Nation* and Irish American journals to back up its claims.⁴⁰⁷ The *Star* then reprinted these extracts.⁴⁰⁸ The *Argus* saw the *Nation* as 'cowardly' rejoicing at bad news from India but the *Freeman's Journal* accepting the need for British success.⁴⁰⁹

There was a concern on the nationalist side, voiced by the *Ulsterman* in July 1857, that the authorities would not take the time to investigate matters properly and just act.⁴¹⁰ On the unionist side both papers and readers agreed that enquiring into the causes of the Rebellion was a logical response. But it was something to do at a later stage, 'future consideration', as after house fire an owner 'will naturally inquire into the causes' after it is extinguished, thus after the Rebellion had ended there will be 'ample time and opportunity to consider and remove the causes'.⁴¹¹ This was an attitude that the Protestant press were happy to support.

⁴⁰⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ballarat Star*, 19 November, 1857.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ballarat Star*, 19 November, 1857.

⁴⁰⁷ *Melbourne Argus*, 20 November, 1857.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ballarat Star*, 21 November, 1857.

⁴⁰⁹ *Melbourne Argus*, 17 November, 1857.

⁴¹⁰ *Ulsterman*, 8 July, 1857.

⁴¹¹ Letter to Editor, *Dublin Evening Mail*, 19 August, 1857.

The *Freeman's Journal* expressed happiness that the conflict in India was now going the British way as 'every man who desires to have a speedy end to this terrible war'.⁴¹² But this was happiness tinged with regret, not about the innocents murdered, but rather about the 'mad career into which an oppressed people have been driven'. This argument that the British, as locally, were in some part responsible for their 'brutalities of which they have been guilty towards inoffensive [European] women and children'.⁴¹³

Concerned that the stories of atrocities were going to be used to justify the extremes of the European side in India, and be used to stifle debate in Ireland, the *Freeman's Journal* sought not to limit the condemnation of 'unprovoked barbarities' to the sepoys, but open it up to both sides. It was only reasonable to accept that what is 'brutal in the one is equally brutal in the other'. While such an argument would attract the ire of a few and produce the standard claims of 'Sepoyism' it was not out of line with sections of the British press. The *Journal* then went on to argue that while the sepoy 'acts under the influence of a cruel and remorseless Paganism, which inculcates the shedding of Christian blood as a duty' the European has no such excuse for his actions. The training he has had and the discipline instilled in him should stop him from copying 'the Sepoy in assassination'. They urged that no 'such dishonour should attach [itself] to British arms' and the Irish fighting with them.⁴¹⁴ Ironically it was the Irish troops that were known for their brutality in India.⁴¹⁵

Such subtlety was not universal in the nationalist camp. The journalists of the *Ulsterman* were still linking the 'natives' of India, who were 'fighting for dear life and liberty' against the British, with their Irish counterparts. The British on the other hand were fighting 'for the right of Sovereignty and Oppression'⁴¹⁶ at the end of 1857. But this time there could be no doubt how Europeans were suffering in India. The *Nation* was even less equivocal, suggesting that the British display 'a spirit of revenge and ferocity to the fullest extent as

⁴¹² *Freeman's Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

⁴¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

⁴¹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 October, 1857.

⁴¹⁵ Holmes, *Irish and India*, 237.

⁴¹⁶ *Ulsterman*, 10 December, 1857.

savage as the barbarian sepoy'⁴¹⁷, even if many involved were actually Irish. The unionist press of Ulster saw any British violence as a method of balancing the measure, the *Belfast Daily Mercury* saw any retribution as compensating for atrocities.⁴¹⁸

For the nationalist press it was 'the mutiny of the hired soldiers of England' who like the Irishmen in the British forces engaged 'themselves in her service, who took her wages, who learned the art of warfare from her, and again and again swore fealty to British rule, and obedience to the officers under whom they served'.⁴¹⁹ The *Journal* wanted to make it clear that it was these 'men and not the Indian people have risen'.⁴²⁰ Those they had paid to fight for them were now fighting against them. The Protestant press saw a further link between the Irish nationalists and the sepoys of India through their betrayal. Ireland 'the abyss of popish ingratitude'⁴²¹ where rebellion was a sign of ingratitude, from those who like the sepoys in India could only 'express their thanklessness through rebellion'.⁴²²

The nationalist press were presented with a further difficulty in their criticism of British imperialism in that the Irish were as involved in the process as all the others parts of the Kingdom.

Coloniser and Colony

Like others at the periphery, the Irish were both a 'colonising as well as colonised people', making criticism a double-edged sword.⁴²³ They were a partner in the endeavour that was the

⁴¹⁷ *Nation*, 12 September, 1857.

⁴¹⁸ *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 8 September, 1857.

⁴¹⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 October, 1857.

⁴²⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 October, 1857.

⁴²¹ *Church and State*, 29 January, 1847.

⁴²² Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press 1798–1882* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 2004), 126-7.

⁴²³ Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A Short History of British Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1995), xii.

British Empire, although a junior one and as such had to contend with thousands of their countrymen doing to another country what they criticised the British for doing to Ireland.⁴²⁴ This participation of Catholics in India made universal criticism of British actions difficult for the nationalist press, as they risked alienating sections of their readership. To solve this dilemma the *Nation* attempted to be supportive of the Irish Catholics fighting for their lives in India, but also to criticise involvement in India. An example of this was when they memorialised the dead, which they used as an opportunity to criticise the British. Another tactic that the nationalist press used was to try and discourage Catholics to get involved in Britain's 'blood-brought Empire'⁴²⁵ in part as a way to show Ireland's separation from the rest of Britain.⁴²⁶ The more conservative⁴²⁷ 'constitutional Nationalism'⁴²⁸ of the *Freeman's Journal* was an easier fit to that task. The *Journal's* approach involved concentrating on Irish Catholic contribution to the forces in India.⁴²⁹ Protestant newspapers found themselves in the peculiar position of praising individual Catholics who served in India, whilst the more fervent in their ranks were attacking Catholics as a class of people. The problem for both sides was that 'without Irishmen, the rampant growth of Britain's empire at this stage would scarcely have been possible'.⁴³⁰ Neither could easily criticise the Irish Catholics in India. The *Nation* took every opportunity it could to irritate their opponents without considering the effect it might have on its readers with family there. They suggested that the lack of information was because those in India were 'hiding as they are in nooks and corners or running about the country at the top of their speed, seeking for protection and safety'.⁴³¹

Religion and class became entangled as the Irish officer class was generally drawn from the Anglo-Irish and Protestant while the soldiery was Catholic, repeating in microcosm the situation in Ireland. Pride in the Irish military leadership in India trumped anti-imperialism.

⁴²⁴ Liam Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast: Queen's University, 1996), 176.

⁴²⁵ *Nation*, 10 October, 1857.

⁴²⁶ *Nation*, 5 September, 1857.

⁴²⁷ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 94.

⁴²⁸ Oram, *The Newspaper Book*, 65.

⁴²⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 31 September, 1857.

⁴³⁰ Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 310.

⁴³¹ *Nation*, 22 August, 1857.

The *Freeman's Journal* reprinted the *Times*' sketches of the military and civilian leadership in India concentrating on those who were Irish.⁴³² The nationalist press was concerned about how the Irish were being treated in the armed forces. They reported the apparent poor treatment of Catholics serving in India and it was suggested that hearing of such treatment would 'damp the ardour' of any possible Catholic recruits.⁴³³ This was seen in a negative way by the unionist press. The *Dublin Evening Mail* suggested that these attempts by the 'Nation and its fellow-travellers' to put people off volunteering for service in India was being ignored.⁴³⁴ The *Nation* had already suggested that was in part because of poverty, but accepted that that was not always the only reason.⁴³⁵ Again the nationalist press sought to link perceived religious persecution, and the effect it had on the 'hired soldiers' in the British employ, both Indian and by implication Irish. Ironically the *Nation* itself was attempting to dampen the ardour of Catholic recruits by suggesting that while they were in India their families would be face difficulties.⁴³⁶ Such religious persecution was alleged to not just be limited to India, the *Freeman's Journal* reported claims that Irish Catholic troops in the Cape Colony, to head to India, were being persecuted.

The *Freeman's Journal* also claimed that a correspondent had told it that Catholics were being forced to attend Protestant services or lose a day's pay.⁴³⁷ To avoid claims that the story was invented the *Journal* vouched for the credibility of its source. It was not just Catholic soldiers that were being treated badly in the eyes of the nationalist press, but their clergy too, the 'condition of the Catholic Clergy in India is universally admitted to be unworthy of the East India Company'.⁴³⁸ Although capable of suggesting that this was due to anti Catholic prejudice the *Freeman's Journal* claimed that they had 'never heard any justification for placing [Catholic priests] on a lower level than the established clergy'.⁴³⁹ This perceived poor treatment of Catholic priests was coupled with the paucity of them in

⁴³² *Freeman's Journal*, 14 November, 1857.

⁴³³ *Nation*, 31 October, 1857.

⁴³⁴ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 9 October, 1857.

⁴³⁵ *Nation*, 5 September, 1857.

⁴³⁶ *Nation*, 29 August, 1857.

⁴³⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 27 August, 1857.

⁴³⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 November, 1857.

⁴³⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 November, 1857.

India, something the *Freeman's Journal* saw as intentional. The *Journal* argued that Catholic clergy found 'no place on the muster roll' in the armies in India.⁴⁴⁰ This lack of Catholic priests with the Irish troops had become a matter of concern to Catholics in other parts of the empire.⁴⁴¹ Discrimination based on religion was also seen as analogous between Ireland and India. In both locations the Protestant British were trying to persuade the native populations to change their religious beliefs. There was concern in the nationalist press that this was all part of a process to convert Catholics, or at least to bring them into a British whole. This fear was not novel. As early as 1843 the *Nation* editorialised that service in the British Army was designed 'to anglicize the Irish soldier, and make him prefer the tyrant of Ireland to Ireland's self'.⁴⁴² This desire to convert was not limited to the Irish, or in fact to the Protestants. Under the headline 'English Proselytism in India' the *Ulsterman* attacked the English for 'bullying' Indians into becoming 'Protestant Christians'.⁴⁴³ Things would have been different if it was Roman Catholic 'Proselytism' and a Catholic government, with the *Nation* reprinting the claims of the Bishop of Almira that he 'would promise that within twenty years India would be wholly Christian'.⁴⁴⁴ The irony was that although they had been excluded for many decades by the East India Company, along with their Protestant colleagues, Catholic missionaries had been in India for over twenty years prior to the Rebellion. Though common prior to the East India Company take over Catholic missionaries did not reappear in India until the relaxing of anti-Catholic measures in the 1830s and a willingness by the Company to allow missionaries of either doctrine.⁴⁴⁵ The suggestion was that religious assimilation had been rejected both in Ireland and in India. Missionary work in India was acceptable to both sides as long as it was their missionaries. The *Nation* was clear, Protestant evangelism as a direct cause of the Rebellion.⁴⁴⁶ This view was supported by conservative papers like *Melbourne's Argus*⁴⁴⁷ or the *Quebec Gazette*.⁴⁴⁸ The failure to Christianise was not just an

⁴⁴⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 27 August 1857.

⁴⁴¹ *The True Witness & Catholic Chronicle*, 30 October, 1857.

⁴⁴² *Nation*, 13 May, 1843.

⁴⁴³ *Ulsterman*, 8 July, 1857.

⁴⁴⁴ Speech of Bishop of Almira reported in *Wexford People*, reprinted in *Nation*, 24 October, 1857.

⁴⁴⁵ Robert Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 350-1.

⁴⁴⁶ *Nation*, 22 August, 1857.

⁴⁴⁷ *Melbourne Argus*, 14 July, 1857.

⁴⁴⁸ *Quebec Gazette*, 18 November, 1857.

issue in Ireland, the Catholic and Protestant press in other colonies fought similar battles in their respective papers.

The Catholic Irish soldier needed the assurance that he would be treated ‘equal to his Protestant comrade’ and be given the same religious freedoms that they enjoyed.⁴⁴⁹ The belief was that the British had treated Catholics in their armed forces worse than Hindus and the *Journal* wanted to know why. There was a history, at least in nationalist eyes, of such assurances having been given during war only to be broken in peacetime. The *Freeman’s Journal* saw a breach of trust in the promises that were made by ‘persons in high office’ when ‘England was engaged in deadly combat with Russia’ during the Crimean War. The promises made ‘while the strong arm of the Catholic soldier seemed essential to [Britain’s] safety’ not to ignore Catholic sentiment had been quickly broken when peace arrived.⁴⁵⁰ Such a breach of promise over religious toleration was not just limited to Catholics. The *Freeman’s Journal* reported similar behaviour by the Company towards ‘Hindoos’.⁴⁵¹ Another separation between Catholic and Protestant occurred on October 7, 1857, the ‘day of humiliation and prayer’ instigated by Queen Victoria. Unsurprisingly Roman Catholics did not observe this Protestant based event. This was misrepresented as ‘broadly and plainly showing that the clergy and the people of the Romish church do not recognise the command of our Protestant Queen’. This meant that Roman Catholics cared ‘not to show that feel not for the victims of the revolting Sepoys’.⁴⁵²

The *Nation* was accusing the ‘English’ of everything it could think of while raising the cause of the Indian rebels. Publishing ‘An Irishman’s Lament’ which was an adaptation of the traditional Irish folk song ‘*The Shan Van Vocht*’ which highlighted what it claimed were ‘England’s lies, and England’s threats’. The lament suggests that the Rebellion was the result of English oppression, ‘In Oppression’s dying wail; well may England kneel all pale’ and linked India and Ireland directly and by use of the ballad form.⁴⁵³ A few weeks later the

⁴⁴⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 11 September, 1857.

⁴⁵⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 27 August, 1857.

⁴⁵¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 14 August, 1857.

⁴⁵² *Belfast News-Letter*, 8 October, 1857.

⁴⁵³ *Nation*, 22 August, 1857.

Nation was claiming that all over ‘Europe there is rejoicing at the overthrow of British aggression in India; all over Ireland there is a feeling that every Rajah who revolts is worth a dozen members in the British Parliament’.⁴⁵⁴

This ultimately produced a reaction. That there was ‘no censorship of the domestic press...and better that it should be so, on general and public grounds’ was a view both groups agreed on.⁴⁵⁵ Freedom from censorship by the state was unacceptable, self censorship was something actively sought. Local groups, mostly unionist, sought to remove offending copy from public and commercial newsrooms. Using British and unionist anger over ‘articles written since the Indian mutiny was announced’ by the *Nation* as a justification a petition started being circulated calling for the paper to be ‘struck off the list of papers received’ into the Commercial News Room in Belfast.⁴⁵⁶ The *News-Letter* quickly took on the case stating how pleased they were that that was happening. It argued that the petition was justified because the *Nation*, ‘this leader of Sepoy journalism’, had misrepresented the character of Irishmen and by tolerating it they had given the impression that they supported its claims. Expelling the *Nation* would correct this apparent falsehood⁴⁵⁷, and prove the loyalty of the Irish.⁴⁵⁸ This concern that the more extreme copy of the nationalist press might be seen elsewhere, as indicative of the opinion of the Irish as a whole had been a fear of the *News-Letter* for some time. These actions may in part be explained by the heightened sectarian tensions prevalent in Belfast at the time. In August the *News-Letter* wrote that they ‘should be glad if the people of England, also, were aware of the kind of Irish eloquence, Irish loyalty, and Irish patriotism’.⁴⁵⁹ As the Commercial News Room was a predominately Protestant institution the paper assumed that the *Nation* would be excluded.⁴⁶⁰ An absence of a gloating editorial from the *News-Letter* suggests the proposal may not have received the popular support the paper expected. As this approach was limited to the *Nation* other nationalist

⁴⁵⁴ *Nation*, 6 September, 1857.

⁴⁵⁵ *Belfast News-Letter*; 7 August, 1857; 15 August, 1857.

⁴⁵⁶ *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 January, 1858.

⁴⁵⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 15 January, 1858.

⁴⁵⁸ *Belfast News-Letter*, 18 January, 1858.

⁴⁵⁹ *Belfast News-Letter*, 7 August, 1857.

⁴⁶⁰ *Belfast News-Letter* of 27 October, 1857 estimated the committee of the Commercial News Room consisted of 14 Protestant, and 2 Catholic, and the subscribers were 645 Protestant, 25 Catholic.

papers escaped any such censure. In his contemporary analysis of the Victorian press, Bourne Fox suggests that the *Nation*, along with the *Freeman's Journal*, were considered 'dangerous and reprehensible' possibly explaining why the former may have been treated in this unique way.⁴⁶¹ The *Nation* was ultimately expelled from other news rooms in Ulster.⁴⁶²

The unionists who feared that those on the mainland would get the wrong impression of Irish opinion had cause for concern. The extremes of local copy quickly crossed the Irish Sea and were reported in mainland papers, creating a misleading impression. The belief that the Irish Catholic press was using what was happening in India to create 'mischief' went as high as Palmerston, who wrote to the Secretary of State for War saying, 'they are praising the mutineers and calling upon the Irish to follow their example'. Palmerston's solution, in language strangely reminiscent of, though in reverse, parts of the nationalist press, was to deter any possible uprising 'by showing that we have in Ireland a sufficient Saxon force to make any movement on the part of the Celts perfectly helpless'.⁴⁶³ The nationalist press had already noticed this possible weakness, but seen it as something to criticise not abuse.

Conclusion

The confused relationships between Ireland and Britain and the communities of the island were consistently altering and this was expressed in the newspapers of Ireland. The issue over the nature of Ireland's place in the empire, a hotly debated issue even today,⁴⁶⁴ as colony or part of the metropole, became easily discussed by analogy to India and the Rebellion.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ Henry Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers, Chapters in the History of Journalism*, Vol 2 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1887), 366.

⁴⁶² *Lyttelton Times*, 17 February, 1858.

⁴⁶³ Quoted in E. David Steele, *Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant-Right and Nationality, 1865-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 37.

⁴⁶⁴ Christine Kinealy, "At home with the Empire: the example of Ireland", in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 79-81.

⁴⁶⁵ See Barbara Bush, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism* (London: Pearson, 2006), 67.

There was an acceptance on both sides that Ireland had been a colony at foundation,⁴⁶⁶ but that its status had altered, although in some eyes it remained a colony.⁴⁶⁷ This disagreement over past formations of Ireland's status was indicative of the different viewpoints from which the Irish viewed their island. The Irish, both colonised and coloniser, found themselves in a divided position.⁴⁶⁸ Jill Bender in her summary of her examination of the Irish press' reaction to the Rebellion concludes that this question was never adequately answered even though the Rebellion gave the Irish a chance to 'voice their opinions' about Ireland's place in the empire.⁴⁶⁹ This multitude of new voices simply added to the confusion. An explanation of this confusion might be that each group had their own answer. It can be argued that while the Protestant population in Ireland, including those writing for and to their newspapers, linked their identity to Britain, and thus the Empire, the nationalist saw themselves as separate even to those involved in the imperial project. Was this a simple case of two opposites? This is too straightforward an analysis. Both sides had to nuance their reporting to fit the reality of events, not their agendas, and in doing so sometimes found themselves having in part to justify what they despised. The clearest example of that was the balance the nationalist press had to draw between seeking to criticise British imperialism and supporting the Irish in India. Whilst the nationalist press presented in various forms a simplistic message, British mistreatment of subject populations, wherever they were, caused events like the Rebellion. Ireland's status and place in the empire was determined by the eye of the beholder, and thus the answers given were as varied as the Irish were. For the Protestant press in Ireland, Catholic was synonymous with the native Irish. The nationalists suggested that the British damaged their chances of suppressing them as it alienated members of, and possible recruits to their armed forces. Although the Protestant press suggested that an uprising was imminent, the Rebellion period passed with not a whimper of rebellion in Ireland. While a single definite answer did not emerge, every possible connotation was discussed. This was the sign of a developed press, complexity equalling societal maturity.

⁴⁶⁶ E.g. *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 October, 1857.

⁴⁶⁷ See Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 43-64 for a discussion of Irish nationalism and colonialism.

⁴⁶⁸ See Hiram Morgan, "Empire-Building an Uncomfortable Irish Heritage", *The Linen Hall Review*, 10, 2 (1993): 8-11.

⁴⁶⁹ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 107-8.

What the reporting of the Rebellion does reveal are the positions of the papers who claimed to represent the two main groups, nationalist and unionist. The unionist press encompassed views from the more extreme, advocated by the likes of the *Belfast News-Letter*, to the *Belfast Daily Mercury* which supported some of the change agenda for India advocated by the nationalists.⁴⁷⁰ The *Belfast News-Letter* took every opportunity, however specious, it could to criticise the nationalist and ‘Whig’ press. It saved its real venom for the *Nation*. Such an approach was not just limited to the extremes of unionism. The *Ulsterman* took a similar but opposite approach to the *News-Letter*. Commonalties existed not about message but in the way they were expressed. These tended to be geographic. Both the unionist and nationalist voices coming from Ulster tended to be more extreme, than those from Dublin, but with notable exceptions such as the *Nation*. In regions which had a large Protestant population to react for or against created extremes. Papers that purported to express the opinions of certain groups often only appealed to small sections of those. Writing only thirty years later Bourne Fox, in his summary of Victorian journalism, suggested that both the *Nation* and the *Freeman’s Journal* was read ‘even by Liberals, with horror and resentment’.⁴⁷¹ Although his view holds a certain bias, sections of the nationalist community found it hard to identify with the copy from those two papers. Their circulation, though, suggests that many did. There was a clear division over how the Rebellion should be quelled, with the unionist press advocating hard measures, then an examination of the causes, and the nationalists advocating restraint coupled with a full inquiry.

Both sides played out old arguments and animosities, using the news from India as an arena in which to do it in. The Rebellion gave the Irish nationalist press an opportunity to examine Ireland’s place and status in the British Empire, but in doing so it laid itself open to allegations of disloyalty and siding with the enemy. They used the Rebellion as a way to attack their opponents, whether they were governments, newspapers, or other groups in Irish society.⁴⁷² Parallels were established with varying levels of effectiveness between both British rule in Ireland and India, and the native response to that rule. This was not something

⁴⁷⁰ Bender, *Mutiny or Freedom Fight*, 107.

⁴⁷¹ Henry Fox Bourne, *English Newspapers, Chapters in the History of Journalism*, vol. 2 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1887), 366.

⁴⁷² Bender, *Mutiny or Freedom Fight*, 107.

unique to the Rebellion with examples of similar language being used before and after the events of the late 1850s. A single view simply could not emerge from such a disparate group of voices. In an age of limited technology, newspapers were the sole means of mass communication and thus the format in which political and social battles were fought. The Rebellion would confirm that Ireland was a land of different forms of Irishnesses.

The debate about Irishness and what position the Irish should take towards the empire was not limited to Ireland. Other colonies with an Irish population experienced similar discussions. In settler colonies newspapers not only expressed the views of their readers, but also in some occasions helped to form it. Newspapers created a sense of identity internally inside immigrant groups, but also across such groups when a cause took centre stage. A comparable example of this can be found in the provinces of British North America in the fifty years before the Rebellion. The reaction and involvement of the local press to these events would mirror that to the Rebellion. The same arguments were used, the same prejudices fed, and the same sides taken.

The next chapter will examine how the Rebellion offered a chance for colonies both to contribute to the imperial effort, but also to establish their independence from local authorities deemed inappropriate.

Chapter 3: Settled Colonies and Company Lands: Place and Position in the Empire

This chapter will investigate the popular sentiments expressed in the colonial press, regarding the place of their colonies in the empire, through how they felt that they could contribute at a time of Imperial crisis. There was an initial, almost universal, desire to support those in India in the English language press, with other newspapers that served minorities of other languages showing more reticence. The desire to aid would initially lack specifics and when those appeared, the suggested modes of support produced disagreement.

Each suggested contribution had its downside to some section of the community. As debated in British North America a colony could raise a regiment to fight in India, but that would be costly and risk denuding the settlement of labour necessary for its development. It might also place the settlement in danger from native, minority or external threats. It would also show how minority communities, like French Canadians, would not see the Rebellion as their fight but highlighting internal disagreements that already existed. The colonies of the Cape and Natal saw the Rebellion as a way of contributing troops and material to aid in suppressing the rebels in India. Proud of their contributions but there were issues of denuding the colonies of labour and the essentials they needed for economic development. In the colonies of Australia money might be donated to relieve the suffering of those Europeans in India, but it should come from private not public funds. Such fundraising would also be a source of criticism when a perception developed, for some, that not enough money was being raised and that would reflect poorly on the colony. Though necessary the costs of suppressing the Rebellion could be used as further justification for a call for better and localised administration.

A desire to provide assistance in the suppression of the Rebellion was countered by concerns over what doing so might entail to each settlement. Each would bring up domestic issues in response. Through a series of examples this, supportive in general but more complex a reaction in specifics, is a phenomenon that will be examined.

Raising A Regiment: British North America

As shown in previous chapters, some saw the Rebellion as a forum in which to play out old disagreements, whilst others wanted to contribute, often from what some might have seen as unlikely parts of the community, some of whom might be seen as a threat. One of the most common ways found, for making such a positive contribution, was to raise troops locally to fight in the subcontinent.

British North America was a land with a substantial suspect alien population that had recently been involved in major rebellions with an aggressive and belligerent southern neighbour and an existing set of internal disagreements in the British Isles origin population. It was also a land that after the War of 1812 with the United States, though it had not developed a sense of nationalism, had amply proven itself to be ‘a loyal, worthy component of the British Empire’.⁴⁷³ The two rebellions that followed cast doubt on that image. The Rebellion was a chance to review the spirit of 1812, with several voices off, presenting criticism to be joined by usually more conciliatory ones.

In British North America a drive developed to raise a regiment from the population with British Isles origins, expanding to include those of French descent. Whilst European troops were being raised to subdue the Rebellion, other sources of recruitment were suggested. It was proposed that a ‘colored’ regiment be raised, an idea that was supported by the then British Prime Minister Palmerston and by the black community themselves. This regiment would never materialise.⁴⁷⁴ The motivation for volunteering was not always patriotic but

⁴⁷³ Troy Beckham, *The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812*, (New York: Oxford University Press New York, 2012), 135.

⁴⁷⁴ *Quebec Gazette*, 16 October, 1857, Palmerston to Panmure, 25 September 1857, in *Panmure Papers*, Volume 2, 432, *Montreal Gazette*, 24 October 1857.

those who did come from across all the communities.⁴⁷⁵ The press that represented minority groups took a different approach. The French language press were at best half-hearted, in their support of Canadians volunteering to serve at home or in India.⁴⁷⁶ When the idea of a French Canadian regiment was mooted, they saw the benefits and supported the idea.⁴⁷⁷ The one concern they had, was that the creation of any sort of regiment might cause a loss of manpower in the colony.⁴⁷⁸ This was a fear that the English language press also shared.⁴⁷⁹ The *Quebec Gazette* was saddened that the ‘military spirit’ of the French seemed to have disappeared from the French Canadians.⁴⁸⁰ The *Three Rivers Inquirer* was clear that French Canadians supported the idea of a Canadian regiment in India.⁴⁸¹ Like their Irish Catholic counterparts, the French Catholic press highlighted the poor treatment of the soldiery in the British Army, such as flogging.⁴⁸²

The English language press had its own primary concern, the financial cost. The *Pilot* suggested that both the French and English language press were against the regiment being at ‘the cost of the colony’.⁴⁸³ Papers supportive of enlistment like the *Quebec Gazette* listed the benefits of serving in the army. These were according to the journal a chance to get a commission, good pay, and the ability for an education.⁴⁸⁴ To counter criticism from others, they also highlighted the improvements in the conditions, which had been made in the British military and the benefits of being in the army.⁴⁸⁵

While there was a move to raise troops to fight in India, there was also a need to keep ample military forces in Canada, to defend against possible United States military attack. A

⁴⁷⁵ *Quebec Gazette*, 11 September, 1857.

⁴⁷⁶ *L’Avenir*, 2 November, 1857.

⁴⁷⁷ *Le Courrier du Canada*, 28 October, 1857.

⁴⁷⁸ *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 16 March, 1858.

⁴⁷⁹ *Quebec Gazette*, 11 September, 1857.

⁴⁸⁰ *Quebec Gazette*, 16 April, 1858.

⁴⁸¹ Quoted in *Montreal Gazette*, 10 April, 1858.

⁴⁸² *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 30 March, 1858.

⁴⁸³ *Pilot*, 26 February, 1858.

⁴⁸⁴ *Quebec Gazette*, 3 March, 1858.

⁴⁸⁵ *Montreal Gazette*, 19 April, 1858; *Quebec Gazette*, 3 March, 1858.

suggestion that Britain herself had been left undefended, came from an unlikely source namely, the Irish Catholic press. 'If England has made enormous exertions to prove her strength on the point of danger' in doing so the *Freeman's Journal* dismissively argued that 'she has also exposed her Colonial possessions, and the protection of three kingdoms is confided to a few battalions of Guards and some militia regiments'. The *Journal* suggested with a certain amount of irony, that it was thus lucky for the British that 'the Temple of Janus is shut and the echoes of war have died away in Europe!'⁴⁸⁶ The *Freeman's Journal* had used a similar argument, but in relation to possible threats to Britain and her empire of stripping them of troops to send to India.⁴⁸⁷

Again, this fear came from a peculiar source, the French language press, not the English-speaking unionist press from which it would be have been most expected. This may have been the product of a desire to criticise supplanting normal prejudices about the British military. There was a fear that funding the Rebellion was depriving Canada of the monetary ability to expand from 'the coal fields of Cape Breton, to the coast of Vancouver's island'. They wanted to leave India to 'Britain Imperial deliberations'.⁴⁸⁸ There were also practical reasons not to send newly raised militia troops to India as many had employment or businesses at home.⁴⁸⁹ This was in part countered by the understanding that going to India offered opportunities.⁴⁹⁰ It would also provide them with a break from the 'monotony of the farm, a wife, or a life of missed chances'.⁴⁹¹ While the press of Lower Canada was divided on the creation of a Canadian regiment, the idea that Canadians should fund the troops produced some agreement across the communities. This proposal was though 'denounced and opposed by the whole Franco-Canadian press and by most English journals in this Province'.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 October, 1857.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ *Acadien Recorder*, 27 March, 1858 quoting *Quebec Chronicle*.

⁴⁸⁹ *Quebec Gazette*, 11 September, 1857.

⁴⁹⁰ *Pilot*, 24 February, 1858.

⁴⁹¹ Charles Boulton, *Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions* (Toronto: Grip Printing and Publishing, 1886), 13.

⁴⁹² *Pilot*, 26 February, 1858.

The ultimate foundation of a regiment to hold those Canadians volunteering to fight in the Rebellion was seen as a ‘great compliment’⁴⁹³ and was ‘almost if not altogether composed of Canadians’.⁴⁹⁴ The *Quebec Gazette* saw this as placing Canada on the same level as the home countries.⁴⁹⁵ Others took a negative view, the radical *New Era* believed that these attempts by the Canadian authorities to raise troops for India was ‘treated by the Imperial Authorities with silent contempt’.⁴⁹⁶ The actions of the British military towards Canadian raised forces seemed to support this ascertain. An issue developed about what was going to happen to the troops raised in Canada in response to the Rebellion. The regiment raised, the 100th, expected to go via Britain to India, but never did reach India but ended up in Gibraltar, replacing troops already sent to the subcontinent. They would stay in the Mediterranean until returning to Canada in 1866. It was implied that Canadian troops would act differently to those from Britain. When the *Islander* discussed causes it saw a ‘relaxed state of discipline’ as the immediate cause of the Rebellion. This was the product of European officers feeling themselves above dealing with disciplining the troops.⁴⁹⁷ In the *Head Quarters*’ annual ‘news-boy’s address’ to their patrons, published at the beginning of 1858 it summarised the Rebellion so far in rather hyperbolic prose.⁴⁹⁸ Their readers were supposed to have pride in the actions of the citizens of an empire.

The adventure of fighting abroad was highlighted by the reprinting of stories of bravery and daring do, and given the context the majority featured military action from India.⁴⁹⁹ Although these stories were not expressly printed for the purpose of encouraging recruitment, they would have had an effect on the general willingness to do so. Another aspect that may have affected such recruitment was the pride it generated in their colony. The desire that Canada should have its military increased. The Canadian military contribution in the suppression of

⁴⁹³ *Brant Expositor*, 9 March, 1858.

⁴⁹⁴ *Trois Rivieres Inquirer*, reprinted in *Montreal Gazette*, 10 April, 1858.

⁴⁹⁵ *Quebec Gazette*, 3 March, 1858.

⁴⁹⁶ *New Era*, 16 March, 1858.

⁴⁹⁷ *Islander*, 28 August, 1857.

⁴⁹⁸ *Head Quarters*, 6 January, 1858.

⁴⁹⁹ *Head Quarters*, 28 April, 1858.

the Rebellion was still being noticed, even in other colonies, decades later.⁵⁰⁰ It also helped create a local identity which was not linked to ethnicity or social background.

There was a contrast to be made. As Britain did not maintain substantial standing armies, like those on mainland Europe, it was reliant on native troops. Now that those troops had realised their importance, they had become a threat. That threat came not from their competence but from their sheer weight of numbers.⁵⁰¹ There had been too much reliance on native troops rather than European troops. Now that the ‘once lauded sepoys’ had become a threat some questions were left unanswered.⁵⁰² The ‘Over praised’⁵⁰³ sepoys were only useful when loyal, and when they were not, who could those in India rely on?⁵⁰⁴ The *Daily Southern Cross* asked whether the British had ‘more trust in European or sepoy bayonets’?⁵⁰⁵ The consistent answer would be the need to replace native troops, with Europeans, or at least improve the ratio between the two.

Troops and Material: Cape Colony

Subject to a series of wars with indigenous populations on its frontiers, conflict with parts of the community, the departure of a large section of its Boer population on the Great Trek, and territorial expansion, the inhabitants of the Cape Colony had every reason to feel insecure. There were also substantial disagreements with the imperial centre about how the colony should be administered. These two factors would colour the local press reaction to ideas for contributing to the subduing of the Rebellion.

⁵⁰⁰ *Adelaide Advertiser*, 24 June, 1911.

⁵⁰¹ *South Australian Advertiser*, 3 August, 1858.

⁵⁰² *Empire*, 11 July, 1857.

⁵⁰³ *Ipswich and General Advertiser*, 30 March, 1858.

⁵⁰⁴ *South Australian Register*, 20 October, 1857.

⁵⁰⁵ *Daily Southern Cross*, 4 August, 1857.

Of all the settled colonies in the British Empire it was the Cape Colony in southern Africa in which press, and government unified in their immediate reaction to the Rebellion. The colony's governor Sir George Grey and the *Cape Argus* had a unity of purpose. A former soldier and explorer Grey had a long history of colonial administration. He had been charged with making the colony self-reliant in defence.⁵⁰⁶ The Cape Colony received a great deal of positive press for its actions during the Rebellion, both from Britain and other colonies.⁵⁰⁷ Some of this positivity were though rehashes of *Cape Argus* copy, without appropriate attribution.⁵⁰⁸ In return the *Argus* was happy to promote the Cape's contribution to suppressing the Rebellion supplementing its copy by reprinting positive press from these other papers.⁵⁰⁹ Copying a pattern that developed in newspapers in other locations, as the Rebellion started to wane the *Argus* started to become more critical.

One of the first colonies to receive news of the events in India, in 26 days⁵¹⁰, the Rebellion gave the Cape Colony its 'moment to shine'.⁵¹¹ It gave credence to its Governor Sir George Grey's claims that it allowed colonies to 'stir themselves to meet the emergency' and increase the 'strength, unity, and stability' of the empire.⁵¹² It also provided a stimulus to economic development, such as with the horse breeding industry that prior to 1857 was full of problems, which dissipated when the opportunities that the Rebellion afforded arose. An offer had been made to provide four thousand horses for use in India. The *Argus* promoted the Cape's ability to provide horses for India and reprinted ideas on how to do it⁵¹³ thus adding to an increasing debate.⁵¹⁴ The idea was not new, as the provision of Cape mounts for India had

⁵⁰⁶ Grey to Labouchere, 7 August, 1857.

⁵⁰⁷ *The Times*, 20 October, 1857; *Taranaki Herald*, 17 April, 1858.

⁵⁰⁸ *Otago Witness*, 27 March, 1858.

⁵⁰⁹ *Cape Argus*, 21 October, 1857.

⁵¹⁰ Peter Putnis, 'The Indian insurgency of 1857 as a global media event', in *I.A.M.C.R. 25th Conference Proceedings* (Canberra: University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts and Design, 2007), 185-90.

⁵¹¹ Jill Bender, "Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the unmaking and making of an imperial career", in Crispin Bates and Marina Carter (eds), *Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins*, (Sage: New Delhi & London, 2009), 206.

⁵¹² Grey to Labouchere, 7 August, 1857.

⁵¹³ *Cape Argus*, 30 January, 1858.

⁵¹⁴ Bender, Sir George Grey, 199-218.

been suggested a decade earlier.⁵¹⁵ By the June of 1858 horse breeding was in full swing at the Cape, although there were still difficulties over transportation and fodder.⁵¹⁶ A similar idea was mooted elsewhere: writing to the *South Australian Register*, an Edward Bathurst suggested that Australia set up a horse breeding business to supply horses for India⁵¹⁷, an idea that was put in place by the spring of 1858.⁵¹⁸ The *Ballarat Star* wanted Victoria to provide horsemen as well as selling the British military and the Company horses.⁵¹⁹ The *Cape Argus* saw two ways of supporting the imperial cause in India and was supported by the Grey in both, within limits.

The first was military: that is by providing men to fight, either by recruiting them, or by freeing troops stationed in the Cape. The Cape was one of the most militarised parts of the empire, with eleven thousand troops stationed there, more than in the entirety of Australia. The *Argus* supported military self-reliance⁵²⁰ and sending troops to India and started to encourage Grey to follow suit.⁵²¹ It was not something about which he needed much persuading. In relation to those troops the paper argued that ‘time [was] everything’.⁵²² The *Argus* highlighted the Cape’s desire to aid the British in India. It reported on the newly formed regiments, such as the Cape Royal Rifles and the others who it reported had ‘tendered their services to [Grey]’.⁵²³ Accepting these offers Grey redirected troops heading towards China, and New Zealand and parts of the Cape Town Garrison, to India.⁵²⁴ The Cape would ultimately contribute six regiments to India. Fearing that local military manpower shortages might lead to troops being withheld the *Argus* argued that local volunteers would cover any threats on the frontier, for they would be ‘unworthy indeed to live under the British flag’ if

⁵¹⁵ *Zuid-Afrikaan*, 16 August, 1849.

⁵¹⁶ *Graham’s Town Journal*, 26 June, 1858.

⁵¹⁷ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 30 January, 1858.

⁵¹⁸ *Launceston Examiner*, 15 April, 1858.

⁵¹⁹ *Ballarat Star*, 19 October, 1857.

⁵²⁰ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857; 12 August, 1857.

⁵²¹ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

⁵²² *Cape Argus*, 26 August, 1857.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁴ William Tyler, “Sir George Grey, South Africa and the Imperial Military Burden, 1855-1860” *Historical Journal*, 14, 3 (1971), 585.

they did not.⁵²⁵ It was even suggested that Grey favoured the raising of a ‘regiment of Kaffirs’.⁵²⁶ The *Argus*’ approach was to be both encouraging and frank about the dangers. It did not hide the likelihood of losses in India. They bluntly stated that ‘the loss of life amongst our soldiery in India will necessarily be very great’.⁵²⁷ This added to the need for the second of Grey’s goals. Grey’s sending of troops to India apparently made him ‘unpopular’ according to the Australian press.⁵²⁸ The *Cape Argus* believed that India now had to be held onto by the power of the sword and reported in depth the preparations for sending troops to the subcontinent.⁵²⁹

The second means of support was providing aid for those affected by the Rebellion, and again this was something in which the *Cape Argus* played a major role through organising a public meeting in the November of 1857 at which Grey asked for monies to aid those suffering, because of ‘the mutinies and unparalleled atrocities of the Sepoys in India’.⁵³⁰ Though primarily to provide relief, the meeting had a secondary purpose to raise money to suppress the Rebellion. Aid to civilians and the military easily became mixed. Grey also sought to use public subscriptions, to support the families of those who had been ‘hurried off to India, and consequently their wives and families have been left scattered all over the face of the earth’. In this, he yet again received the support of the *Argus*. The journal became a heavy promoter of both the establishment and donating to relief funds using declaratory language mixed with moral blackmail. On the support for widows and orphans the paper pronounced that ‘the claims of this class of sufferers, here and elsewhere, will attract the notice of the charitable and humane throughout the empire’.⁵³¹ By the December of 1857 the *Argus*’ prediction seemed to have come true, at least at the Cape, ‘all classes contribute according to their means’.⁵³² Difficulties arose when in December 1857 it became apparent that some of the Cape Town Municipal Commissioners had donated municipal funds, not their own, to the

⁵²⁵ *Cape Argus*, 12 August, 1857.

⁵²⁶ *Mercantile Advertiser*, 20 February, 1858.

⁵²⁷ *Cape Argus*, 11 November, 1857.

⁵²⁸ *Launceston Examiner*, 26 June, 1858.

⁵²⁹ *Cape Argus*, 11 May, 1858; 10 October, 1858.

⁵³⁰ *Cape Argus*, 11 November, 1857.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² *Cape Argus*, 2 December, 1857.

relief fund.⁵³³ Face was saved when it became apparent that these donations had been refused. The *Argus* agreed with the refusal, not because the act was inherently wrong but because it would become ‘a precedent for all sorts of abuses’. The cause itself remained ‘so great, so good’.⁵³⁴ The minutia of how and to whom to provide relief proved to be less clear. Take the cases of the Cape based families of a Captain Hardie, who along with two others, was killed at Lucknow. The *Argus* was clear about the validity of their claims: ‘their claims on the Fund are certainly as good as any of those who have suffered in India; and the application of the money to this object cannot but be regarded as perfectly legitimate’.⁵³⁵ When it emerged that payment had not been forthcoming, the matter was investigated. Issues had arisen over relief to locals versus those in India, and solved by holding back monies until those in the Cape had received aid.⁵³⁶ When the families did finally receive support in the spring of 1858 the *Argus* was quick to report the news.⁵³⁷ A ‘blue-book’ covering the despatch of troops from amongst others the Cape to India was published in early 1858 and reported on empire wide, especially in New Zealand, where Grey had been governor.⁵³⁸

Along the Malaya Peninsula similar concerns were raised. The Straits Settlements’ papers tried to satisfy the craving for information on friends and loved ones. Lists of those killed were published, civilian or military⁵³⁹ plus a list of those regiments that had mutinied.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ *Cape Argus*, 2 December, 1857.

⁵³⁵ *Cape Argus*, 30 January, 1858.

⁵³⁶ *Cape Argus*, 6 February, 1858.

⁵³⁷ *Cape Argus*, 27 March, 1858.

⁵³⁸ E.g. *Daily Southern Cross*, 18 June, 1858.

⁵³⁹ *Straits Times*, 28 September, 1857; 10 November, 1857; 15 May, 1858.

⁵⁴⁰ *Straits Times*, 28 July, 1857; 14 August, 1857.

Managing Local Threats: On the Cape Frontier

A less direct form of contribution was through demonstrating that a colony was capable of dealing with domestic threats without the need to call on external support at a time of Imperial crisis.

In the colonies of Southern Africa, a local indigenous population, the Xhosa, caused concern, but the opportunities of supply and labour coupled with an ability to display their capacities, trumped that fear, leading to the eventual belief that any threats on the frontier was manageable. The clearest example of this in the period was the ongoing Xhosa cattle-killing movement and subsequent famine, as the outbreak of the Rebellion corresponded with the height of this movement.⁵⁴¹

A young Xhosa woman called Nongqawuse had prophesied that if her people killed their cattle and destroyed their crops, then their ancestors would be reborn, to drive away the Europeans who were encroaching on their lands.⁵⁴² This simply hastened the decline of the Xhosa. Their population in British Kaffraria dropped from over a hundred thousand to thirty-seven thousand, during the year of the Rebellion, with fifteen thousand dying from causes linked to the cattle slaughtering.⁵⁴³ Although this led to mass starvation the colonial authorities were highly suspicious of its motives. There was a clear belief that it was the forerunner of a rebellion. When trouble erupted in British Kaffraria the *Cape Argus* did ‘not attach any blame to the Governor’ Sir George Grey whose motives it supported, but to ‘the Colonial Parliament which’ did not have the ‘capacity and strength of mind sufficient to prevent itself from becoming a mere pliant tool in his hands’⁵⁴⁴. As with other rebellions or possible threats a conflict existed. Grey saw the cattle slaughtering movement as an

⁵⁴¹ 1856 to 1857.

⁵⁴² Examination of Nonqause before the Chief Commissioner of April 9, 1858, British Kaffraria Government Gazette, reprinted in *Grahamstown Journal*, 1 May, 1858.

⁵⁴³ Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks* (London, Routledge, 2001), 183.

⁵⁴⁴ *Cape Argus*, 24 March, 1858.

opportunity for territorial expansion, but also a possible threat.⁵⁴⁵ Grey perceived a way of gaining ‘great permanent advantages’ from these events and believed it provided a ‘stepping stone for future settlement’.⁵⁴⁶ Three issues arose between London and Grey, his holding back of troops, the lack of accounting for a Treasury grant, and the expulsion of the Xhosa leader Sarhili.⁵⁴⁷

Grey’s plans to defend the frontier engendered much criticism in the British press.⁵⁴⁸ On the frontier others believed that what had happened in India was about to happen in the Cape, just with a different native population.⁵⁴⁹ The *Cape Argus* saw such negative opinions as ‘scarcely worthy of consideration’⁵⁵⁰ and in October of 1857 *The Times* had been heaping praise on the Cape’s support.⁵⁵¹ Criticism of Grey’s policies regarding the frontier and his general behaviour, as governor, increased and were reported in detail in the *Cape Argus*. With criticism coming from the British state, plus the London press, members of the colonial administration spoke up to defend Grey. The Auditor General argued that the colony would be under threat if the ‘Kafirs [had] an idea that there was nothing left to oppose them’ and thus Grey’s plans were apt. Grey chose to pre-empt any attack on the colony. The Auditor General also supported Grey’s expulsion of Sarhili from the colony because of the threat he posed. He argued that Sarhili was using events in India as a way of uniting the Xhosa against the British.⁵⁵² There were differences between the two native groups. The Ngqika Commissioner Charles Brownlee noting that the Xhosa had not harmed any white women and children, he pondered if the ‘civilised’ Indians would bear comparison to that standard.⁵⁵³ The colonial Parliament also decided to support Grey’s policies. The image of the Xhosa as a

⁵⁴⁵ William Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the mid-Victorian Age: South Africa, New Zealand, the West Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) 88-9; Donovan Williams “The Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Cape Colony Part II: The Emergence of Black Consciousness in Caffraria” *Historia*, 32, 2, (1987): 61.

⁵⁴⁶ Grey quoted in Jeffery Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1989), 247.

⁵⁴⁷ Noel Mosteret, *Frontiers* (London: Pimlico, 1993), 1233.

⁵⁴⁸ *The Times*, 26, 27 August, 1857.

⁵⁴⁹ *Anglo African* quoted in *Cape Argus*, 25 August, 1857.

⁵⁵⁰ *Cape Argus*, 7 November, 1857.

⁵⁵¹ *London Times*, 20 October, 1857.

⁵⁵² *Cape Argus*, 22 April, 1858; *Cape Argus*, 11 May, 1858.

⁵⁵³ Charles Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History* (Lovedale, Lovedale Press, 1896), 202.

threat was nothing new. Papers from the borderlands, such as the *Graham's Town Journal*, were full of stories of real and imagined Xhosa thefts and violence.⁵⁵⁴ Through the press of the Cape and neighbouring settlements the outside world developed its view of the Xhosa. Local prejudices transformed piecemeal into an accepted view, through the imperial press.

When Grey was removed as governor due to his disagreements with the British centre, the local popular support he had developed was echoed in the press.⁵⁵⁵ The *Argus* saw his removal as an action 'deeply regretted by the whole colony'.⁵⁵⁶ The *Eastern Province Herald* was more scathing in its reporting of Grey's removal. Describing him as 'the best qualified' governor the colony had ever had it was openly hostile to his removal. The paper then sought to justify that opinion by listing all that they saw as good in him, it was 'because [Grey] dared to be independent – dared to sacrifice the good opinion of a Prime Minister to the interests of his charge – strong in the consciousness of his own integrity, and the ultimate justice and sovereignty of the English people'.⁵⁵⁷ It would be that view that was reprinted in other colonies.⁵⁵⁸ The *Herald's* conclusion was that Grey's was 'pre-eminently the right man in the right place'.⁵⁵⁹ Grey was seen as someone who promised little but suggested much, but wanted to promote 'peace and prosperity' in the Cape Colony.⁵⁶⁰ Grey had support on the frontier. When in mid-1858 a rumour of Grey's recall to England reached the *Graham's Town Journal* the paper expressed concern. The paper believed that a change of governor 'might imperil the present system of border policy' which it believed had avoided a conflict and helped to promote the development of the colony.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁴ Alan Lester, "British settler discourse and the circuits of empire", *History Workshop Journal*, 54,1 (2002): 41.

⁵⁵⁵ William Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the mid-Victorian Age: South Africa, New Zealand, the West Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 119.

⁵⁵⁶ *Cape Argus*, 23 August, 1857.

⁵⁵⁷ *Eastern Province Herald*, 16 August, 1859.

⁵⁵⁸ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 12 October, 1859; *Daily Southern Cross*, 1 November, 1859.

⁵⁵⁹ *Eastern Province Herald*, 16 August, 1859.

⁵⁶⁰ *Cape Monitor*, 11 April, 1857.

⁵⁶¹ *Graham's Town Journal*, 26 June, 1858.

A colonial governor could act in ways that were not universally supported domestically but receive a general endorsement for acting independently of the centre. If that governor was removed the local press would criticise that decision, even when admitting that the leader had made errors.

Financial Aid: Australia

Australia was in the process of moving from a series of convict settlements to free colonies. These colonies were in turn moving through large scale agricultural development and gold rushes towards self-government. Australia was transforming itself both materially and in the public consciousness. One method through which the colonies of Australia would display this transformation, was to offer financial support to those suffering in India.

The desire to aid those suppressing the Rebellion was accepted as fact by *Bells Life*, and the magazine hoped that it would be seen Empire wide to New South Wales' credit. If those in the colony could not help in person, they could do so financially.⁵⁶² In Australia public meetings, lectures or fund-raising events repeated and then expanded on these stories.⁵⁶³ The suffering of those in India was bringing those in the colonies together. Even in Ireland, with its apparent 'ecclesiastical interference and party bigotry' people were providing alms for those Europeans who had suffered in India.⁵⁶⁴ A letter from India that was published in the *Melbourne Argus* suggested that 'an enormous number of persons [would] be ruined by [the] rebellion'.⁵⁶⁵ The *South Australian Register* took a different view suggesting that the Rebellion had diverted attention away from 'the numerous and enormous failures of 1857' rather than been created by it.⁵⁶⁶ Whilst believing that the Australian public were generally

⁵⁶² *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

⁵⁶³ Lecture on India by Captain D.C.F. Scott reported in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 February, 1858; *Launceston Examiner*, 11 March 1858; *Melbourne Argus*, 1 May, 1858; *South Australian Register*, 23 February, 1858.

⁵⁶⁴ *Nelson Colonist*, 14 January, 1858.

⁵⁶⁵ *Melbourne Argus*, 16 October, 1857.

⁵⁶⁶ *South Australian Register*, 20 March, 1858.

sympathetic towards those suffering in India there was also some concern that there was not enough support for charitable efforts to help them.⁵⁶⁷ The *Sydney Morning Herald* expressed concern that the general population of New South Wales did not understand the seriousness of events in India.⁵⁶⁸ The paper whose editor saw ‘the merchant, manufacturer, farmer and local and civil functionary’ as the backbone of the colonies found those groups behaviour difficult to understand.⁵⁶⁹ The *Empire* shared the *Herald*’s concerns that New South Wales which had been the first to act during the Crimean War, might be the ‘last to give relief’.⁵⁷⁰ This lack of concern might be explained by the paucity of detailed information on which to make a judgement. Australian newspapers themselves expressed surprise that events seemed to be dragging on for longer than expected. Australian papers in July 1857 were suggesting things were improving⁵⁷¹, or even near full suppression.⁵⁷² Such confusion was often the product of the communication lag between the antipodes and India, or Britain. In the mid nineteenth hundreds it could take three months for British news to reach Australia⁵⁷³ whilst a seventy nine day delay on ‘home news’ in New Zealand was seen as fast.⁵⁷⁴ Often news could come by a very circuitous route. While there clearly was great interest in what was happening in the Rebellion especially from those with friends and family, there it remained, just one news story that was often replaced by local stories. Another concern was that the Rebellion was growing, not decreasing.

Time For A Change: The Straits Settlements

As other settlements discussed their possible contributions to the suppression of the Rebellion, some highlighted the cost of the endeavour in money and material. These local obsessions would choose the issues that came to the fore, producing negative attitudes

⁵⁶⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March, 1858; *Melbourne Argus*, 23 January, 1858.

⁵⁶⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September, 1857.

⁵⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April, 1831; 19 September, 1857.

⁵⁷⁰ *Empire*, 22 January, 1858.

⁵⁷¹ *Melbourne Argus*, 7 July, 1857.

⁵⁷² *Courier*, 10 July, 1857.

⁵⁷³ Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World*, 27.

⁵⁷⁴ *Otago Witness*, 5 September, 1857.

towards aspects of suppressing the Rebellion. The clearest example of this would occur in the East India Company controlled Straits Settlements. This collection of disparate settlements had a vocal European minority, who had increasing distain for the Company and its local administration.

The *Straits Times* took an almost abnormal interest in the cost of fighting the Rebellion. Reports by the paper's London Correspondent concentrated on the costs of suppressing the Rebellion and who would pay for it, including comments about the 'enormous' financial burden of transporting troops, down to their exact costings.⁵⁷⁵ When the total loss had been calculated the correspondent printed them first in his report.⁵⁷⁶ This was the product both of the paper's general dislike of the East India Company but also a fear that the costs would be foisted on the Settlements. Commenting on the proposed tax increases, the paper made it clear that it was 'obnoxious' to make the Europeans pay for the Rebellion.⁵⁷⁷ Mirroring those comments five days later the paper made it clear that it was against 'Europeans in India pay[ing] the expenses of putting down the native rebellion' through higher tariffs. This was a 'most unjust imposition and extortion on the loyal' and a reward for the rebels. Not wishing to be seen as against supporting the victims, the paper highlighted its sympathy for those who had lost out during the Rebellion.⁵⁷⁸ After the Rebellion had been suppressed the paper reported on a new class of administrator who wanted a reduction of military expenditure in India to pre-conflict levels.⁵⁷⁹ Their opinions were countered by those with experience of and in India.⁵⁸⁰ The *Straits Times*' London Correspondent raised the question of who would pay the cost of suppressing the Rebellion.⁵⁸¹

Two other areas attracted the interest of the *Straits Times*' 'London Correspondent' and which he focused on in some depth, one was the British reaction to events in India, and the

⁵⁷⁵ Report of 27 July 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 31 August, 1857.

⁵⁷⁶ Report of 16 February 1859, printed in *Straits Times*, 31 March, 1859.

⁵⁷⁷ *Straits Times*, 9 April, 1859.

⁵⁷⁸ *Straits Times*, 16 April, 1859.

⁵⁷⁹ *Straits Times*, 15 October, 1859.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Report of 10 January, 1859, printed in *Straits Times*, 17 February, 1859.

effect that the Rebellion would have on East India Company controlled areas, like of course the Settlements. The correspondent highlighted the changing attitude in Britain towards the Rebellion. Initial concerns that the Rebellion was not being taken seriously by the public, were countered by the reaction of the British press and that of the ‘thinking portion of the public’.⁵⁸² By early August 1857 the paper’s ‘London Correspondent’ was suggesting that the Rebellion was by then the most or ‘only topic of interest’ in the capital, even though things like an economic crash in the United States could still ‘divide attention’ in that city.⁵⁸³

The Times’ correspondent highlighted the discussions on the need to reorganise the military and administration of India and the atrocities happening there.⁵⁸⁴ There had been ‘negligence’ in the defence of India.⁵⁸⁵ By copy length, the most important topic from the correspondent was the poor organisation in India.⁵⁸⁶ Criticising the then opposition leader Disraeli for suggesting it was a rebellion, not just a Rebellion, but not waiting for information that might ‘upset his theories’. For the ‘London Correspondent’ the Rebellion was the product of Company ‘bad policy, negligence, and ill-judged economy’.⁵⁸⁷ The *Straits Times* continued to list the opinions of metropolitan papers, that were critical of the East India Company and their reaction to the Rebellion.⁵⁸⁸ The *Straits Times*’ London Correspondent commented on the ‘large expenditure of English money and English blood’ in suppressing the Rebellion. The Correspondent repeated a commonly held view in Britain that it was a primarily a Muslim conspiracy, aided by the East India Company’s mismanagement in India.⁵⁸⁹

The *Straits Times* also used external events to criticise Company rule in India. The Company’s policies had been ‘fatal’ for their rule in India.⁵⁹⁰ The *Straits Times* pondered if the Rebellion would have occurred in India, if it had had a better class of governor and while

⁵⁸² Report of 27 July, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 31 August, 1857.

⁵⁸³ Report of 26 October, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 8 December, 1857.

⁵⁸⁴ Report of 10 August, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 15 September, 1857.

⁵⁸⁵ *Straits Times*, 29 September, 1857.

⁵⁸⁶ Report of 10 August, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 15 September, 1857.

⁵⁸⁷ Report of 27 July, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 31 August, 1857.

⁵⁸⁸ *Straits Times*, 29 January, 1858.

⁵⁸⁹ Report of 10 August, 1857, printed in *Straits Times*, 15 September, 1857.

⁵⁹⁰ *Straits Times*, 2 April, 1859.

not coming to a definitive conclusion, were clear on the East India Company's guilt.⁵⁹¹ They had stopped progress. According to the *Times* the sheer number of petitions against them, evidenced their poor governance.⁵⁹² Whilst the Company was viewed badly other sources the paper accepted, such as material transmitted by government and officers then given to the press 'there can be no doubt of its correctness'.⁵⁹³ The *Straits Times* also criticised the types of people that the East India Company was employing locally including 'idle and refractory sailors' and those taken out of prison.⁵⁹⁴ The *Straits Times* highlighted the rewards that those recruiting sailors such as the Master Attendant and Conservator of the port of Singapore getting a thousand rupees for his work in doing so.⁵⁹⁵ The *Straits Times* reprinted the proclamation, which transferred power in India from the East India Company to the British Crown⁵⁹⁶ but without further comment. A year later the journal highlighted the difficulties of merging the Company military and the British Army.⁵⁹⁷ The reforms that the Rebellion would usher in were seen as only being beneficial in nature by the *Times*.⁵⁹⁸ External views of the Company from other settler colonies were often more positive, in the short term, but there was clear agreement that Company rule in India had had its day.⁵⁹⁹

The general view of the Company was not completely negative. It was seen as still having some positive aspects. The Company was more of a meritocracy than other parts of the British state. It was that which made it more attractive to the average colonist.⁶⁰⁰ Regardless it had ultimately reached a stage at which nothing could save it. The Company could do both too little, and too much, leaving it open to criticism from both sides. Criticised for triggering the Rebellion by attempting to convert the sepoys, the East India Company was also attacked

⁵⁹¹ *Straits Times*, 12 March, 1859.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ *Straits Times*, 10 July, 1858.

⁵⁹⁴ *Straits Times*, 31 July, 1858.

⁵⁹⁵ *Straits Times*, 11 June, 1859.

⁵⁹⁶ *Straits Times*, 13 November, 1858.

⁵⁹⁷ *Straits Times*, 4 June, 1859.

⁵⁹⁸ *Straits Times*, 1 December, 1857.

⁵⁹⁹ E.g. *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 16 July, 1859.

⁶⁰⁰ *Colonist*, 6 April, 1858.

for discouraging conversions.⁶⁰¹ The Company was also condemned for being too tolerant and not strict in relation to native religions.

The European population of the Settlements expected their rights and freedoms to be respected wherever they happened to be.⁶⁰² They also believed in a base line of rights, which should not be denied to anyone, even convicts. They believed that the rule of law should apply universally, and convicts charged with subsequent crimes should face a fair trial.⁶⁰³ The European minority voiced their opinions through a local press, that was generally free of censorship or Company control. Although geographically scattered, with a limited European population, the Settlements were well served with newspapers by the middle of the nineteenth century. Singapore produced both the *Singapore Free Press* and the *Straits Times*, while Penang had its *Penang Gazette*.⁶⁰⁴ The *Free Press* and the *Gazette* were run by the Logan brothers, James and Abraham, who instilled a cross pollination of copy between the two papers.⁶⁰⁵ A different relationship existed between the two Singapore papers. The respected but staid *Free Press* was contemptuous of the *Times* which supported every criticism of the Company, while the *Free Press* took a more restrained approach.⁶⁰⁶

When a ‘Gagging Act’ was imposed to control reporting about the uprising in India, the Settlements’ press reacted uniformly, with anger, classing it as something that subverted ‘every principle of liberty and free discussion’.⁶⁰⁷ This Act which applied to all East India Company controlled territory, banned the publication of news without the prior approval of the local authorities. While it might be appropriate in the subcontinent, the *Straits Times*

⁶⁰¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 28 November, 1857.

⁶⁰² *Straits Times*, 28 July, 1857.

⁶⁰³ *Straits Times*, 16 April, 1859.

⁶⁰⁴ Formerly the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, from 1833 until 1838, also known as the *Pinang Gazette*.

⁶⁰⁵ Francis Seow, *The Media Enthrallled: Singapore Revisited* (Singapore, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 7.

⁶⁰⁶ C.M. Turnbull, “The European Mercantile Community in Singapore, 1819-1867”, *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 10, 1, Singapore Commemorative Issue (1969): 16; *Singapore Free Press*, 9 October, 1845.

⁶⁰⁷ *Straits Times*, 28 July, 1857.

commented on the ‘impropriety’ of extending the Act’s coverage to the Settlements.⁶⁰⁸ As there was little or no non European press in the Settlements such a ban seemed excessive and irrelevant, it was rarely enforced and ended in less than a year.⁶⁰⁹ Although this pragmatic local approach had won out the *Times* put that down to luck not design.⁶¹⁰ Even with the ban removed, the damage to the reputation of the local authorities had been done. The fear of this sort of influence that an independent press could have over populations bordering on unrest, probably led to the closure of the five principle Indian papers during the Rebellion.⁶¹¹

The reaction to the ‘Gagging Act’ showed how the Settlement media disliked the arbitrary manner in which the Company treated them and it piqued their interest in Company affairs, with public meetings about the Act being reported in depth locally.⁶¹² The local view of the ‘Press Gag Act’ being the East India Company’s sorry final act, was one shared by Australasian journals.⁶¹³ Bad intent was inferred, with another paper from the Antipodes suggested that the Act might be intended to stop critical news escaping.⁶¹⁴ Criticism of apparent even handed treatment of Indian and European alike, engendered repeated negative comment in the Indian and British press, until censored in both locations by the Act.⁶¹⁵

The European population of the Settlements were not willing to accept, what they saw, as an erosion of their rights. When the European merchant community in Calcutta organised a petition to the British Parliament, seeking to replace East India Company control with British rule, their counterparts in the Settlements were quick to follow suit. This desire for separation from Company control and India had its roots in the format of the Settlements and was made manifest in their petition. The idea of a petition garnered almost universal support at public meetings, held in Singapore. It also received the backing of both the *Singapore Free Press*

⁶⁰⁸ *Straits Times*, 4 August, 1857.

⁶⁰⁹ Francis Seow, *The Media Enthralled*, 6.

⁶¹⁰ *Straits Times*, 28 July, 1857.

⁶¹¹ Philip Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995), 165.

⁶¹² *Straits Times*, 4 August, 1857.

⁶¹³ *Straits Times*, 12 March, 1859; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 November, 1857.

⁶¹⁴ *Lyttelton Times*, 28 November, 1857.

⁶¹⁵ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

and the *Straits Times* who reprinted the petition for all to read.⁶¹⁶ In Penang the situation was different. The *Penang Gazette* and its editor James Logan supported the petition but the European population did not, viewing the middle of an insurrection as an inappropriate time to seek political change.⁶¹⁷ After the Rebellion had been suppressed the *Straits Times* felt it important to emphasise that Singapore did not wish to be seen as associated with the East India Company and how it governed the subcontinent.⁶¹⁸ ‘Long may the Queen reign over these realms, and may the teeming millions of the varied races of her Indian Empire enjoy the benign influences of such a rule!’ was the *Straits Times*’ laudation for the new post Company world.⁶¹⁹ For the paper ‘a brighter day is dawning over India’ and by extension the Settlements.⁶²⁰ But the paper wanted to make it clear that ‘Singapore is not *in* India, it is part of her Majesty’s British Empire in the East’.⁶²¹

In Penang the desire to change their government was equally as strong and expressed bluntly. The *Penang Gazette* highlighted the need to move from Company to British control. The papers described, by reference to the governance of other colonies, the format of administration it supported was a Governor ‘restrained by a Council...in most cases having a popular element’.⁶²² They knew where the opposition would be from, the East India Company employees ‘and such parasites’ were the only ones who supported keeping Company rule in the Settlements.⁶²³

⁶¹⁶ *Straits Times*, 22 September, 1857; Petition reprinted in *Straits Times*, 13 October, 1857.

⁶¹⁷ C.M. Turnbull, “Penang’s Changing Role in the Straits Settlements, 1826-1946”, paper given to *The Penang Story Conference*, Penang, Malaysia (2002).

⁶¹⁸ *Straits Times*, 2 April, 1859.

⁶¹⁹ *Straits Times*, 12 March, 1859.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ *Straits Times*, 2 April, 1859.

⁶²² *Penang Gazette*, 3 September, 1857.

⁶²³ *Straits Times*, 13 October, 1857.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how the Rebellion gave the settler colonies of the Empire the ability to show their agency and capacity, as individual locations, in a larger whole. They did this by providing material support in the terms of manpower and horses, financial aid to those in need in India as well as their ability to deal with local threats to their security. They were designed, in part, to display their abilities and competency, rather than being simply altruistic or a desire to be a contributing part of an imperial whole. Any contribution to the effort to suppress the Rebellion was only to occur as long as it did not threaten the security or economy of the settlements providing it.

It further demonstrates how in the Straits Settlements and other Company controlled territory there was a clear desire for reform of the administration and a transfer of authority to the Crown. One of their motivations for this was a reaction to how the Company had denied them the rights and freedoms that Europeans expected in the Empire. Although there was a general desire to contribute to the suppression of the Rebellion local factors would influence what aid was provided and the quantity of that aid. Through this again demonstrates how the general became local.

We will now move on to examine the internal disagreements and divisions that existed in another of Britain's European majority colonies, that contained cultural and ethnic minorities: British North America.

Chapter 4: British North America: Settler Colonies and Loyalties Divided

This chapter will investigate the response to the Rebellion, from the English language press of the various provinces of British North America. By reference to previous rebellions and civil disturbances, it will show that the Rebellion reaction was simply part of a continuum of using the press to express and foster internal disputes in a fashion similar to that previously shown in Ireland. This would be given an extra poignancy as several newspaper editors and journalists were directly involved in the series of conflicts that had happened in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was, as well, a continuation of a reactive coverage countering the critical copy produced domestically in the radical, Irish, and French language press, as well as that being produced in the United States, who had proved in the last few decades to be a direct military threat. This shows how the local issues of security and internal conflicts were given a new arena for discussion by the Rebellion.

Starting out by outlining the history of British North America, referencing the two rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada and associated disorder, the chapter will begin highlighting the role the domestic press and its staff played in them. This will both provide a contrast to how the Rebellion was covered and evidence that the reportage was localised. Included in this is a summary of the domestic press situation of the early to mid-nineteenth century and its partial involvement in recent insurrections in British North America. By reference to this narrative a comparison can be made to their reaction and involvement in previous insurrections, local and Empire wide, as it coloured how events were reported and how one newspaper viewed those who worked for journals with opposing opinions. It will move on to examine the response of the Irish managed and francophone press, to the Rebellion. The chapter will conclude by surveying the antagonist relationship that British North America had with its

neighbour, the United States, and its response to the Rebellion copy generated by the American press, focused on the city of New York.

British North America and Internal Conflicts

British North America had a diverse and expanding press in the first half of the nineteenth century, whose development was linked to the increased immigration into the two Canadas, Upper and Lower, and the Maritime Provinces around the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. The increase in population opened a larger market for news. It also increased the variety of types of settler, which in turn produced an increasing diversity of message while also diluting the strength of previous groups, most notably the French speakers. Such diversity created similar problems to those it did in Ireland, namely, separation, and mixed messages. Papers were labelled, often by others, as ‘reform’, ‘Tory’, ‘patriote’, or ‘Irish’ based on the political stance of the editor.⁶²⁴ Most editors followed a political career some time in their lives, politicising the press. Advertising supported these papers, rather than government support or a rich patron or group of patrons.⁶²⁵ This allowed dissent a voice. It would also be another location in which newspapers printed during rebellion, would be a forum in which such discussions took place.

The first half of the nineteenth century had been an unstable period for Canada with threats coming from both domestic and foreign sources. The period was marked by persistent conflicts: indeed, with the indigenous population serious internal threats did not come from that expected source but from their fellow colonialists. The settler view of native population in Canada was altered by events like the Rebellion. Like elsewhere in the empire, the paternalist view was replaced with a view that the native population had become ‘dangerous’ and that justified increased control and segregation.⁶²⁶ Canada had seemed, at the end of the

⁶²⁴ Wilfrid H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1967), 15.

⁶²⁵ Chris Raible, *The Power of the Press: The Story of Early Canadian Printers and Publishers* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2007), 57.

⁶²⁶ Sarah Carter, “Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the ‘Indian Woman’ in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada” in Mary-Ellen Kelm and Lorna Townsend (ed.) *In the Days of our*

American War of Independence, to have one of the most reliable populations in the empire as it had become home to the United Empire Loyalists, who had moved north after the foundation of the United States.⁶²⁷ Importantly for later events the bulk of the loyalists tended to move to the Maritime Provinces rather than the two Canadas for example those who left New York went to Nova Scotia.⁶²⁸ But this land, part populated by those willing to leave their homes and move to a new land to remain under British rule, proved to be anything but pacific. There existed a basic antagonism between the British and minority ethnic groups such as the French populations of Lower Canada.

Such antagonism would eventually boil over in the Lower Canada Rebellion of 1837. The first minority group to rebel in the nineteenth century was the Irish soldiery of Newfoundland. In 1800 several Irish soldiers stationed in the colony, allegedly influenced by the United Irishman Rebellion in Ireland, started to scheme. They planned to mutiny, kill their officers and the colonial administration, and then take over the colony's capital, St. John's. Although later investigations suggested that over four hundred had agreed to take part, by bad luck and treachery, only nineteen mutinied. Although this attempted rebellion was a poorly instigated, one-off event, it resonated with the fear that the Irish would mount a wider rebellion.⁶²⁹ The concept of Irish troops as something other than loyal had entered the Canadian psyche and via reports of rebellions in Ireland, was now coupled with a more localised threat. Further events would compound that impression. With large-scale immigration from Ireland during the period, Newfoundland had become known as a 'Transatlantic Tipperary' and its Irish population became the brunt of both domestic and British press attacks.⁶³⁰ By the middle of the nineteenth century Irish immigrants formed a significant minority in British North America, three hundred thousand Irish, out of a total

Grandmothers: A Reader in Aboriginal Women's History in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 161.

⁶²⁷ Ferguson, *Empire*, 110.

⁶²⁸ Gerald Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 1-19.

⁶²⁹ Jerry Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals: Law, Custom and Naval Government in Newfoundland, 1699-1832* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 220.

⁶³⁰ John Greene, *Between Damnation and Starvation: Priests and Merchants in Newfoundland Politics, 1745-1855* (Quebec: McGill-Queen's Press, 2001), 147.

population of around two and a half million.⁶³¹ No rebellion materialised, but that did not stop the Tory sections of the press highlighting discontent in Ireland. Their task was made easier with the involvement of Irish immigrants in strikes, riots and terrorist attacks around the time of the Rebellion.⁶³² As many of these were reactions to anti-Catholic events, they may not have been as one sided as the Protestant press suggested.⁶³³

Lower Canada was seen at the time as having three distinct population groups, the French, Irish, and the British Protestants.⁶³⁴ Each had their own press. The two most influential reform newspapers were the *Toronto Globe*, established by the liberal reformer and Clear Grits⁶³⁵ leader George Brown in 1844, and William Lyon Mackenzie's the *Colonial Advocate*.⁶³⁶ Their editors served their political agendas, by using both papers as a method to expand the audience for their views. Of the two, Brown would be the most successful, but anti-French⁶³⁷, and Mackenzie the loudest and pro-French. Other papers that took a similar line as the *Globe* included the *Hamilton Weekly Times*, and the *Pilot*. Based on the quantity of copy on imperial and foreign news, it was apparent that Canadians were interested in what was happening abroad⁶³⁸. Canadian newspapers based in coastal settlements tended to reprise the prejudices of British journals, while more internal papers focussed on the domestic.

English language papers in Lower Canada tended towards the conservative, including the *Montreal Weekly Gazette* and the *Quebec Gazette*, reflecting the newly arrived immigrant

⁶³¹ Statistics Canada url [<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm>] Accessed 4 October 2009.

⁶³² For example, the Gavazzi Riots of 1853 and the Toronto National Hotel attack of 1858.

⁶³³ Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's Press, 1993), 186.

⁶³⁴ Arthur Lower, *Canadians in the Making: A Social History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, 1958), 265.

⁶³⁵ A precursor of the Liberal Party of Canada.

⁶³⁶ For a more detailed history see Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1967).

⁶³⁷ Ged Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1995), 15.

⁶³⁸ Philip A Buckner, *Canada and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 75.

population from the mother country, whose attitudes were predominately British, and imperialist.⁶³⁹ French language journals followed three approaches: the radical ‘rouge’ one taken by the likes of *L’Avenir*; the ‘bleu’ *Le Journal de Quebec*, which favoured working inside the system;⁶⁴⁰ and the *Le Courrier du Canada* approach of supporting British imperialism outside Canada. In general, French language newspapers in Canada reported local news, unless anything critical appeared in the French press. This produced a similar battle of words, as with the loyalist and nationalist press in Ireland, with old battles being refought.

The 1837 Rebellions in both Upper and Lower Canada proved to be more serious. Common grievance and a feeling of their views being ignored by a Governor and Legislative Council, that was perceived to lack any local accountability, provoked feelings of resentment that boiled over in rebellion along the Saint Lawrence River. The more pressing of the two uprisings, the Lower Canada Rebellion, was a larger and more sustained uprising by French Canadian rebels, with a substantial minority of Anglophone immigrant supporters against the colonial government in Lower Canada. The rebellion had a distinctly foreign edge to it, in those involved and the tactics used. The predominately French-speaking rebels, calling themselves ‘patriotes’, adopted both American and revolutionary French symbols.⁶⁴¹ This helped emphasise the ethnic and cultural differences that the French settlers in Canada added that was an extra aspect of concern to the colonial authorities. With four-fifths of the Europeans living in Lower Canada being French-speaking, the whole province seemed suspect.⁶⁴² The rebels also used tactics of the American Revolution, like boycotting British products. It was not hard to envisage there being a second war of independence aided by the United States.

⁶³⁹ J.M.S. Careless, “Mid-Victorian Liberalism in Central Canadian Newspapers, 1850-67”, *Canadian Historical Review*, 31, 3 (1950): 222-36.

⁶⁴⁰ Antony Rasporich, “Imperial Sentiment in the Province of Canada during the Crimean War. 1854-1856”, in William Morton (ed.), *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1969), 141.

⁶⁴¹ Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (London: Vintage, 2007), 78.

⁶⁴² Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation*, 8.

Newspapers played a role in the build up to rebellion, but there were the internal disagreements, as in Upper Canada about how to achieve their goals. French language newspapers like *Le Canadien* were supportive of the cause, but not rebellion. Other more radical papers such as *Le Liberal*, which was founded as a challenge to the perceived timidity of *Le Canadien*⁶⁴³, provided the counter. The constitutionalist *Le Populaire* represented moderate reformers. The semi-official newspaper of the ‘patriotes’ *La Minerve* worked in conjunction with the few English language reform papers, especially two of the editors of the *Vinidactor*.

Three Irish-born newspaper editors would play a crucial role in giving the French speakers of the Saint Lawrence valley an English language voice.⁶⁴⁴ The first was Jocelyn Waller, originally from Tipperary, who arrived in Canada in 1817. Waller helped to provide an English language outlet for a primarily French-speaking movement. In the October of 1822 he transformed *Le Spectateur Canadien* into the *Canadian Spectator*. Waller died in 1829 leaving a hole that was filled by another Irishman. Continuing Waller’s methods, Daniel Tracey started to publish the *Irish Vindicator and Canada General Advertiser*, in December 1828.⁶⁴⁵ He aimed to give a voice to the Irish immigrant population but also sought to link both the Irish and Canadian reform movements. To do so he reprinted many of the letters and speeches of Irish Catholic reformer Daniel O’Connell. Tracey supported ‘patriote’ leader Louis-Joseph Papineau, who he put on an equal level with O’Connell, a man who Papineau himself described as a great leader.⁶⁴⁶ Papineau became the ‘O’Connell of Canada’⁶⁴⁷ whose political actions could be supported in the *Vindicator*, the same way as his Irish counterpart.⁶⁴⁸ The third was Irish born journalist and editor Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan,

⁶⁴³ Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 132.

⁶⁴⁴ James Jackson, “The Radicalisation of the Montreal Irish: the role of The Vindicator”, *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 31, 1 (2005): 90.

⁶⁴⁵ France Galarneau, “TRACEY, DANIEL,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003 onwards, accessed 1 August 2015.
http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tracey_daniel_6E.html.

⁶⁴⁶ Fergus O’Ferrall, *Catholic Emancipation, Daniel O’Connell and the Birth of Irish Democracy* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985), 284.

⁶⁴⁷ Greer, *The patriots and the People*, 134.

⁶⁴⁸ *Vindicator*, 15 May, 1829.

who had emigrated to Quebec in 1823. After having worked in several professions he joined the Lower Canada assembly in 1834. Two years earlier he became the editor of the *Vindicator* after 'patriote' Édouard-Raymond Fabre had purchased it from Tracey's estate. O'Callaghan took over the paper in a period when reformers were moving from being moderate to more extreme and followed suit.⁶⁴⁹ O'Callaghan approach of advocating reform coupled with editorial integrity⁶⁵⁰ substantially increased the numbers of subscribers but also led to his offices being attacked⁶⁵¹ O'Callaghan reprinted Daniel O'Connell's 'Letters to the Irish People' and editorialised about them linking the Irish and Canadian struggles together.⁶⁵² O'Callaghan although a strong supporter of O'Connell's methods, saw him as someone working for reform 'legally and safely'⁶⁵³ while he moved along another path: 'there must be no peace in the Province, no quarter for the plunderers...Destroy the Revenue; denounce the oppressors. Everything is lawful when the fundamental liberties are in danger.'

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Fleeing to the United States after the rebellion's collapse, O'Callaghan was never to return. Several historians have seen a 'striking parallel' between the Lower Canada rebellion and contemporary uprisings in Ireland, following on a practice started at the time.⁶⁵⁵ O'Callaghan directly linked the struggle in Ireland to that of his province, presenting Lower Canada as the 'Ireland of North America' a land of majority Catholics, ruled by a minority of Protestants.⁶⁵⁶

In Lower Canada the Irish Catholics were a minority both of the English speakers, but also of their faith, but represented an important minority in political terms.⁶⁵⁷ It was they who could

⁶⁴⁹ Gerald Bernier and Daniel Salee, *The Shaping of Quebec Politics and Society: Colonialism, Power, and the Transition to Capitalism in the 19th Century* (New York: Crane Russak, 1992), 108.

⁶⁵⁰ *Vindicator*, 12 June, 1833.

⁶⁵¹ H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1984), 104.

⁶⁵² Helen Manning, *The Revolt of French Canada 1800-1835* (Toronto: McMillan, Toronto, 192), 213-21.

⁶⁵³ *Vindicator*, 28 May, 1833.

⁶⁵⁴ *Vindicator*, April 21, 1837.

⁶⁵⁵ Greer, *The patriots and the people*, 134.

⁶⁵⁶ *Vindicator*, 14 April, 1837.

⁶⁵⁷ Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada*, 104.

provide a majority in many wards that the French alone could not. This produced a situation in which many English speaking reformers represented French speaking ridings.

The second rebellion occurred in the Province of Upper Canada, the southern section of present day Ontario, of pro-American⁶⁵⁸ reformers, resentful of land distribution, the old order represented by a local oligarchy known, by a term coined by William Lyon Mackenzie, the 'Family Compact'⁶⁵⁹, and poor economic situation. The rebellion took the form of small scale skirmishes and actions that posed no real challenge to the British and Provincial forces. It would have caused little concern, if many of the attacks had not been launched from the United States. In the Maritimes there was a similar demand for reform led by Joseph Howe, but no rebellion occurred. Two years Howe had been tried for seditious libel after publishing a letter in his paper the *Novascotian* alleging corruption in high places. Although the judge instructed the jury to convict, Howe was acquitted.⁶⁶⁰ Howe later started on a political career.

On both sides newspapers, their editors, and contributors played a major part in the rebellion, firstly in creating a debate and then using it to push their agendas. With the obvious government control of the official media newspapers it became the only effective way to communicate alternate viewpoints with a disparate audience. This was primarily of use for those favouring reform.⁶⁶¹ It was a similar pattern that had developed in Irish newspapers during the Young Irelander Rebellion.

In Upper Canada those advocating reform tended not to be native-born. Scottish-born journalist and editor William Lyon Mackenzie started his career by writing for a number of colonial papers, including the *Montreal Herald* and the *York Observer* before he establishes his own paper, the *Colonial Advocate*, in 1824. The only real voice of dissent in newspaper

⁶⁵⁸ Ferguson, *Empire*, 110.

⁶⁵⁹ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 29.

⁶⁶⁰ J. Murray Beck, *Joseph Howe: Conservative Reformer, 1804-1848*, Vol. 1 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), 8-9.

⁶⁶¹ Gerald Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 200.

form in the 1820s, it was soon joined by several others and a decade later reformers had a strong voice in the press.⁶⁶² Later in 1836 he formed the *Constitution* newspaper. Mackenzie, a self-imposed champion of the working people of Upper Canada, through the *Advocate* began promoting political reform, equality of rights for all settlers, and an end to the Family Compact's control in Upper Canada, the 'enemies ... of liberty everywhere'.⁶⁶³ In those issues he was not alone with other voices for reform using newspapers to further their cause. Mackenzie's arguments fell afoul of conservative journals, such as the *Kingston Chronicle*. This led to a battle of editorials. It was not only conservatives that received Mackenzie's attention, but other reforming minded newspapers such as William Warren Baldwin and later his son, Robert. The Baldwins favoured a reformed legislature, based on the British Parliament while Mackenzie favoured a United States model. The Baldwins, seen as nobodies by Mackenzie, would eventually have far more influence than he did.⁶⁶⁴ Robert Baldwin with Hippolyte de Fontaine led two Province of Canada administrations in 1842 and 1848. Another target of Mackenzie's ire was his former ally Egerton Ryerson the editor of *Christian Guardian*.

Working within the system could not produce the change Mackenzie was after. As a result, he became a leader of the Upper Canada Rebellion and summed up their cause such as in his 'Proclamation for a Provisional Government for the State of Upper Canada'.⁶⁶⁵ Those who Mackenzie opposed he described with similar overstatement, but with added invective.⁶⁶⁶ With the failure of the rebellion Mackenzie fled to the United States. After eleven years of exile he was included in a general amnesty and returned to the new Province of Canada. After his return from exile Mackenzie continued to be highly critical of British foreign policy and imperialism, which he saw as a way of preserving the influence of the aristocracy.⁶⁶⁷ In his new paper, Mackenzie's *Weekly Message*, founded in 1852, he spoke out against British

⁶⁶² Craig, *Upper Canada*, 200.

⁶⁶³ *Message*, 14 August, 1857.

⁶⁶⁴ Mackenzie quoted in Lilian Gates, *After the rebellion: the later years of William Lyon Mackenzie* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988), 86.

⁶⁶⁵ 'A Proclamation for a Provisional Government for the State of Upper Canada, to be established on Navy Island', 13 December, 1837.

⁶⁶⁶ *Constitution*, 12 July, 1827.

⁶⁶⁷ *Message*, 14 August, 1857.

foreign policy such as the Second Opium War.⁶⁶⁸ He was not concerned about the effect that his copy was having on his reputation and that on his paper.⁶⁶⁹ Mackenzie remained supportive of rebel factions. During the Rebellion period he would support the rebel cause, but not their methods saying so in editorials in the *Weekly Message*.⁶⁷⁰ The *Message* perpetuating its editor's struggles with the 'Family Compact' argued that the British were only in India to give the younger sons of the aristocracy something to do and likened their behaviour to the slave trade.⁶⁷¹ He also attempted to forward a theory, that the British 'conservative aristocracy' was actively trying to trigger rebellions, in order to avoid reform⁶⁷² and was funded by the taxpayers of Britain and her colonies.⁶⁷³ He suggested that this was not their first attempt because they had done this before both in Ireland and Canada.⁶⁷⁴ Mackenzie's desire for equality was not limited to the French speakers but also encompassed 'the inhabitants of Hindostan' who were as capable of civilisation as 'the Celt or Anglo-Saxon', but not the 'woolyhaired African'.⁶⁷⁵ Faced with the reports of atrocities in India, Mackenzie became somewhat even handed, placing a bit of the blame on the Indians. He claimed that '[t]here is cruelty on both sides' and asked 'Which has the most reason to be cruel? The strangers who seek to trample India for gain, or the natives whose home is there?'⁶⁷⁶

The desire for responsive government resulted in the two Rebellions of 1837. Ethnic and cultural differences, plus economic and rural hardship produced this desire for reform that the British government tried, in part, to meet. The Durham Report of 1839 recommended responsible government and the assimilation of French Canadians into British culture to dilute the French influence. By 1848 there was representative government in Nova Scotia and in the next eight years most of the Canada was governed directly by its people. This form of

⁶⁶⁸ *Message*, 19 June, 1857.

⁶⁶⁹ Gates, *After the rebellion*, 290.

⁶⁷⁰ *Message*, 17 July, 1857, 14 August, 1857.

⁶⁷¹ *Message*, 7 August, 1857.

⁶⁷² *Message*, 18 September, 1857.

⁶⁷³ *Message*, 14 September, 1857.

⁶⁷⁴ *Message*, 11 September, 1857.

⁶⁷⁵ *Message*, 5 February, 1858.

⁶⁷⁶ *Message*, 18 September, 1857.

self-rule was limited to the ‘white’ settler colonies. The colonial authorities did not rely on conciliation alone, as hundreds of rebels were transported to Australia. These reforms which were designed to make Canada ‘more British’⁶⁷⁷, both ethnically, and structurally, removed much that had caused discontent and produced a Canada, that by the time of the Rebellion that openly expressed its patriotism, the English people in an extreme way, and the Francophone, to avoid criticism or suspicion.⁶⁷⁸ There were still marked differences in the attitudes of the two communities, more so when dealing with imperial issues. As in Ireland India was used as an equivalence for events in Canada.

Domestically in Britain and throughout the empire, newspapers were used as a means of voicing dissent and organising resistance on both sides of most debates. One example of this occurred eight years before the rebellion in Montreal. In the April of 1849 sections of the Tory population of the city were involved, in what would become known as the Montreal Riots. It was a response to the Rebellion Losses Bill which compensated those who had suffered loss during the Lower Canadian Rebellion, even the rebels. The rioting culminated in the burning of the Parliament Buildings. Newspapers again played an important part in events. On the day of Parliament’s burning the Montreal Gazette, published an ‘Extra’ edition that vividly described the events of the day.⁶⁷⁹ They highlighted and promoted a mass meeting to protest.⁶⁸⁰ The Canadian press could also do damage that spread. The thousand or so people who signed the Annexation Manifesto to become part of the United States were viewed as being motivated by economic rather than political concerns⁶⁸¹ and as such confirmed the general opinion in Canada and Britain that it was of little importance.⁶⁸² The Canadian press took an important role in defining how these events were viewed empire-

⁶⁷⁷ Catherine Hall and Keith MacCelland and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 200.

⁶⁷⁸ Antony Rasporich, “Imperial Sentiment in the Province of Canada during the Crimean War. 1854-1856”, in William Morton (ed.), *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1969), 139-68.

⁶⁷⁹ *Montreal Gazette*, Extra Edition, 25 April, 1849.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 71.

⁶⁸² For example, *Freeman’s Journal*, 30 October, 1849, and *Morning Chronicle*, 10 January, 1850.

wide.⁶⁸³ They classed those who signed as a group of ‘protectionists and tories’ worried about ‘their loss of commercial and political privilege’ from the abolition of the Corn Laws, and post rebellion measures.⁶⁸⁴ The association between the press and rebellion was not limited to editors, but many who worked for the newspapers.

Having looked at the press of British North America and how they covered rebellions domestically, we will now move on to examine how the English language press of the colonies, reacted to the copy generated by their French language and Irish edited counterparts.

The Francophone and Irish Press of British North America

The Canadian Francophile and phone press’ view of British imperialism was highly coloured by their own experience of it. It was almost universally negative and produced an odd dynamic, in which the Canadian French language press could see their French imperialism as ‘noble’, but British imperialism as the ‘ignoble’.⁶⁸⁵ The imperialism that had brought them to Canada was acceptable, that which had brought the British was not. They could be supportive though of those they saw as ‘brilliant’ such as Sir Henry Havelock whose death from dysentery *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* mourned, but critical of the enterprise of which they were part.⁶⁸⁶ The press in France drew a similarly negative reaction from parts of the British colonial press as which they found them full of sentiments that they could agree with. In Lower Canada francophone newspapers, also used such copy, as a way of criticising the British. Canada was not the only location with critical French language copy. A very vocal one was found, taking sides in the disputes over Indian immigration to another former French colony, Mauritius. The French speaking population along with Irish immigrants formed a majority, while a Protestant minority ruled over them. Unlike the Irish they were isolationist and not part of the imperial project but happy to criticise it. During this period there was a

⁶⁸³ For example, in the *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 November, 1849.

⁶⁸⁴ Martin, *Britain and the Origins*, 181.

⁶⁸⁵ *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 24 July, 1857.

⁶⁸⁶ *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 29 January, 1858.

great deal of controversy about ‘alleged power of journals to foment dissidence or revolt’⁶⁸⁷ some of which was based on fact.

Other papers repeated critical press the found in the foreign press. They did this in order to be able to criticise it or would reprint third party other copy that did.⁶⁸⁸ It was not unusual for such copy to in turn be reprinted. In general, the Australian press believed that in Europe and the United States the populous was largely supportive of the British in India, regardless of what some of their papers printed.⁶⁸⁹ Anglophone Canadian journals chose to emphasise the commonalties between the British and the Canadians on race, religion, and culture in order to counter the differences created by a large minority with another language and religion.⁶⁹⁰

The local prejudices of Canadian journals influenced how they viewed the players in the Rebellion. The *Globe*, a fervent critic of the Hudson Bay Company and its attempts to limit the expansion of Upper Canada, saw the East India Company as an arm of the British Government. As the paper did not like criticising the British government, it could not attack its ‘mouthpiece’ - the Company.⁶⁹¹ This produced a situation in which the paper found its scope for comment limited. The *Globe* had difficulties about how to tone its reporting of the Rebellion for their customer base. Although the paper saw the long-term future of the British Empire as ‘stable and secure’ once the Rebellion and other challenges had been dealt with in the short term at least, ‘[h]anging by a hair’ was the *Globe*’s view of the empire in the east.⁶⁹² Most other Canadian papers, even those of a liberal vent, acknowledged that the Company and empire were separate entities. This separation allowed the papers to criticise the way the Company was running India, without risking being classed as being against the British

⁶⁸⁷ Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 23.

⁶⁸⁸ *Northern Bee*, 3-18 September, 1857, reprinted in *Melbourne Argus*, 26 December, 1857, Hobart *Town Mercury*, 8 January, 1858, and *Perth Gazette*, 15 January, 1858, *Times* summary of American press opinion in the *Argus*, 8 December, 1857.

⁶⁸⁹ *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 19 November, 1857.

⁶⁹⁰ *Montreal Weekly Gazette*, 28 November, 1857.

⁶⁹¹ *Globe*, 16 January, 1858.

⁶⁹² James Careless, *Brown of the Globe: Statesman of Confederation, 1860-1880*, Vol 2, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989), 2; *Globe*, 10 November, 1857.

government. A noted exception was the Irish founded *New Era* which decided to follow the *Globe*'s approach. It argued that 'every friend of justice' would want separate roles in India for the Company and the British Army. The paper stated that there were 'two powers [in] India, both British'.⁶⁹³ The French language press unconcerned at being seen as critical of the British government, so easily linked it with the Company. As news spread of the seriousness of what was happening, there was a common call in British North America for power in India to be transferred from the Company to the British State.⁶⁹⁴ The East India Company simply had 'few friends left' in Britain or its colonies. The situation was no different abroad.⁶⁹⁵ The news that the Company was being abolished was greeted in Canada with satisfaction from all parts of the community, with the *New Era* suggesting that 'every disinterested person is pleased that the Company's old humdrum system has come to an end'.⁶⁹⁶ The nature of the Rebellion was something else that separated French and English-speaking papers. Considering their position in British North America it is not surprising that journals aimed at French speakers matched their prejudices about it being a actual uprising.⁶⁹⁷ The majority of the English language papers, the radical *Toronto Weekly Message* excluded, saw it as a Rebellion that was attracting some popular support.⁶⁹⁸ The *Pilot* agreed arguing that although things were instigated by the soldiery, the general population 'sympathize with them and wish them success'.⁶⁹⁹

It should be noted that it was common practice for journals to quote others, domestic or foreign, which agreed with their stance or just those available on the latest steamer. This produced a situation in which any news, regardless of source, seemed to be worth printing. This led to conservative papers further afield, such as New South Wales' *Maitland Mercury*

⁶⁹³ *New Era*, 16 October, 1857.

⁶⁹⁴ Examples can be found in *Quebec Gazette*, 14 August 1857; *New Era*, 17 December, 1857.

⁶⁹⁵ James Byrne 'British Opinion and the Indian Revolt' in Priti Joshi (ed.), *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium* (New Dehli: People's Publishing House, 1957), 294; Fournian, *Contemporary French Press*, 313-21.

⁶⁹⁶ *New Era*, 17 December, 1857.

⁶⁹⁷ *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 10 November, 1857.

⁶⁹⁸ *Message*, 7 August, 1857.

⁶⁹⁹ *Pilot*, 13 August, 1857.

or Western Australia's *Perth Gazette* reprinting critical foreign copy.⁷⁰⁰ Other papers would comment on foreign copy, in order to advance their agendas or to counter others.

The radical sections of the Canadian press sought to highlight what it saw as the bad behaviour of the East India Company. D'Arcy McGee, the Irish born editor of the *New Era*, harked back to fellow Irishman Edmund Burke's criticism of Warren Hastings suggesting that the sepoys had yet to exceed the 'atrocities described by Burke' in the 1780s.⁷⁰¹ McGee was concerned about false reports of meetings of Irishmen in New York City showing sympathy for the sepoys. Arguing that there were a quarter of a million Irish in New York and the meeting was held in a hall that held three hundred, so it was hardly representative.⁷⁰² Both sides of the religious divide in Canada saw the need to counter the copy of the New York press. McGee's concern, that the Irish were being linked to the sepoys, was not without foundation. In November the *Head Quarters* claimed that McGee was a madman who 'raised the standard of revolt in Ireland in 1848'. This placed him as part of a class of people, including the *Nation*, who sympathised with the sepoys and prayed for 'England's humiliation'.⁷⁰³ The *New Era* countered these allegations.⁷⁰⁴

While the British press reported atrocity stories without much thought, the Canadian press took a slightly more measured, but mixed approach. While they were against indiscriminate retribution⁷⁰⁵ and targeting the families of mutineers,⁷⁰⁶ they still felt that justice had to be done in the 'Western fashion'.⁷⁰⁷ Unlike the British press, they were supportive of the 'clemency' proposed by Indian Governor-General Canning but not of its timing.⁷⁰⁸ They were also willing to be apologists for some of the extremes of British behaviour. The killing

⁷⁰⁰ *Maitland Mercury*, 14 November, 1857; *Perth Gazette*, 11 December, 1857.

⁷⁰¹ A common theme in the paper examples of which can be found in *New Era*, 26 September, 1857 and 8 December, 1857.

⁷⁰² *New Era*, 24 September, 1857.

⁷⁰³ *Head Quarters*, 4 November, 1857.

⁷⁰⁴ *New Era*, 24 October, 1857.

⁷⁰⁵ *Pilot*, 22 August 1857, 6 November, 1857.

⁷⁰⁶ *True Witness*, 9 October, 1857.

⁷⁰⁷ *Pilot*, 6 November, 1857.

⁷⁰⁸ *Pilot*, 6 November, 1857.

of a few innocents is acceptable if women and children are spared⁷⁰⁹, and if any were killed it would be wrong but understandable.⁷¹⁰ Such a mixed message was limited to just the papers. A correspondent to the *Pilot* accepted that bad things happened in war but saw ‘wholesale fire-raising’ was the Devil’s work.⁷¹¹

Information was seen as the key to improve the situation of the Irish, at home or in the colonies. The Irish press could ‘elevate’ the Irish ‘above the degraded position of serfs’.⁷¹² This ‘elevation’, for only ‘a dollar every three months’ had a direct effect on how the empire countered the Rebellion.⁷¹³ The Toronto-based *Mirror* argued that the difficulties it perceived that the British were having recruiting Irish troops to fight in India, was the product of an increased knowledge of ‘Ireland’s history and its wrongs’.⁷¹⁴ The Irish press in Canada wanted to educate their population about how the Protestant press had their community and were concerned about the ‘lukewarm’ response they were getting.⁷¹⁵ Some even argued that the Irish populous was weak but the journals were strong.⁷¹⁶ Ironically much of this information came from correspondents, people who lived in foreign climes and had little or ‘no experience of Canada’.⁷¹⁷

The search for third party involvement, something to be examined in detail in a later chapter, was not an attempt to simply attach blame, or to divert attention away from the real causes of the revolt India. Those looking at other countries, as the driving force behind the Rebellion fervently believed it was the reality. They accepted that there was no concrete evidence linking a foreign power to the Rebellion. There did not need to be any. The press was looking at possibilities not probabilities, meaning that circumstantial evidence was sufficient. They asked themselves who would gain from a large-scale rebellion against Company rule. The

⁷⁰⁹ *Montreal Weekly Gazette*, 21 November, 1857.

⁷¹⁰ *Quebec Gazette*, 23 November, 1857.

⁷¹¹ *Pilot*, 17 September, 1857; 21 October, 1857.

⁷¹² *Catholic Citizen* reprinted in *Montreal Witness*, 15 November, 1856.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁴ *Mirror*, 23 October, 1857.

⁷¹⁵ *Canadian Freeman*, 20 November, 1862.

⁷¹⁶ *Mirror*, 18 June, 1858.

⁷¹⁷ Glasgow correspondent in *Pilot*, 19 February, 1858.

answer was a number of countries. China would fight a newly weakened opponent, Russian expansion in Central Asia would be easier, as would that of Persia, while France and the United States benefited from a weakened imperial rival. It also helped cement a sense of identity, in opposition to those nations who might be a threat or seek to criticise. Domestic groups that represented, in part, these foreign nations were similarly criticised. Informed by their own fears some colonists, through their press, wished to find this elusive outside player, who was inconveniently hidden by a lack of evidence.

While the press of the British North America may have been internally fractured on the lines of ethnicity and language, it also sought to respond to copy produced in the United States, a nation that had proven to be a consistent threat both externally through border disputes and the threat of invasion, but also as a source of support and protection to those seeking the violent overthrow of the administration. This is what we will now focus on.

British North America and its Neighbour to the South

As a group of colonies situated in direct proximity with an often troublesome and critical neighbour, British North America provides an example of how a topic like the Rebellion speedily became localised. With the two sources of critical coverage, the Francophone press and that of the United States provided the generally supportive Canadian press with a chance to criticise those nations and groups. who were threats to their colonies. Empire wide issues about foreign involvement quickly narrowed into domestic and neighbouring critics.

The United States was both a former colony that had achieved independence and the only quasi-European state that bordered on a major British colony. The American War of Independence had created a comparatively strong and hostile neighbour to Canada's south. As one that was vocal in its opinions of Canada and its former mother country, it often appeared more of a threat than it actually was. Criticism could have a personal aspect, as Canada had become the home in exile of many loyalists, who had fled the newly independent United States. In the twenty years between the Canadian rebellions of 1837 and the

Rebellion, British North America had changed politically and culturally. British North America was now more secure internally. Politically the issues that had produced rebellion were resolved or contained and culturally British North America was becoming more Anglo Saxon. Population distribution between the two Canadas favoured Upper Canada, and thus those who spoke English.⁷¹⁸ This left a French speaking minority large enough ‘for cultural survival, but too few to encourage any dreams of an independent state’.⁷¹⁹ While this did not stop the English language press from criticising Irish and French Canadians it created an opportunity for them to voice their opinions on British North America’s southern neighbour, the United States.

Although invasion seemed a continuous threat, it only materialised once and in doing so created distinctiveness in Canadians. The War of 1812 led to a number of often shambolic attempts by the Americans to invade Upper Canada, with an army twelve thousand strong. This continuing threat coupled with the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions, meant a substantial number of regular British troops had to be kept in Canada, something that went contrary to the accepted public opinion of the time.⁷²⁰ The press of Canada’s Maritime Provinces⁷²¹ regularly expressed local concern about the vulnerability of the area to American attack. It was commonly believed that Canada’s ‘sedentary’ military could no more resist an American attack than ‘a fish could walk up a beanpole’.⁷²² The Caroline Affair, during the Upper Canadian Rebellion and the subsequent McLeod Affair created the impression that the United States was willing to involve itself directly in British North American affairs, on the side of those trying to overthrow the state.⁷²³ Two boundary disputes with the United States, which at times erupted into localised violence, added to the tensions between the two communities, something discussed by the press on both sides.

⁷¹⁸ Martin, *Britain and the Origins*, 14.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid, 8.

⁷²⁰ Frank Greenwood and Barry Wright, *Canadian State Trials: Rebellion and Invasion in the Canadas, 1837-1839*, Vol 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 22.

⁷²¹ New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

⁷²² Fredericton newspaper quoted in Martin, *Britain and the Origins*, 63.

⁷²³ The first the seizing and burning by the Canadian militia of the US vessel SS Caroline that was aiding the rebels during the Upper Canadian Rebellion and second Canadian who falsely claimed to have been involved in the Caroline Affair was tried and acquitted in the US for arson and murder.

On the eastern seaboard of the continent a boundary dispute between Maine, and Quebec and New Brunswick escalated into a series of skirmishes, popularly known as the Aroostook War. The ‘war’ for two years from 1838 showed how simple disputes about where a border ran, could cause heightened local tension. The arrest of a Maine census official, in disputed territory produced a mobilisation of the militias on both sides. Local feuds, personal animosities, and resentment left over from the occupation of parts of Maine, during the War of 1812 had found an outlet.⁷²⁴ The power of the local press was apparent, as it fed the fires of that antagonism.⁷²⁵ Things became so serious that Sir George Arthur, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada mused, ‘I don’t see how this can terminate without a *General war*’.⁷²⁶ The national governments on both sides, realising that things were getting out of hand, sought to calm things down. President Martin Van Buren sent General Winfield Scott to diffuse the tensions on the border and prevent any American incursions into British North America. The British government’s attitude was that ‘minor arguments over the strategic value of barren lands in North America were unimportant compared with the possibility of war with...Britain’s best customer’.⁷²⁷ Both governments who were facing more important difficulties ‘chose peace over war’, but still had to persuade those at the frontier and the editors of their newspapers.⁷²⁸ This boundary and others were eventually resolved in 1842 with the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Two earlier treaties had sought to lower tensions. In the Pacific North West, a further issue, unsolved by the London Convention of 1818, became the cause of yet another quarrel over territory, known as the Oregon Boundary Dispute. In the United States expansionist fever, ‘Manifest Destiny’, gripped the country in the 1840s with President James Polk’s call for the ‘reoccupation’ of Oregon, triggering an understandably negative response on the British side.⁷²⁹ Both sides hovered near war. The issue was

⁷²⁴ Howard Jones, ‘Anglophobia and the Aroostook War’, *New England Quarterly*, 48, 4 (1975): 519-20.

⁷²⁵ For an examination of the involvement of the press before and during the Aroostook War see Howard Jones and Donald Rakestraw, *Prologue to Manifest Destiny: Anglo-American Relations in the 1840s*, (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

⁷²⁶ Quoted in Francis Carroll, *A Good and Wise Measure: The Search for the Canadian-American Boundary, 1783-1842* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 209.

⁷²⁷ Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 64.

⁷²⁸ Howard Jones and Donald Rakestraw, *Prologue to Manifest Destiny: Anglo-American Relations in the 1840s* (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 19.

⁷²⁹ *New York Morning News*, 27 December, 1845, quoted in Chad Reimer, “Borders of the Past: The Oregon Boundary Dispute and the Beginnings of Northwest Historiography” in John Findlay and Ken Coates

eventually solved when both sides pulled back from war and agreed the 1846 Oregon Treaty. United States expansionism had a troubling aspect for British North America with the American Articles of Confederation pre-approving Canadian entry into the United States. Fear of annexation was exacerbated by the increasing population of Canada's much larger southern neighbour. In 1860 the population of the United States was over 31 million, whilst Canadian provinces, or even Canada as a whole were being likened to population sizes of British cities. Canada was though the British colony, with the largest European population something that Canadians could read about in the *New Era*.⁷³⁰ Both of these disputes were more important locally than nationally but could easily grow to national importance.

The most extreme copy from foreign papers was not just reprinted in the Irish Canadian press, but the mainstream Canadian press. The *Globe*⁷³¹ and the *Pilot*⁷³² amongst others reprinted copy from the *New York Irish News* which enthusiastically hoped for 'Himalayan heaps of English slain, and Ganges' generous flood incardinated with English blood'. The *Montreal Weekly Gazette* reprinted material from Irish nationalist newspaper the *Nation*.⁷³³

British assumptions of security and stability were challenged by the Rebellion, but Canadian insecurity was reinforced. In Canada, as in the homeland, the loss of India equated to a substantial loss of status.⁷³⁴ Such concern that things go wrong reached Canada quickly. In the two Canadas the issue passed with little comment, but it found resonance in the other provinces. Halifax's the *British Colonist* argued that the Britain will lose India 'and when that happens, she is lost, sinks to a fourth rate power, and will not be able to look even the United State in the face!'⁷³⁵ This fear of becoming inferiors was common in the Maritime Provinces with other papers such as the *Head Quarters* taking a very similar line. That

(eds), *Parallel destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2002), 222.

⁷³⁰ Martin, *Britain and the Origins*, 9; *New Era*, 17 September, 1857.

⁷³¹ *Globe*, 22 February, 1858.

⁷³² *Pilot*, 16 February, 1858.

⁷³³ *Montreal Weekly Gazette*, 31 October, 1857.

⁷³⁴ For example, *Times*, 6 July, 1857.

⁷³⁵ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

journal also argued that the loss of India would reduce the standing of the British ‘to the rank of a fourth or fifth rate power’.⁷³⁶ This was an opinion that the paper found echoed in the New York press and in the British domestic press.⁷³⁷ In August 1857 the *Head Quarters* commented on how the American press was speculating on the ‘probability’ that the British would lose in India, that opinion was something that the paper took affront to.⁷³⁸ But in case the worse actually happened, the Halifax British Colonist in the same edition, expressed their fears about Britain’s position, but also raised doubts about the subcontinent’s importance. The paper stated that they did ‘not regard the possession of India to be such vital consequence to England as it is the fashion of many to do’. They took this attitude only when there was a real possibility that the British might suffer substantial territorial losses or even losses. To those in foreign countries, that wished the British ill, the message the Canadian press wanted to impart was simple: ‘England will not succumb to a mere sepoy mutiny’ just as Canada could not submit to being ceded ‘like slaves’ to another country’s rule, especially the United States.⁷³⁹ The population of Canada would have to be ‘demented’ to comply with such an idea.⁷⁴⁰ The perceived influence of the United States was not limited to North America. The appearance of United States trading ships in Natal and parts of Australia, in the first half of the nineteenth century and rumours of planned settlements expanded the area in which they were viewed, as a threat in those colonies.⁷⁴¹

Used to promote causes and counter others, newspapers provided even the smallest settlement or interest group with a voice. The predominately rural interior of the two Canadas was more insular than the Maritimes, with their links to the outside world. This showed in their newspapers. British North America's second-oldest weekly newspaper the *Perth Courier* made an issue of the loyalty of native troops, but this was the exception, not the rule.⁷⁴² Although not totally ignorant of what was happening abroad, Canadians, according to Upper

⁷³⁶ *Head Quarters*, 19 August, 1857.

⁷³⁷ *Illustrated London News*, 4 July, 1857.

⁷³⁸ *Head Quarters*, 19 August, 1857.

⁷³⁹ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

⁷⁴⁰ *Head Quarters*, 19 August, 1857.

⁷⁴¹ See K. MacKirdy, “The Fear of American Intervention as a Factor in British Expansion: Western Australia and Natal”, *Pacific Historical Review*, 35, 2 (1966): 123-39.

⁷⁴² *Perth Courier*, 7 August, 1857.

Canada's *Pilot* knew 'little about' India and its inhabitants. The desire to hold onto India was not universal, with Upper Canada's *Pilot* wishing that 'England was well rid of India' because it produced little more than 'anxiety, trouble, and expense'.⁷⁴³ Their motives were financial. It was concerned about the undeclared costs of involvement in India, that gained the country nothing but the supposed monopoly of East India Company's requests for loans.⁷⁴⁴ Although the paper would eventually change to supporting the British remaining in India its poor view of the Company would remain the same. The Canadian Francophone press, though not supportive, in general accepted that the British would win in India, because they had both the financial and manpower resources to do so.⁷⁴⁵

New York City became a major source of copy, critical of British rule in India, for British North America. The New York press, in the form of the *Daily Tribune* published copy on the Rebellion from Karl Marx. Although highly critical of the East India Company and the British administration in India, Marx was able to show concern for those in peril in India.⁷⁴⁶ Papers such as the Halifax British Colonist saw it as their task to counter claims being made by the American press, who were using the Rebellion, as a way of criticising British imperial policy. The first method they used was ridicule. Sarcastically calling those who wrote 'effusions' for American papers 'good natured friends of England', the journal claimed that they found it 'curious even amusing to read' that they were predicting, that the British would lose her Indian possessions. The Colonist believed that this was more an example of American desire, than an actual prediction of what would happen. Summarising what it saw as the American explanation for the Rebellion, as being 'the barbarities practised in India, the tyranny inflicted, the robberies committed, and the poverty induced led the Hindoos to revolt' the Colonist sought to counter each of these 'slanders'.⁷⁴⁷ The 'thousands' of other slanders it would leave to others to deal with. Maritime papers also provided summaries of news from 'England'.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴³ *Pilot*, 14 September, 1857; *Pilot*, 15 July, 1857.

⁷⁴⁴ *Pilot*, 5 September, 1857; *Pilot*, 7 August, 1857.

⁷⁴⁵ *Journal de Quebec*, 8 October, 1857; *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, 15 September, 1857.

⁷⁴⁶ *New York Daily Tribune*, 13 October, 1857.

⁷⁴⁷ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

⁷⁴⁸ *Head Quarters*, 14 October, 1857.

What the press in the United States saw as British ‘barbarities’ the *Colonist* explained as a British attempt to put a ‘stop to the cruelties committed by the native princes on their unhappy subjects’. The *Colonist* sought to deal with each of the remaining accusations in turn. The supposed tyrannies it argued consisted of ‘administering equal laws, making life and property secure for the first time in centuries, and introducing [to India] trial by jury’. The robberies were ‘the introduction of such laws that the people could not be robbed with impunity’, and the poverty ‘to make thousands rich who were formerly poor’.⁷⁴⁹ This was not a universal view with Mackenzie’s *Toronto Weekly Message* claiming that there was ‘wholesale robbery’ occurring in India.⁷⁵⁰ The *Colonist* ended with a common call heard in other parts of the empire: it was not the time to ponder the reasons for the Rebellion, but the time to quell it.

A few months later the *Colonist* was again looking to refute yet more allegations made by the American press. The journal argued that the treatment of Nana Sahib, prior to the Rebellion, proved they were not the caricature of ‘British’ rule found in the American press. This would have irked as Sahib had become one of the chief villains in the Imperial mind responsible not only for the cruel deaths of innocents but also a wholesale betrayal of trust. The paper stated that Sahib had been allowed to firstly ‘occupy a large estate’ that he had ‘not inherited’ but which had been given to him. Second, he had been permitted to control ‘a considerable army of his own’ plus ‘a stronghold of very difficult approach’ near Kanpur. The *Colonist* suggested that these two things ‘certainly speaks for our simplicity but does not show us harsh masters’.⁷⁵¹ Other papers presented a similar impression of British rule in the sub-continent. ‘Upper Canada’s most powerful newspaper’ the *Globe* suggested that the Indians had been ‘blessed’ by British rule, which had replaced the ‘former misgovernment and tyranny of native monarchs’.⁷⁵² This was a viewpoint echoed nearly exactly in the *Pilot* a few weeks later.⁷⁵³ A similar argument had been posited in Australia. *Bell’s Life in Sydney* argued

⁷⁴⁹ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

⁷⁵⁰ *Message*, 7 August, 1857.

⁷⁵¹ *Halifax British Colonist*, 1 October, 1857.

⁷⁵² Martin, *Britain and the Origins*, 15; *Globe*, 13 July, 1857.

⁷⁵³ *Pilot*, 28 July, 1857.

that nobody could disagree that the Indians, under Company rule enjoyed more liberty and security than they had had under native rulers.⁷⁵⁴ Attempts by foreign commentators to cite Company interference in the Indian way of life as a cause of the Rebellion was quickly manipulated into being an attempt to excuse. The *Bathurst Free Press* supported that view, but also argued that interference in Indian affairs was a positive. For the paper, establishing the rule of law, introducing education, and stopping religious practices like sati were not good reasons to rebel.⁷⁵⁵ The Rebellion would alter this policy of overthrowing ‘corrupt, despotic, ruling regimes’ to return to protect the traditional order. India, ‘once the target of reformers... had now become the hope of reactionaries’.⁷⁵⁶ This attitude from the United States belied the fact that they too were interfering in the foreign policies of other nations. An example of this was the American attitude towards French and British action in China. In New Zealand the United States was seen as meddling, while being unhappy to actually get involved herself.⁷⁵⁷ The British and colonial English language press were seen as universally supportive.⁷⁵⁸ Commenting on American criticism of British rule in India was not solely limited to Canada. Similar copy could be found in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

The contents of ‘the American press’ were worrying for the *Head Quarters*. Apparent offers of help from the United States were conditional that Britain ‘cede to [the United States] entire control of the affairs of this continent and its dependencies’.⁷⁵⁹ Although probably made in jest, this ‘impudent suggestion’ generated derision from the paper, which intimated that ‘the people of the North American Colonies would have a word or two to say on the matter’ and its press too.⁷⁶⁰ A general fear that India might be more important to the British, than their North American possessions, was being echoed by the Americans. It did not take long for the Canadian press to inflate rumours about troops coming from the United States. The American press, reprinted in Canada, suggested that there were thousands of unemployed Americans

⁷⁵⁴ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 19 June, 1858

⁷⁵⁵ *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 14 November, 1857

⁷⁵⁶ Francis Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), xi.

⁷⁵⁷ *Lyttelton Times*, 29 July, 1857.

⁷⁵⁸ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

⁷⁵⁹ A ‘New York paper’ quoted in *Head Quarters*, 19 August, 1857.

⁷⁶⁰ *Head Quarters*, 19 August, 1857.

who could be used to bolster British forces in India.⁷⁶¹ Rumours soon spread that Canadian barracks were being used to house American troops en route to India.⁷⁶² A section of the Francophile press, including *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* and *Le Pays*, were fundamentally against recruitment in the colonies. In that they tended to echo copy from the Irish nationalist papers, who were expressing the sentiments of Irish émigrés, who were against such recruitment in the United States.⁷⁶³

Conclusion

In British North America, as in Ireland, newspapers and newspaper men, primarily from the Irish and Francophone press, had played major roles in fermenting rebellions against British rule. Others in the press were seeking a form of self determination for their various colonies, but with less violence. Further newspapers supported the status quo and the administration viewpoint. The Rebellion gave these various voices the ability to discuss their own internal situation. As the only colony with a land border with a de facto European state, British North America a previous set of conflicts had turned into a war of words. This manifested itself by the loyalist press reacting to the critical press from New York by parsing that copy to refute it in an almost obsessive manner. An identical approach was taken to negative comments from domestic Irish and French language press. The Rebellion was the topic, but countering criticism of the British and their empire was the purpose.

We will now move onto the plantation and East India Company settlements and the debates that occurred between those who saw Indian labour, free or convict, as a method of increasing its development and those who saw such labour as a threat, physically and economically.

⁷⁶¹ *New York Herald* in *Montreal Weekly Gazette*, 24 October, 1857.

⁷⁶² *Toronto Weekly Message*, 14 August, 1857.

⁷⁶³ *The Times*, 3 October, 1857.

Chapter 5: The Search for Labour: Opportunity and Threat

The necessary, but contentious importation of Indian labour throughout the Empire had become a major topic of debate and had naturally migrated onto the pages of their newspapers. This existing discussion became more intense and long lived, with the advent of the Rebellion. With a primary focus on the plantation colonies of the West Indies, South America, southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, this chapter will examine how the colonial press viewed the positives and negatives of the importation of Indian labour. One side would see the policy as an effective way of dealing with a labour shortage, whilst the other would see it as a threat both to their security and employment prospects. This offers an explanation as to why one of the major critics of importing Indian labour was the black press of the Caribbean. The chapter will continue with an examination of how in locations with existing convict populations whether they were Europeans, as in the Australian colonies, or from the subcontinent, in East India Company controlled territories like the Straits Settlements and Burma, existing concerns were too provided with another forum for debate, by the Rebellion. It will show that though there was an immediate reaction to the news from the subcontinent, the Rebellion almost uniquely provided an argument against the use of Indian labour for decades to come. The chronological spread of material to be examined will reflect this.

The necessity for labour on formerly slave worked plantations, would be filled by the importation of Indian labour, causing disputes that would obtain a Rebellion aspect but still remain the original domestic disagreement they had previously been. A dearth of labour had been created on the plantation estates of the Empire. The emancipation of the slaves in the Caribbean and South America had coupled with the expansion of plantations on the islands of the Indian Ocean to produce it. This situation provided both an opportunity and a threat, as the need was most obviously sated by the importation of labour from the Indian subcontinent. These issues will be used to analyse the attitudes towards the non-Europeans in the Empire. In the Caribbean colonies of Guiana and Trinidad there was the existing separation of planter and worker classes, whilst on Mauritius the debate was between the French and English press, and in the Cape Colony and Natal a local native problem would be added to the mix. Other settlements like the Straits Settlements and Burma provide locations with small European communities, with both a native majority and an Indian convict population coupled

with a feeling of impotence due to East India Company governance of their colonies. Similar issues would be raised in parts of Australia which had convict populations, but of the same race.

The Europeans who inhabited many of Britain's colonies often represented a small percentage of the population and instinctively felt threatened by the multitudes that they expected to govern, employ, or profit from. Would this attitude be changed or simply reinforced by the events in India? The answer depended on who you were and what you might have to gain from the local population or imported labour. Those seeking labour to work on their plantations were willing to take the risk, whilst those who already worked on the plantation or did not belong to the planter class, for reasons often domestic, were less supportive of such immigration. We turn first to the reasons for this dilemma.

The Need for Labour

Slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1834 and the post emancipation period of apprenticeship ended four years later, which led to a general labour shortage in British colonies that had relied on servile labour. This left less developed colonies looking for a bigger share of labour. An empire-wide solution presented itself, in increasing the already developed system of importing Indian labour, be it free, indentured, or convict. The conditions imposed on the indentured labourers and the often-isolated nature of plantations separated them from the rest of society, increasing the feeling of them being 'other'. During the British and East India Company rule of India, over six million Indians travelled overseas as indentured labourers. A third of these went outside Asia, to Africa, the Caribbean, and islands of the Indian and Pacific oceans, with the remainder to settlements around the Indian Ocean, for instance Burma, Ceylon, and the Straits Settlements. These immigrants ultimately only represented ten percent of the total Indian immigrants, never amounting to a majority in any of those settlements, they nonetheless often substantially outnumbered the European

population.⁷⁶⁴ These Indian populations were often restricted or mistreated giving rise to disturbances and riots. These disturbances were seen through the lens of the Rebellion.

The emancipation of slaves had created a marked shortage of labour, on the plantations of the Caribbean, as sections of the newly freed workforce looked for employment from other sources. After trying several alternative sources of labour, a solution was found with the importation of Indian labour. In the 1830s Indian workers, or as they were called in the demotic ‘coolies’, were employed to fill this shortage. To some likethe Colonial Secretary Lord John Russell, this was ‘a new system of slavery’, incorporating too many aspects of the previous system.⁷⁶⁵ In the period of Indian immigration to the colonies, Trinidad would eventually receive nearly one hundred and fifty thousand immigrants, British Guiana over two hundred thousand⁷⁶⁶, Mauritius four hundred and fifty thousand⁷⁶⁷, and to Natal just over one hundred and fifty thousand.⁷⁶⁸ Although the peak outward flow of Indian labour coincided with the Rebellion, it remained high afterwards, producing an ongoing issue for the populations of those colonies.

The coverage of the Rebellion became a forum in which to discuss how to meet the labour needs of colonies, with or wishing to develop domestic plantations. Three classes of settlement emerged, those with an Indian labour force but no convicts, those with both, and those that specifically saw prisoners from the Rebellion, as a source of labour to develop their colony.

⁷⁶⁴ David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9–10, 53.

⁷⁶⁵ Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century, 1815–1914*, Third Edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 38.

⁷⁶⁶ George Roberts and Joycelyn Byrne, ‘Summary Statistics on Indenture and Associated Migration Affecting the West Indies, 1834–1918’, *Population Studies*, 20 (1966): 125–34.

⁷⁶⁷ Robert Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 797.

⁷⁶⁸ Imre Ferenczi and Walter Willcox, *International Migrations*, Vol 1 (New York: Bureau of Economic Research, 1929), 904–5.

Two British colonies in the southern Caribbean demonstrated the separation, between the planter class and those below them about Indian immigration, producing similar reactions in the mid 1850s and then a few decades later. A recruitment program was launched in 1839 at Calcutta to recruit Indian labour for the Caribbean colonies of Trinidad and British Guiana, present day Guyana, under which Indians, of multiple faiths, agreed to work specified hours for three years at a prearranged salary. Starting with equal numbers of men and women after 1840 the female numbers were reduced. Alterations to the terms and conditions were made in the early 1840s, extending term periods, and in the 1850, to permit reindenturing and early returns to India. In the Caribbean, Indian immigrants were disliked and distrusted by the white population. Indian labour was initially welcomed by the black population in locations like Jamaica,⁷⁶⁹ but they soon became resentful of the new arrivals. The indentured Indians were seen as an economic threat to them, an attitude that the colonial authorities reinforced.⁷⁷⁰ This attitude hardened, as the Indian population began to replace the black population, as the primary source of labour. By the year of the Rebellion, over half of the fourteen thousand strong workforce on the plantations of Trinidad were immigrants from China and India, changing the ethnic, religious and cultural makeup of the colony.⁷⁷¹ Descriptions as suspicious and scheming replaced placid and loyal, as the common view of the Indian labourers on the island.⁷⁷²

Concern about the Indian population, in both colonies, arose in the press on two separate occasions, first at the time of the Rebellion, and again during disturbances a few decades later. On neither occasion could they be seen in isolation. The fears engendered in 1857 were not the result of the Rebellion alone. Although it would be surprising if the stories of the atrocities by Indians on Europeans, had had no effect on attitudes a few decades later, well within living memory, they were in no way the single concern. The black press was happy to link the two for economic advantage, more than real concern.

⁷⁶⁹ *Falmouth Post*, 20 May, 1845.

⁷⁷⁰ Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884* (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1988), 16.

⁷⁷¹ Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Abacus, 1994), 188.

⁷⁷² Faith Smith, *Creole recitations: John Jacob Thomas and Colonial Formation in the Late Nineteenth-Century Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 21.

The generally positive attitude towards Indian labour changed in 1857, when proposals were made to transfer sepoys and their families to the West Indies. Two former Governors of British Guiana, Henry Light and Sir Philip Wodehouse, advocated such a resettlement. Other proposed settlement areas included those with no meaningful convict labour like Mauritius, or the Seychelles, and those that had them, such as the Straits Settlements, Burma, and the Andaman Islands.

We will now use four separate types of settlements to investigate the reaction to Indian labour, existing or proposed. The first will use Trinidad and British Guyana, as examples of colonies with an existing developed plantation systems. The second will examine two locations, Mauritius and southern Africa, that were seeking to initiate or substantially expand their plantations. The third set will use the Straits Settlements and Burma to outline the reaction in areas under direct East India Company control, which were being developed with Indian convict labour. Finally, it will examine the response from areas with an existing European convict population with a focus on the colonies of Australia.

Starting with two British Caribbean colonies with substantial plantation economies, Trinidad and British Guyana, we will examine how the inherent and existent concerns about the importation of Indian labour, both economic and security based, took on a Rebellion angle. Both colonies would find events that had happened in India, continued to colour the continuing debate and the responses to local disturbances for decades later, with awareness of what was happening in the other colony.

Existing Plantations: Trinidad and British Guiana.

Initially in Trinidad the Rebellion was viewed as something that might disrupt the indentured labour system. The *Port of Spain Gazette* worried that ‘the Indian Government [would] have enough to do to look after its own affairs’, rather than worrying about the labour requirements of the colonies. The paper’s editor was concerned that Indian immigration was proving to be

‘very problematic’.⁷⁷³ The *Gazette*’s editor had believed ten years earlier that the importation of indentured labour and beforehand convict labour on the island’s plantations would prove beneficial to all involved.⁷⁷⁴ The plantation owners would get the required labour and hard work plus a peaceful environment were ‘sure roads to competence and independence’ which the ‘misguided sepoy’ would soon find out. The editor was careful to make sure that his readers did not think he was advocating that Trinidad benefited from India’s misfortune.⁷⁷⁵ The importation of labour to the Caribbean resumed, without incident, although concerns remained. Through the 1860s indentured Indians had been introduced as workers into many parts of the West Indies. Indian immigrants to the Caribbean amounted to around half a million, with most going to either British Guiana or Trinidad. The *Port of Spain Gazette* would again highlight the system’s benefits, but with a different outlook. The paper argued that India emigration to the West Indies, was a solution to poverty in the subcontinent and would provide work for idle hands.⁷⁷⁶ The once adroit ‘coolie’ became the ignorant savage, who could not be redeemed even by education. They ‘enter the school as a coolie and emerge from it the same coolie’ wrote one correspondent to the *Gazette* decades later.⁷⁷⁷ The paper had believed in 1845, that the introduction of Indian labour would teach the black population the benefits of hard work and ‘giving greater satisfaction to their employers’.⁷⁷⁸

The spectre of the Rebellion persisted for decades to come with its memory being invoked when the *Port of Spain Gazette* and other newspapers, wished to criticise the ‘Coolies’. In November 1870 the *Gazette* published a letter to the editor which outlined the threat and where it came from, ‘The horrors of an Indian Mutiny are fresh in the recollections of Englishmen and we do not need to be reminded that the race to which our immigrants belong is easily roused’.⁷⁷⁹ Early the next year a correspondent, to the short lived *New Era* newspaper saw a day ‘not far off, when these Coolies, bent on having everything their own way, and meeting with the slightest resistance from the authorities, will break out in open

⁷⁷³ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 23 January, 1858.

⁷⁷⁴ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 30 May, 1845.

⁷⁷⁵ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 14 October, 1857.

⁷⁷⁶ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 23 January, 1858.

⁷⁷⁷ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 16 December, 1892, letter to editor from ‘A Son of a Gun’.

⁷⁷⁸ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 30 May, 1845.

⁷⁷⁹ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 26 November, 1870: Letter to editor.

rebellion, and reproduce here the barbarities of the great chief Nana Sahib in British India a few years ago'.⁷⁸⁰

When Indian violence did erupt in the colony, thoughts of the Rebellion were not far from anyone's minds. On 30 October 1884 in the British colony of Trinidad the deaths of up to twenty-two imported Indian workers⁷⁸¹, protesting restrictions that had been imposed on their increasingly nationalistic and violent annual Hosay⁷⁸² procession. Two clear views emerged about what had occurred. On one side for the European, and sections of black populations it was a riot, a clear breach of law and order, and on the other it was a massacre and an attack on religious and ethnic tradition. Both viewpoints were primarily the results of what was happening locally, but for the Europeans and blacks it had a clear Rebellion flavour. Rebellion had become intrinsically linked to the Indian.⁷⁸³ These fears were not new, as similar concerns had been raised in Singapore and Penang, in mid 1857 and again did not diminish over time.⁷⁸⁴ For the *Port of Spain Gazette* it was 'ignorant and semi-savage...peasantry' rioting. The paper was certain that 'the supremacy of the law should be upheld at all times and regardless of consequences'.⁷⁸⁵ The paper believed that such strong action would teach a 'lesson', not only to the Indians but to 'the heterogeneous collections of loafers, prostitutes, roughs, rogues and vagabonds which infest our two towns'.⁷⁸⁶ The *Gazette* had reported on previous Hosay processions, with the suggestion that only quick police action had stopped them turning into riots⁷⁸⁷, but it and other Trinidadian papers had been accepting of it going ahead, as long as it remained peaceful.⁷⁸⁸ It should also be noted that the *Gazette* had issues with other public events, such as the Carnival, a view which was

⁷⁸⁰ *New Era*, 3 April, 1871.

⁷⁸¹ Prabhu Mohapatra, "Following Custom"? Representations of Community among Indian Immigrant Labour in the West Indies, 1880-1920" in Rana Behal and Marcel van der Linden, (eds) *Coolies, Capital and Colonialism: Studies in Indian Labour History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 182.

⁷⁸² Local restrained variant of Shi'a festival of Muharram.

⁷⁸³ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 18 May, 1870.

⁷⁸⁴ Singapore correspondent in the *Daily News*, 20 August, 1857.

⁷⁸⁵ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 15 October, 1884.

⁷⁸⁶ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 8 November, 1884.

⁷⁸⁷ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 14 June, 1865.

⁷⁸⁸ *Trinidad Sentinel*, 6 August, 1857; *Port of Spain Gazette*, 13 July, 1859, 14 June, 1865.

shared by a number of its correspondents.⁷⁸⁹ Another way the *Gazette* highlighted its worries about the situation with the Indian labourers on Trinidad was by reporting ‘news of coolie risings in the sister colony’ of British Guiana. This is destination we will next move onto.

The second of Britain’s Caribbean colonies to import large numbers of Indian indentured labourers was British Guiana. The colony, ‘a mild despotism tempered by sugar’, like Trinidad, was a land of European owned and managed plantations, worked by former slaves, with an increasing Indian immigrant population.⁷⁹⁰ As Indian numbers increased, so an attitude of fear developed in the black and European population. As in Trinidad proposals to import sepoy labour, made amid the Rebellion, split opinion in British Guiana, between the planter class and their workers. This would be echoed a decade later.

The *Creole*, the Guianese paper of the middle and working classes, served the colony’s black population, who were concerned that increased immigration would lessen their employment opportunities.⁷⁹¹ The editor of the *Creole* raised the issue of the threat that these sepoys would pose. He complained that some ‘would not give a fig for the security of the country’.⁷⁹² Fears, created by Indian rioting in 1870, were fed by reference back to the Rebellion and claims that ‘many of the sepoys who took part in the murderous outbreak in India’ were on their way.⁷⁹³ Those who favoured the importation of sepoy labour were less open. As early as August 1857 an anonymous correspondent, going by the name ‘Guianensis’ wrote to the *Royal Gazette* trying to rehabilitate those who, he argued, could ‘shake off their caste prejudices and become good citizens’.⁷⁹⁴ He argued that they could provide ‘estimable service’ to the colony which could ‘readily receive and employ ten thousand’ of them.⁷⁹⁵ The

⁷⁸⁹ As in *Port of Spain Gazette*, 12 April, 1884, Letter of ‘DUTY’ to *Port of Spain Gazette*, 3 February, 1857.

⁷⁹⁰ Anthony Trollope, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, (London, Chapman and Hall, 1859), 199.

⁷⁹¹ George Alapatt, “The Sepoy Mutiny of 1847: Indian Indentured Labour and Plantation Politics in British Guiana”, *Journal of Indian History* 59 (1981): 303.

⁷⁹² *The Creole*, 14 September, 1857.

⁷⁹³ Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs*, 16; *The Royal Gazette*, British Guiana, 1 November, 1870.

⁷⁹⁴ *The Royal Gazette*, British Guiana, 8 August, 1857.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

colonies' planters formed the West Indies Committee to advocate that sepoy prisoners should be shipped to the Caribbean, as a source of cheap labour. Guiana, or rather its planters, wanted the ten thousand former sepoys but to avoid any danger, to limit the 'grave mutineers' to a thousand.⁷⁹⁶ There was a clear attempt to diminish the culpability and hence the threat posed from the immigrants. Thus the Indian labourers, that arrived in British Guiana in March 1858, were described as a mix of sepoys who ran away from battle, rather than fire on their European officers, and loyal former servants like the one whose 'lady was massacred at Cawnpore'.⁷⁹⁷

A letter to the *Creole* from the aptly named 'Not a Sepoy' displayed concern that the existing Indian population might 'attempt to imitate the deeds of their countrymen'.⁷⁹⁸ He suggested that news of the events in India might even trigger an uprising locally. Another correspondent to the paper argued, that the hindrances to large scale immigration from the subcontinent, had saved British Guiana. Otherwise the colony would have allowed the immigration of 'a fierce, idolatrous, rebellious population quite disposed and fully able to give us, our wives and our children a taste of Meerut and Cawnpore atrocities'.⁷⁹⁹ Yet another correspondent to the *Creole* argued that transferring sepoys to the West Indies would be too lenient a move and they would be left to 'the tender mercies of Sir Colin Campbell and his gallant band of British soldiers'.⁸⁰⁰ This negative attitude in the *Creole* was not universal. A final letter writer to the paper took a more liberal approach, claiming that the sepoys in British Guiana were no more of a threat than the convicts in New South Wales.⁸⁰¹

Indian riots in 1869 and the year after in British Guiana, produced a climate of fear. Unwilling to examine the actual causes for the disturbances, the colonial press looked for an imported cause. The *Royal Gazette* defined those it considered a threat to the colony and to

⁷⁹⁶ Quoted in Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners, and Rebellion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007), 111.

⁷⁹⁷ *The Colonist*, 15 March, 1858.

⁷⁹⁸ *The Creole*, 17 November, 1857.

⁷⁹⁹ *The Creole*, 16 March, 1858.

⁸⁰⁰ *The Creole*, 16 September, 1857.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*

its readership, ‘we have among us many of the sepoy who took part in the murderous outbreak in India and have since been sent here as immigrants’. The journal’s solution was vigilance. These sepoy immigrants were ‘men who require close supervision, the probability being that they are instigators or leaders in every outbreak which occurs among the immigrants’.⁸⁰² Such an ‘outbreak’ was the Devonshire Castle riot of September 1872, when Indian indentured labourers went on strike over pay levels on the plantation of that name. The strike soon led to rioting and the police responded by opening fire, killing five, and injuring seven. The local magistrate described those involved as ‘regular demons’ and suggested that those who did not have experience of ‘excited’ Hindus could not imagine it.⁸⁰³ This attitude was not simply a continuation of old held prejudices. As on Trinidad the Indian labourers had once been held in high regard. In the 1840s the white planter class was happily comparing the negatives of the ‘pampered Creole Labourer’ with the positives of ‘the quiet willing coolie’.⁸⁰⁴ There was a real fear that without their labour there would be a spate of plantation abandonment.⁸⁰⁵ This later served to construct the images of ‘disloyal coolie’ against the ‘loyal black’, which suited those trying to maintain the status quo.⁸⁰⁶ It also provided a helpful argument for those wishing to promote the former slaves over the imported labour. These attitudes existed only five years after the supposed rebellion in Morant Bay, which like the Rebellion, had a profound effect on the attitude to race.

The ‘black’ press was clear about the character of the Indians. The editor of the *Working Man* summed up the paper and its readers’ opinion of the Indian immigrants on the island; ‘we have a dislike for Hindu murderers in our midst’.⁸⁰⁷ The *Working Man* suggested that events in British Guiana might soon take a more serious turn. Its correspondent in the colony thought that the Indians, who were rioting, were stockpiling arms for a Rebellion style

⁸⁰² *The Royal Gazette*, 1 November, 1870.

⁸⁰³ Quoted in Chandra Jayawardena, “Ideology and Conflict in Lower Class Communities” in Christopher Harrington, *Cross cultural approaches to learning* (New York: Ardent Media, 1973), 209.

⁸⁰⁴ Letter to Governor in *The Royal Gazette*, British Guiana, 25 August, 1849.

⁸⁰⁵ H.V.P. Bronkhurst, *Among Hindus and Creoles of British Guyana* (London, Wolmer, 1888), 186.

⁸⁰⁶ Robert Moore, “Colonial Images of Blacks and Indians in Nineteenth Century Guyana”, in Bridget Brereton and Kevin Yelvington (eds), *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Post-Emancipation Social and Cultural Life* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 154.

⁸⁰⁷ *Working Man*, 30 October, 1872.

uprising.⁸⁰⁸ Other anecdotal stories of escaped mutineers, would appear in the Caribbean colonies to which any Indian labour was exported.⁸⁰⁹ In other Caribbean settlements without substantial Indian populations the reportage was more factual concentrating on the news rather than opinion. In the Bahamas, the *Nassau Guardian* reprinted newspaper articles, letters, and even sections from books⁸¹⁰, focusing on British successes and sepoy atrocities.⁸¹¹ No mention was made of British atrocities, just how even the wounded were recovering well.⁸¹²

Leaving the Caribbean, we will now see how the similar issues arose in another plantation colony, with equally pressing needs for labour and comparable concerns over the safety of imported Indian workers. There was an extra dimension, with a great deal of critical comment, coming from the island's French language newspapers.

Seeking Labour: Mauritius and Southern Africa.

Other colonies searching for labour, would experience the same localised debates, but those involved would be different. Mauritius, a former Dutch then French colony, which had been under British control since 1810, had a press as divided as its population, but by language rather than simply economics. The French language press would be against importing labour and the English one more sympathetic.

From 1815 the East India Company had sent convicts to the island and by the 1850s the demand for labour had greatly increased and so had its reliance on the subcontinent. In July

⁸⁰⁸ *Working Man*, 16 June, 1872.

⁸⁰⁹ See for example, Walton Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 27; Jagdish Jha, "The Indian Mutiny-cum-Revolt of 1857 and Trinidad", *Indian Studies: Past and Present*, 13, 4, (1972): 419-30, and George Alapatt, "The Sepoy Mutiny of 1847: Indian Indentured Labour and Plantation Politics in British Guiana", *Journal of Indian History*, 59, 1-3 (1981): 309-12.

⁸¹⁰ *Nassau Guardian*, 2 September, 1857

⁸¹¹ *Nassau Guardian*, 18 November, 1857

⁸¹² *Nassau Guardian*, 11 November, 1857

1857 the *Overland Commercial Gazette* highlighted the islands dependency on India for supplies.⁸¹³ A solution it posited was to increase local development. For the *Gazette* a need for labour⁸¹⁴ and a desire to expand⁸¹⁵ topped the threat that Indian labour might present. The French language newspaper *Le Mauricien* and *Le Cerneen* continued their rivalry, with the Anglophone *Commercial Gazette* over the importation of sepoy labour. The *Commercial Gazette* favoured bringing in sepoys to repair roads⁸¹⁶ to which *Le Cerneen* countered that doing so could transform the Indians already on the island from lambs ‘into [one of] ferocious beasts’.⁸¹⁷ The *Commercial Gazette*’s readers saw the Rebellion and associated famine in northern India, as an opportunity to import labour who could be tamed.⁸¹⁸ Mauritius was seen in other island settlements, as the nearest place to the subcontinent for ‘fugitives and strays’.⁸¹⁹ The *Commercial Gazette* argued that the imported labour shed their ‘indolent disposition’ when they arrived on the island and that the local planters preferred them over other classes of labour.⁸²⁰ The need for labour became so intense, that planters had to increase wages to induce Indian labour to come to the island.⁸²¹ To effectively manage the post Rebellion influx, administrative positions in Mauritius were filled by India veterans who had ‘a thorough knowledge of the Indian character and language’.⁸²² The *Gazette* thought that the imported labour was attracted by the wages on offer and a new location in which to rebel.⁸²³ The newspaper itself shared the concerns of the French language journals. The editor of *Le Cerneen* highlighted the possible effect, that the importation of Indian labour, might have on the existing Indian population of Mauritius. They were ‘well fed, well treated, well paid’ but occasionally did not ‘hide their sympathies for the rebels’.⁸²⁴ The adverse reaction to the proposed immigration, primarily in the Francophone press influenced policy. It caused the shelving of immigration early on, but the island did receive large scale Indian

⁸¹³ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 17 July, 1857

⁸¹⁴ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 29 October, 1858

⁸¹⁵ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 24 July, 1858

⁸¹⁶ *Commercial Gazette*, 26 March, 1858.

⁸¹⁷ *Le Cerneen*, 31 March, 1858.

⁸¹⁸ Letter published in *Commercial Gazette*, 20 January, 1857.

⁸¹⁹ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 23 January, 1858.

⁸²⁰ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 27 August, 1858.

⁸²¹ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 12 June, 1858.

⁸²² *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 6 September, 1858.

⁸²³ *Overland Commercial Gazette*, 27 August, 1858

⁸²⁴ *Le Cerneen*, 31 March, 1858.

immigration shortly after the Rebellion had ended. The fear that immigrant Indians to Mauritius might be mutineers, or hold grudges against the British proved to have basis in fact with Indian families on the island finding such characters, when tracing their ancestors.⁸²⁵

Some locations were offered labour whose threat was without doubt, convicts many of whom had been involved in the Rebellion. After India had been pacified, the issue arose about what to do with sepoy prisoners and others viewed as suspect. Transporting them to various rocks and small islands was the first proposal muted, as was forming a sepoy penal colony in Northern or Western Australia.⁸²⁶ This would have made uncomfortable reading for those in Australia, as at the same time their press was reprinting tales of sepoy atrocities on a regular basis.⁸²⁷ Other venues suggested, included Singapore, and other Straits Settlements, which had a history of taking Indian convicts.⁸²⁸ Another plan, mooted in the late summer of 1857, was to transfer thousands of sepoys to the Cape, with a public relations campaign to promote it. A JH van Renen, who claimed to be a ‘*Captain Bengal Army*’, argued that such a transfer would provide ‘useful’ labour for both ‘public works, but also private service’. Another reason for importing Indian labour van Renen used was that doing so would lead to improvements in agriculture.⁸²⁹ Although these Indian labourers would be seen as a boon in Natal, the *Cape Argus* argued that the area around the Cape did not have the size of plantations to warrant importing labour.⁸³⁰ The costs involved would be paid for by the Indian government⁸³¹. van Renen went on to argue that the massacres were committed by a limited group, the ‘Budmashes⁸³² of the bazaars and troopers of the 3rd Cavalry’. He went on to class the sepoy as ‘faithful’, ‘smart, handy, intelligent and robust’⁸³³ descriptions that ran counter to those in India that the *Cape Argus* described as committing ‘outrages too horrid to

⁸²⁵ *Mauritius Times*, 17 November, 2006; 1 December, 2006.

⁸²⁶ *Port of Spain Gazette*, 14 October, 1857; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May, 1858.

⁸²⁷ Examples being *Hobart Courier*, 9 September, 1857, and *Melbourne Argus*, 24 November, 1857

⁸²⁸ See Anand Yang, “Indian Convict Workers in Southeast Asia in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries”, *Journal of World History* 14, 2 (2003): 179-208.

⁸²⁹ Letters of J.H. van Renen to *Cape Argus*, 30 August, 1857 and 9 September, 1857.

⁸³⁰ *Cape Argus*, 27 January, 1876.

⁸³¹ *Cape Argus*, 30 August, 1857.

⁸³² Term meaning ‘criminals’ used to describe civilians who aided the rebels.

⁸³³ *Cape Argus*, 9 September, 1857.

think of and hitherto unimagined'.⁸³⁴ van Renen's claims must have made difficult reading, for those in the colony, with family in India. The Cape Colony had close ties with India, as a staging post and a vacation point, which was clearly expressed in its press. Victims of the 'slaughter', like the Jennings family, were often 'well known at the Cape'.⁸³⁵ There was no separation between those in danger and India and those in the Cape. The people of the Cape were 'personally interested in the general fearful rebellion; the Indian connection of so many years duration has linked many a Cape family with the distant East'.⁸³⁶ It was the connection between the two colonies that made the Rebellion all that more troubling.⁸³⁷ The response was equally as linked: 'the blood of our slaughtered countrymen cries aloud for vengeance'. On 8 August the *Argus* ran a digest of the news that it had obtained direct from Indian papers, capping it with an assurance that British rule in India was sound.⁸³⁸ To bolster his case van Renen provided the example of a 'Major Longmore' who on Mauritius had been in charge of 'a gang of some 600 transported Sepoys, who there made all the roads, &c., on the island, and he tells me he always found them a quiet, well-behaved, inoffensive, and very obedient people'.⁸³⁹ This was a view supported by the press of Mauritius, but only towards the present Indian population.⁸⁴⁰ Towards imported sepoy labour, their attitude was a lot more hostile, especially in the French language press.⁸⁴¹ A different attitude appeared at least initially in the colonies of Southern Africa.

A proposal to import the 'least guilty' sepoys to the Cape Colony, generated initial support from its governor George Grey and the domestic colonial government.⁸⁴² That evaporated, as it did elsewhere, as more horror stories arrived from India. The response from the settler

⁸³⁴ *Cape Argus*, 23 September, 1857.

⁸³⁵ *Cape Argus*, 8 and 26 August, 1857, further examples can be found in Jill Bender, "Sir George Grey and the 1857 Indian Rebellion: the Unmaking and Making of an Imperial Career", in Crispin Bates and Marina (eds) *Carter Global Perspectives on 1857, Mutiny at the Margins* (London: Sage, 2009).

⁸³⁶ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

⁸³⁷ *Cape Argus*, 26 August, 1857.

⁸³⁸ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

⁸³⁹ *Cape Argus*, 9 September, 1857.

⁸⁴⁰ *Le Cerneen*, 31 March, 1858.

⁸⁴¹ See *Le Cerneen* and *Commercial Gazette*, through March 1858.

⁸⁴² *Cape Argus*, 9 September, 1857.

population in the Cape was to reject the importation of ‘ten thousand sepoy cut-throats’. The *Cape Argus* summed up the difficulty, for those suggesting that the Cape house sepoy prisoners, ‘the accounts which had been received here of the revolting atrocities committed by the mutineers in India had created such a feeling in this colony [against the proposal]’. When Grey’s initial support for the proposal became common knowledge the *Cape Argus* was scathing about the governor’s ‘precocious, but happily abortive, arrangement to bring about the cutting of the colonial throat’.⁸⁴³ Some convicts the Cape would never accept. When a ship that had carried the ‘King of Delhi’ into exile docked in Cape Town the *Argus* was ‘glad to hear [that he was] not onboard... He was left at Rangoon’. Otherwise there was no ‘Indian news of importance’.⁸⁴⁴

The need for labour was more pronounced along the coast from Cape Town in Natal, in the important local sugar industry.⁸⁴⁵ The local native population proved resistant to the idea, so Natal’s farmers needed to look elsewhere.⁸⁴⁶ European immigration to the colony would prove unable to provide those with the requisite skills to meet this demand.⁸⁴⁷ The importation of Indian labour did not find favour in the Natal press, with the *Natal Mercury* being the only real voice of support for the idea.⁸⁴⁸ Even the *Mercury*’s support was based on the concept, that the Indian immigrants would set an example for the local population and thus remove the need for further immigration.⁸⁴⁹ Even so in 1855, when Natal was still administered, as part of the Cape Colony, Grey asked the East India Company for three hundred Indian labourers. His approaches were rejected. In 1856 Natal became a Crown Colony in its own right. Soon the colonial legislature had empowered the colony’s Lieutenant-Governor to prepare for importation of Indian labour. The Rebellion made things more complicated. Natal had a large veteran population, many of whom had served in East India Company regiments who proffered advice. The *Natal Witness* reported as a ‘Gentleman from Capetown, formerly a captain in the Bengal Army’ suggesting that ‘mutineer sepoy of India as convict laborers in

⁸⁴³ *Cape Argus*, 24 March, 1858.

⁸⁴⁴ *Cape Argus*, 10 February, 1859.

⁸⁴⁵ ‘The Real Condition of Natal’ in *Natal Mercury*, 23 December, 1852.

⁸⁴⁶ Mabel Palmer, *The History of the Indians in Natal* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1957), 10.

⁸⁴⁷ *Cape Monitor*, 31 July, 1858.

⁸⁴⁸ *Natal Mercury*, 26 April; 28 June, 1854

⁸⁴⁹ *Natal Mercury*, 28 June, 1854

South Africa'. It 'would certainly be a 'cheap way of getting labor for important public works' but 'confess to a feeling of disgust, at the idea of having amongst us, a large number of the brutal murderers of our countrymen and country women in India'.⁸⁵⁰ The *Natal Witness* told its local and empire wide readers, that those selling the importation of Indian labour describe 'the sepoys as intelligent, tractable, and faithful servants, under ordinary circumstances, and endeavours to show that their recent outbreak is of so exceptional a character, that it presents no valid objection to the proposal'.⁸⁵¹ The colony needed labour and security would play a secondary part.

By 1859 the labour shortage on the sugar plantations of Natal had reached a crisis. As the *Natal Mercury* put it, 'The fate of the Colony hangs on a Thread and that thread is Labour'.⁸⁵² The *Natal Guardian* supported the *Mercury's* argument, seeing the 'coolies' in the manufactory and the natives in the fields.⁸⁵³ The *Natal Witness* could not see this 'scarcity of labour',⁸⁵⁴ and along with the *Natal Star* was against any public funding for the venture.⁸⁵⁵ Regardless, Indian labour was soon being imported. Arriving from 1860 onwards many of the Indians were leaving the subcontinent, as a direct result of the post Rebellion chaos, attempts by Company authorities to export their 'undesirables', or to escape local famines.⁸⁵⁶ The *Natal Witness* voicing concern, suggested that these Indians could bring illnesses like cholera and smallpox with them.⁸⁵⁷ Six months later the *Graham's Town Journal* expressed a similar fear.⁸⁵⁸ The attitude towards Indian labour soon changed. Five years after the first arrivals, the *Natal Mercury* was singing their praises, 'Coolie immigration after several years' experience of it is deemed more essential to our prosperity than ever. It is the vitalising principle'. The *Mercury* placed the praise for increased sugar exports and the development of

⁸⁵⁰ *Natal Witness* reprinted in *Launceston Examiner*, 9 January, 1858; *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 6 February, 1858.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² *Natal Mercury*, 28 April, 1859.

⁸⁵³ *Natal Guardian*, 25 March, 1856.

⁸⁵⁴ *Natal Witness*, 23 March, 1855.

⁸⁵⁵ *Natal Witness*, 15 July, 22 July, 1859, and *Natal Star*, 3 March, 1860.

⁸⁵⁶ Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London, Oxford University: Press, 1974), 97-118.

⁸⁵⁷ *Natal Witness*, 6 July, 1860.

⁸⁵⁸ *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 January, 1861.

the colonies' nascent coffee plantations firmly on the Indian labour. The paper went on to argue that the 'white labouring population' had nothing to fear from a competition for labour.⁸⁵⁹ A two way trade was proposed with Natal exporting horses and the ships returning with Indian labourers but this was hindered by the lack of a regular shipping route to India.⁸⁶⁰ That allowed other colonies to take over the horse trade.⁸⁶¹ By 1895 the *Mercury*, reflecting the views of the white settler population, had radically changed its opinion of the Indian labourers. It stated in terms more suited to the *Natal Witness* of the 1860s, that 'the evils attendant upon the immigration of coolies, their low standard of living and morals, the introduction by them of disease and the ever threatening outbreak of epidemics, not to mention other serious drawbacks - are too generally appreciated to leave room for contradiction'.⁸⁶² This shift in attitude was the result of changes produced by an increase in the Indian population. This was the product both of a failure of the Indian migrants to return home after their indenture period and continuing non-indentured immigration.⁸⁶³ In contrast a different type of labour was being used, in a set of East India Company controlled territories, primarily along the coast of the Malay peninsula and in coastal Burma, where it was of a convict form. This convict labour was not being imported to work on plantations but to develop the infrastructure of the settlements which brought them into direct contact regularly with the European population.

Convict Lands: The Straits Settlements and Burma

Colonies that were already developed by the mid 1850s as penal settlements, even in part, produced a wary European populous, whose prejudices towards the convicts were simply reinforced by the Rebellion. It was their security, that was challenged by a post conflict increase in Indian convicts, not those who benefited from the labour. In these Straits Settlements and other locations outside of the subcontinent controlled by the East India

⁸⁵⁹ *Natal Mercury*, 19 January, 1865.

⁸⁶⁰ *Natal Witness*, 9 June, 1865.

⁸⁶¹ *Times of Natal*, 2 May, 1874.

⁸⁶² *Natal Mercury*, 29 January, 1895.

⁸⁶³ Robert Huttenback, "Indians in South Africa, 1860-1914: The British Imperial Philosophy on Trial", *English Historical Review*, 81, 319 (1966): 275.

Company, the news had a local tone, with criticism of how their colonies were managed, the Company's domestic response to the Rebellion and the importation of potentially dangerous Indian labour. Established by the East India Company in 1826, the Straits Settlements, were a strange collection of competing settlements, Penang, Province Wellesley, Malacca and Singapore, centred primarily on the Malay Peninsula. Designed to protect the East India Company's route to India, they soon served as both penal colonies and trading settlements. Their scattered nature proved to be difficult, and, after the Company lost its monopoly in the China trade in 1833, expensive to administer.⁸⁶⁴ The Settlements were largely Chinese in population but contained a tiny but vocal European minority, whose views the Settlements' English language press tended to reflect.⁸⁶⁵ They were after all their readership.

An existing set of concerns about how the Settlements were run, convict numbers, and the lack of a direct method to influence policy, found an outlet in copy discussing the Rebellion. In 1857 a sense of general unease found a true voice, through a petition movement and the Rebellion. The number of convicts already in the Settlements at the time of the Rebellion is estimated to have been around fifteen thousand of which Singapore held half.⁸⁶⁶ The Indian convicts in Singapore were seen as a boon by the administration, 'many public buildings, including the Government House at Singapore, [being] constructed by Indian convict labour' and a concern by the European population.⁸⁶⁷ These convict labourers had been, according to the Straits Times, 'unhappily forced' on the island.⁸⁶⁸ To the *Singapore Free Press* their 'small island' was already full of the 'very dregs of the population of south eastern Asia' and importing convicts would only make things worse.⁸⁶⁹ The convicts behaved as the European population expected, the years 1852 and 1853 saw minor uprisings by Indian convicts

⁸⁶⁴ C.M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements, 1826-1867: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony* (London: Athlone Press, 1972), 3.

⁸⁶⁵ *Singapore Free Press*, 3 January, 1861.

⁸⁶⁶ Stephen Nicholas and Peter Shergold, "Transportation as Global Migration", in Stephen Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's past*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1988), 30.

⁸⁶⁷ Dun Jen Li, *British Malaya: An Economic Analysis*. Second Edition. (Kuala Lumpur, Insan, 1982), 117.

⁸⁶⁸ *Straits Times*, 11 August, 1857.

⁸⁶⁹ *Singapore Free Press*, 21 July, 1854.

imprisoned in Singapore and Penang.⁸⁷⁰ Trouble was not just limited to the Indian population, in Singapore there was the ten day ‘great riot of 1854’ and in Penang there were regular Chinese riots, producing distrust, which would grow later in the Century.⁸⁷¹ Seen at first as adding to the development of the Settlements the importation of Indian convicts became ‘a burning grievance’ to those who felt they should have more of a say in how the Settlements were run.⁸⁷² The Settlements were becoming the ‘Botany Bays of India’.⁸⁷³ The European population had an almost obsessive interest in the make-up of the community and the ‘inequality of the sexes’.⁸⁷⁴ Whether this interest was simply academic, or an attempt to emphasise the state of the colony is not clear.

The Rebellion and the local Company response to it, provided impetus for those living in the Settlements to raise existing local worries about how where they lived was run. This was exacerbated by a feeling of inherent threat, created in part by Company policies. The European population was concerned. They saw the local police force as both corrupt and incompetent, which would make them incapable of dealing with a Rebellion level uprising.⁸⁷⁵ They became even more so when in August 1857 the *Times* reported that a prominent political prisoner, Khurruck Singh, was moved to Penang⁸⁷⁶ after being suspected of plotting an uprising, with the convicts imprisoned in Singapore.⁸⁷⁷ Other sepoy convicts, according to the *Straits Times*, were seeking release, so they could fight for the British against the mutineers. The *Straits Times* along with its readers suspected a ‘ruse’. This acquired extra force, when the *Times* further reported that Singh was amongst their number.⁸⁷⁸ Stories surfaced, claiming that the sepoy garrisons in the Settlements were about to rise and massacre all the Europeans and Christians they found. This led to a general panic producing calls to use

⁸⁷⁰ C.M. Turnbull, “Internal Security”: 91.

⁸⁷¹ Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 165.

⁸⁷² Lennox Mills, *British Malaya, 1824-1867* (Singapore: Methodist Publishing House, 1924), 274.

⁸⁷³ Stephen Nicholas and Peter Shergold, “Transportation as Global Migration’, 29.

⁸⁷⁴ *Straits Times*, 6 August, 1859.

⁸⁷⁵ C.M. Turnbull “Internal Security”: 37-53.

⁸⁷⁶ *Straits Times*, 11 August, 1857.

⁸⁷⁷ Crispin Bates, and Marina Carter, “Empire and locality: a global dimension to the 1857 Indian Uprising”, *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 61.

⁸⁷⁸ *Straits Times*, 11 August, 1857.

all available assistance; the European sailors as temporary troops, create a civilian force, and to remove sepoy troops from duty. The colonial authorities tried to assuage these fears, but with little effect. Every small action, such as appointing European special constables, inflamed things further. In this mood of panic the *Straits Times* chose to side with the general population and not the colonial authorities. Confining the convicts to their barracks was seen as provocation, by the authorities, but not doing so was ‘needlessly outraging’ public opinion.⁸⁷⁹

The year 1857 started with violence in the Straits Settlements. There were riots among the Chinese and Indian populations, which led to the construction of fortifications, such as Singapore’s Fort Canning.⁸⁸⁰ By the May when news of the Rebellion arrived further protests had erupted when the authorities chose to ban the local Muharrum festival, matching what would happen in Trinidad a century later. Problems with the festival were nothing new. Convicts had altered the nature of the festival, changing it into ‘the rowdy display of hooliganism’ that it had become by the 1850s.⁸⁸¹ Fears that the festival would be the focus for a rebellion appeared in local and British papers.⁸⁸² Seeing the threat the *Straits Times* supported restrictions on the festival⁸⁸³ but believed that knowledge of how the authorities would respond to violence would hold people in check.⁸⁸⁴ By the beginning of September the ‘much dreaded’ festival had passed without incident or ‘any of the evil occurrences which, some weak-minded persons conjured up’.⁸⁸⁵

As the news of the Rebellion reached the Settlements, the tone used to describe the Indian convict population hardened even more. Never letting an opportunity go to waste, the Rebellion and the threat that local Indians posed, was used to push the local campaign against the convict system in the Settlements. The ‘whole Convict system is rotten to the very

⁸⁷⁹ *Straits Times*, 1 September, 1857.

⁸⁸⁰ Jean Abshire, *History of Singapore* (California, Greenwood, 2011), 54.

⁸⁸¹ Turnbull, “*Internal Security*”: 100.

⁸⁸² Singapore correspondent, *Daily News*, 20 August 1857; *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁸⁸³ *Straits Times*, 11 August, 1857.

⁸⁸⁴ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁸⁸⁵ *Straits Times*, 1 September, 1857.

core...the system requires complete reorganisation, if this is to be continued' something that the paper hoped would not happen.⁸⁸⁶ When it did the *Times* suggested that the former mismanagement of the convict system continued after the Rebellion had ended.⁸⁸⁷ The colony was no longer 'infant' and thus did not require convict labour.⁸⁸⁸ There was also a worry that convicts who had escaped from other penal colonies in the Settlements, would often end up in Singapore. The existing convicts represented the 'scum' of the Indian population and were 'dangerous to the peace' of Singapore.⁸⁸⁹ This fear of the Indians led to over reactions. When one musket was lost in Penang, it had created a 'street brawl',⁸⁹⁰ although the weapon was almost immediately recovered.⁸⁹¹

The contemporary situation was untenable. The *Straits Times* argued that Singapore had already been given a 'large body of Convicts' with no 'adequate provisions for the protection of the life and property of the inhabitants'.⁸⁹² If more convicts were to come during and after the Rebellion the *Times* stated that the system needed to be totally reorganised and that more European troops were needed to guard them.⁸⁹³ But not only 'soldiers, but...civilians' too. They could take over the positions that 'natives' held avoiding, 'native treachery'.⁸⁹⁴ Reporting on a public meeting held in November 1857, the *Times* highlighted the local concern that Singapore would become 'deluged' with Indian convicts and that there was a fear, that the penal facilities in Singapore were not adequate to house and control such an influx.⁸⁹⁵ To make the penal facilities adequate and provide the necessary manpower to control the prisoners would be costly, but necessary to avoid the colony being 'rendered highly unsafe'.⁸⁹⁶ This was part of a general movement after the Rebellion to increase the

⁸⁸⁶ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁸⁸⁷ *Straits Times*, 10 July, 1858.

⁸⁸⁸ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁸⁸⁹ Such as *Straits Times*, 25 December, 1858.

⁸⁹⁰ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁸⁹¹ *Penang Gazette*, 24 July, 1857.

⁸⁹² *Straits Times*, 13 October, 1857.

⁸⁹³ *Straits Times*, 1 September, 1857.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁵ *Straits Times*, 19 November, 1857.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

European populations in Britain's eastern possessions and even in India itself.⁸⁹⁷ As in Mauritius and the West Indies the Settlements' press was worried about the contamination of existing populations, by those arriving from India. The *Times* believed that Rebellion convicts, that had committed 'the most heinous offences' and who were being sent to the Settlements would 'pollute' those already there.⁸⁹⁸ This was a common viewpoint being expressed at public meetings in Singapore.⁸⁹⁹

The refusal to accept sepoy convicts by the 'colonists at Sydney and Victoria' and the Cape was presented as an example for the Settlements to follow and demand the return of the 'felony it seeks to cast upon our shores'. 'Cut-throat mutineers of the disaffected Sepoy regiments' were being sent to Singapore, without the consent of the local population or any consultation. The threat being universal all should act. The *Times* believed that all in Singapore, 'European and Native' should use all legal measures to block their arrival. If the convict sepoys were to come to Singapore the *Times* believed that it would be necessary to dramatically increase the numbers of European soldiers and officials. That they believed would be costly and 'horrify the financial authorities both in - Calcutta and Leadenhall Street'. The paper was certain of the importance of those conditions, stating that 'unless this is done the settlement cannot but be considered as rendered highly unsafe by the presence of so large a body of convicts'.⁹⁰⁰ The *Straits Times* expressed concerns, that they were about to act as a depository for mutineers, like Singapore.⁹⁰¹ Such fears were not assuaged by reports of rebellions among transported mutineers.⁹⁰²

The *Straits Times* was worried that after sixteen years these undesirables would be allowed into the general population. The paper wanted the system to cease and the apparatus in place to be wound down. Noting that the 'Supreme Council' was looking for alternative locations,

⁸⁹⁷ David Arnold "White colonization and labour in Nineteenth-Century India", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 11 (1983): 144.

⁸⁹⁸ *Straits Times*, 15 December, 1857.

⁸⁹⁹ *Straits Times*, 19 November, 1857.

⁹⁰⁰ *Straits Times*, 21 November, 1857.

⁹⁰¹ *Straits Times*, 1 April, 1857.

⁹⁰² *Moulmian Advertiser*, 11 June, 1859, reprinted in *Straits Times*, 13 August, 1859.

the paper suggested the Andaman Islands as a better choice and quoted the Indian paper the *Englishman* to back their view. The paper also wanted those Indians in the Settlements, on contracts to leave at the end of them.⁹⁰³ As if to maintain the tension the *Straits Times* still ran stories of potential mutinies, and poor convict behaviour after the Rebellion had ended.⁹⁰⁴ The local and British reaction to the Rebellion, and its consequences made transportation of convicts to colonies like the Settlements increasingly untenable. The transportation of convicts had in general ended by 1860, although around three thousand convicts remained in the Settlements. The penal facilities did not close until 1873. The news of the ending of convict transports was greeted with general approval.⁹⁰⁵

While the English language press in the Settlements was suspicious of the actions of non-Europeans, it was reasonably balanced in its coverage. The *Straits Times* was happy to highlight East India Company injustice towards non Europeans⁹⁰⁶ as it was towards Europeans.⁹⁰⁷ But as the true nature of events in India materialised, the *Straits Times*' stance became harsher. By December 1857 the paper was demanding that none of the Rebellion's leaders 'Prince, Priest, or Sepoy' be spared from the 'one punishment for mutiny, death'.⁹⁰⁸ This excession of revenge was not just aimed at the enemy. As the threat to Company India diminished, the *Straits Times* became more aggressive in its criticism of those it viewed as having failed. In May 1857 it was arguing that any 'blundering generals' should pay for their failures with their lives.⁹⁰⁹

The island of Penang had received convict labour since 1790, primarily for use in public works, and later local plantations. These plus the increasing numbers of indentured labourers changed the makeup of the Settlements. The Governor of Penang had given permission, the *Straits Times* reported, for the 1857 Muharram. The *Times* described the festival as an

⁹⁰³ *Straits Times*, 7 May, 1859.

⁹⁰⁴ *Straits Times*, 4 June, 1859.

⁹⁰⁵ Annual Retrospective for the year 1860, in *Singapore Free Press*, 10 January, 1861.

⁹⁰⁶ *Straits Times*, 28 July, 1857.

⁹⁰⁷ *Straits Times*, 4 August, 1857.

⁹⁰⁸ *Straits Times*, 8 December, 1857.

⁹⁰⁹ *Straits Times*, 15 May, 1858.

absurdity not known in the Koran ‘and unpractised by the better classes’ of Muslims.⁹¹⁰ Abuse of the privilege of holding the festival should have been followed by ‘severe punishment and a curtailment of...liberties’.⁹¹¹ The Chief Justice did not have the ‘nerve’ to act in the required strong fashion, but had granted rights to ‘Criminals’ while denying them to the native population. The *Straits Times* would later highlight the failure to provide adequate law officers in Singapore.⁹¹² The *Straits Times* complained that instead of being allowed out of their lines, the authorities should have treated convict dissatisfaction with high and ‘strong walls and barred gates’.⁹¹³

Penang Gazette reported a ‘mutiny’ on a convict ship that contained some captured rebel sepoys. These convicts were sent to the Settlements before a plan to locate convicts on the Andaman Islands, and the *Gazette* was concerned that they had come to Singapore and that the ‘Governor would appear[ed] not to have authority to alter the destination of [the] batch’. The paper wanted the convict sepoys forwarded to the Islands as soon as possible, along with all the other convicts then present in the Settlements. The newspaper also published portions of the ship’s log to highlight the details of what had happened.⁹¹⁴ The *Penang Argus* tried to sell the alternative location to its readers. It described the Andaman Islands as a ‘very picturesque’ Eden with a healthy climate boasting some ‘comfortable and well-constructed’ accommodations for the convicts and their administrators.⁹¹⁵ The fear of rebellion continued in the years after the Rebellion had been suppressed, triggered by local disturbances and rebellions in the Dutch East Indies. When Banjarmasin in Borneo rose against the Dutch colonial authorities, the *Straits Times* echoed its Rebellion coverage. It was quick to mourn the European victims, accuse the locals of ‘treachery’, and hope that the rebellion would be quickly suppressed.⁹¹⁶

⁹¹⁰ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹¹² *Straits Times*, 21 May, 1859.

⁹¹³ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

⁹¹⁴ *Penang Gazette*, 17 April, 1858.

⁹¹⁵ *Penang Argus*, 11 August, 1860.

⁹¹⁶ *Straits Times*, 4 June, 1859.

As part of their greater Indian possessions since 1852, Lower Burma served the East India Company, as a penal settlement, in which convicts were held mid transportation to and from India proper. Lower Burma had become a primary convict processing centre, which produced a similar sense of threat, as had developed in the Settlements. The reason for this was clear, East India Company administrative incompetence produced an atmosphere of resentment and unrest. Regular reports of illness and a scarcity of food,⁹¹⁷ strikes,⁹¹⁸ and regular native uprisings that continued after 1857 inhabited the press of Rangoon.⁹¹⁹ As news of the Rebellion reached Burma the *Rangoon Chronicle* reported ‘sinister rumours’ that the sepoy in Rangoon had a ‘mutinous spirit’. The newspaper also covered the overreaction of Europeans towards them. Every event concerning Indians acquired a ‘mutiny’ tag.⁹²⁰ An example of this occurred, when an out of uniform Captain Wickham tried to requisition an area being used by sepoy for cooking. The soon irate sepoy drove him away by throwing stones and brickbats. Five ‘ringleaders’ were brought to a court of enquiry, at which they claimed they were unaware of his profession or rank. No evidence of a link to the Rebellion was produced or probably existed.⁹²¹

There were a series of uprisings in penal settlements in Burma during 1860. These outbreaks had been predicted by the *Rangoon Times*, who suggested in the June that there was ‘impending trouble amongst the convicts’.⁹²² In July the *Rangoon Times* reported ‘a very serious rising among the prisoners in the gaol of Rangoon’.⁹²³ The uprising was countered by the use of European troops. In early August a similar uprising occurred.⁹²⁴ Both of these insurrections were unsurprisingly given a Rebellion aspect. These events were reported in Singapore and via steamer in the Australian press, raising tensions in those locations, which

⁹¹⁷ *Rangoon Times*, 8 April 1860.

⁹¹⁸ *Rangoon Chronicle*, 25 March, 1857.

⁹¹⁹ *Rangoon Times*, 10 April, 1860; *Rangoon Chronicle*, 26 November, 1854.

⁹²⁰ *Rangoon Chronicle*, 19 June, 1857.

⁹²¹ Ibid.

⁹²² *Rangoon Times*, 14 June, 1860.

⁹²³ *Rangoon Times*, 31 July, 1860.

⁹²⁴ *Rangoon Times*, 4 August, 1860.

would grow when they too were considered as locations in which to house Indian convict labour.⁹²⁵

‘Convict Colony’: Australia.⁹²⁶

In November 1857 John Hutt, former Governor of Western Australia, wrote to the British government to suggest the colony as a destination for rebellious sepoys.⁹²⁷ He argued that the colony had many advantages; a good climate, experience of convicts, and was surrounded by natural barriers such as the sea, and desert which would hamper possible escapes.⁹²⁸ This proposal was reported in the Western Australian press, then Australia wide.⁹²⁹ Western Australia had a small free European population, and a larger aboriginal population, but overwhelming both was the primarily British convict population. The free colonists were concerned about the introduction of Asian immigrants into Australia tipping this already weighted balance further. There was a general opinion that the difficulties that housing convict sepoys would create, would outweigh any benefit.⁹³⁰ The *Perth Inquirer* accepted that Western Australia was a ‘convict colony’⁹³¹ and that it made little difference if those convicts were sepoy or otherwise.⁹³² The *Hobart Courier* in Tasmania repeated this line, ‘[as] this is a convict colony, we suppose that it makes little difference whether we choose sepoy prisoners or no’.⁹³³ Little distinction was made between whole classes of violent convicts, sepoy or

⁹²⁵ *Hobart Mercury*, 24 October, 1860.

⁹²⁶ Not to be confused with ‘*The Inquirer: A Western Australian Journal of Politics and Literature*’ of a similar period and location.

⁹²⁷ India Office Library Records, E/4/849 India & Bengal Despatches Public Department, 2 December, 1857.

⁹²⁸ India Office Library Records, IPP 188/49 John Hutt to Governor General in Council, London 26 November, 1857.

⁹²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 July 1858; *Launceston Examiner*, 6 April 1858 amongst others.

⁹³⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 15 September, 1858.

⁹³¹ Not to be confused with ‘*The Inquirer: A Western Australian Journal of Politics and Literature*’ of a similar period and location.

⁹³² *Perth Inquirer*, 10 February, 1858.

⁹³³ *Hobart Courier*, 5 April, 1858.

otherwise. European convicts in Western Australia, who had behaved badly could be shipped to the Andaman Islands, to be held with those of a similar ‘disposition’, the rebel sepoys.⁹³⁴

The *Perth Gazette* reported on public meetings, at which certain parties resolved that any convict sepoy immigration to be conditional. The resolution suggested that there should be the minimum necessary numbers of guards, no early releases, and the convicts were to return home at the end of their sentences.⁹³⁵ It failed as many saw the sepoys as a source of cheap labour and that the colony would benefit from the necessary developments to accommodate them.⁹³⁶ The *Inquirer* was critical of the use of public meetings, as a way of expressing colonial opinion as the numbers who attended were limited and did not have general public support. The paper favoured a public memorial to be sent to London expressing as the opinion of as large a number of settlers as possible.⁹³⁷ The *Inquirer* took the idea, as an opportunity for some self-reflection on what the colony had become. It argued that all the colonists wanted was the money that housing the convict sepoys would generate. It based that assumption on the view that the convict sepoys could not be reformed, nor could they be used in public or private works in the colony. If the colony objected, the paper suggested, it could ‘offer no resistance’ and the ‘public meeting is merely for the purpose of stimulating the Indian Government to act at once, without awaiting instructions from home’.⁹³⁸ There was also a lack of European females, which the *Inquirer* argued were actually required to expand the colony.⁹³⁹ Concerned that he might be seen as too supportive in earlier *Inquirer* coverage of these meetings, a ‘CA Manning’ wrote to the paper stating that he believed that the issue required further consideration.⁹⁴⁰ Ultimately unnecessary, the public meetings had, the paper suggested, shown that the fears of Perth were similar to those in London.⁹⁴¹ Although it

⁹³⁴ *Perth Gazette*, 21 May, 1858.

⁹³⁵ *Perth Gazette*, 12 February, 1858.

⁹³⁶ *Perth Inquirer*, 17 February, 1858.

⁹³⁷ *Perth Inquirer*, 10 February, 1858.

⁹³⁸ Ibid.

⁹³⁹ *Perth Inquirer*, 11 June, 1858.

⁹⁴⁰ Letter of CA Manning in *Perth Inquirer*, 24 February, 1858.

⁹⁴¹ *Perth Inquirer*, 26 May, 1858.

received some local support the idea was rejected and Hutt quickly acquiesced.⁹⁴² The rejection was happily reported by the local press in Western Australia.⁹⁴³

News of the refusal of the sepoy proposals for Western Australia, soon reached all parts of Australia.⁹⁴⁴ This negative public reaction was only partially successful, however, as though convict transportation ended in New South Wales in 1840 and in Tasmania in 1852, in Western Australia it would continue until 1868. The *Perth Gazette* felt that Western Australia could learn lessons from the experiences of Tasmania, as a convict settlement centre. Discussing the reports and reprints in Tasmania's Launceston *Examiner* the journal believed that if Western Australia remained a convict colony, the benefits of the convict system would outweigh the negatives but that was a short-term view. As Tasmania had found when the system stopped accepting convicts, 'the legacies left behind [would] weigh against [the colony] like a millstone'.⁹⁴⁵

The Governor of Bombay, Lord Elphinstone, had a similar proposal, but for the northern coast of the Australian continent.⁹⁴⁶ This alternative suggestion was seen by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as a flawed proposal. While accepting that the 'darker races' were best suited to the climate of the region, the paper was concerned that conditions in such a colony would be so primitive as to be 'inhuman'.⁹⁴⁷ The *Perth Inquirer* believed that the reasons for this sepoy proposal ultimately being abandoned, were the same as those voiced in Western Australia.⁹⁴⁸ Concern about the immigration of foreign labour was not limited to the Indian. In early 1857 there was concern about importing Chinese labour and demands for

⁹⁴² *Launceston Examiner*, 29 July 1858; *Perth Inquirer*, 11 June, 1858.

⁹⁴³ *Perth Inquirer*, 19 May, 1858.

⁹⁴⁴ *Launceston Examiner*, 29 July, 1858.

⁹⁴⁵ *Perth Gazette*, 4 June, 1858.

⁹⁴⁶ IOR P/188/58, 'Minute by the Governor', 6 October, 1857.

⁹⁴⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May, 1858.

⁹⁴⁸ *Perth Inquirer*, 26 May, 1858.

restrictions⁹⁴⁹, especially in areas of the Victorian gold rush.⁹⁵⁰ The local merchant class had a more positive view of the Chinese.⁹⁵¹

The sepoy settlement issue propagated easily as the news of the Rebellion would later do. *Sydney Morning Herald* reprinted copy from the *Calcutta Englishman* that suggested that convict sepoys might be sent to Australia⁹⁵², as did Tasmania's *Hobart Mercury* a day later.⁹⁵³ The *Herald's* coverage, in turn, was reprinted in the *Melbourne Argus*⁹⁵⁴ which had only a few days earlier reprinted another article in the *Englishman* entitled 'What is to be done with the Sepoys?'⁹⁵⁵ Australia proved a difficult place to sell the importation of convict sepoys because as the *Hobart Town Mercury* highlighted, many Australians had links to India.⁹⁵⁶ In the years after the Rebellion the news itself did not help the transportation cause, as stories of mutinying sepoy convict ships⁹⁵⁷ and violence in penal settlements⁹⁵⁸ coupled with the extreme measures used to subdue them became common in late 1850s Australia.⁹⁵⁹

Conclusion

In locations with a need for labour, the importation of Indian workers, indentured or convict, was to some the obvious solution, but to others an obvious threat both to their livelihoods, but also to their security. The Rebellion made the task of those seeking Indian labour more

⁹⁴⁹ *Melbourne Argus*, 25 July, 1857.

⁹⁵⁰ *Empire*, 15 June, 1858.

⁹⁵¹ *Ballarat Star*, 24 August, 1857.

⁹⁵² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May, 1858.

⁹⁵³ *Hobart Daily Mercury*, 27 May 1858.

⁹⁵⁴ *Melbourne Argus*, 4 June, 1858.

⁹⁵⁵ *Englishman*, 29 March, 1858 in *Melbourne Argus*, 31 May, 1858, also the *Hobart Mercury*, 27 May, 1858.

⁹⁵⁶ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

⁹⁵⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 November, 1859.

⁹⁵⁸ *South Australian Register*, 2 August, 1859; *Melbourne Argus*, 22 July, 1859; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 August, 1859.

⁹⁵⁹ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 25 December, 1858.

complex but created the opportunity of being able to develop colonies with inherently free labour or to profit from the fees provided to house and feed a population of Indian convicts.

The Rebellion led to an examination of the threat that Indian populations, free, indentured, or convict, were posing empire wide, and also an attempt to understand and classify the characteristics of the Indian, to understand why he behaved as he did during the Rebellion. The supposed threat Indians posed in colonies all over the British Empire was reflected in the copy in and letters sent to their papers. Although the image of a savage sepoy remained in the popular psyche, once the initial shock had worn off, attempts were made by those promoting imported labour to differentiate between those to be used as labourers and those in rebellion. Events like the massacres at Kanpur interrupted this process but did not derail it. Were the Indian authorities meeting a necessary demand, or simply exporting the threat of rebellion from India to the islands of the Caribbean? A stark reality dawned on many. Although the Rebellion undoubtedly had been a shocking event labour, was needed in the empire. Now though a wariereye would be kept on them and minor uprisings would be treated harshly.

In areas under East India Company control cheap convict labour went from being a blessing to a grievance.⁹⁶⁰ In part this was the product of existing difficulties with Company rule, but also the concern that Europeans there would, like their counterparts in India, be surrounded and outnumbered by 'savage hordes' of Indians.⁹⁶¹ This fear was not limited to Company controlled areas, nor was the feeling that the authorities would impose labour on an unwilling populous. A separation developed between those in authority and those below them. One wanted the labour, and the other perceived its threat physically and economically. Government and planter proposals to import labour under pseudonyms, apparent real names, or from colonial figures, caused concern and often were rejected. When Indian immigration was permitted, there was the feeling that violence was not far off. As if to reinforce this opinion when local muharrum festivals were banned, at the time or later, violence did occur.

⁹⁶⁰ Lennox Mills, *British Malaya, 1824-1867* (Singapore: Methodist Publishing House, 1924), 274.

⁹⁶¹ *Nelson Colonist*, 26 January, 1858.

When discussing an Empire wide crisis, the debate quickly developed into one about local discussion, on the suitability of Indians as labour as a way of development of the settlements and their agricultural hinterland. Those whose position was threatened by them sought to use the Rebellion, as a method of excluding the labour, joining forces with those who had genuine fears of the threat they might pose.

Finally, we will look at how both conflicting sides in the Rebellion were imagined in the colonial press and how those general pictures became more nuanced when aspects of the local cultures, subsets of those on the subcontinent and Indians, as individuals were debated.

Chapter 6: Representing the Combatants: The General and Specific.

This chapter will compare the two Empire-wide images that were created of the rebels in India and the British, who were fighting against them. It will also contrast the facets that formed them. These images were the creation, not of a unified force, but rather a patchwork of individual views which initially created a series of already existing stereotypes placed on those they would always see as negative. As things developed complexities were added to this mix, which allowed for a local Indian or subsets of Indians to exhibit of fidelity, honour and bravery in the company of a negative counter narrative about Indians as a whole. The more that opinions moved from the general and stereotypical the more nuanced they would become.

As the Rebellion became one of the primary topics of conversation an image of Indians in general was created, as was a characterisation of the rebel leadership with special attention placed on the villain of the piece, Nana Sahib. These will then be contrasted with images of the faithful, loyal and brave Indians found locally and in the subcontinent. Then there will be an investigation of the colonial press view the effect that religion played on the Indians and the Rebellion. The chapter will end with a survey of the rape and other horror stories from the European perspective highlighting how even at the time many were sceptical of them.

Imagining the British.

When the news of the Rebellion first reached Britain and her colonies it was treated with disbelief, almost scorn, and an unwillingness to accept its seriousness, which was not the case locally in India or in Britain.⁹⁶² Although there was a certainty that the British would ‘not succumb to a mere sepoy mutiny’, the horror of what was happening was made all too clear.⁹⁶³ India became linked with the atrocities happening in part of it. As the Caribbean newspaper *The Barbadian* put it, there were ‘dreadful goings on in what is now such a land of

⁹⁶² *Bengal Hurkaru*, 12 June, 1857; *The London Times*, 27 July, 1857.

⁹⁶³ *Halifax British Colonist*, 20 August, 1857.

horrors'.⁹⁶⁴ As they would in reverse in relation to the enemy, the colonial press sought to define the characteristics of their contemporaries in India. Two elements might be highlighted.

First and foremost, they were superior morally. 'The sword alone had not saved India', argued the *Nelson Colonist*. In part it had been the product of the 'moral superiority' of the British.⁹⁶⁵ Feelings of horror that reports of what was happening in India were coupled with 'a glow of pride' in response to stories of bravery. The *Nelson Examiner* continued: 'our English heart throbs again with a warmth of admiration at the deeds of our country men and fair country women in this desperate struggle'.⁹⁶⁶ The Rebellion was a sign of the poor moral state of India.⁹⁶⁷ They were dynamic. The Europeans were 'vigorous' and 'thoroughly energetic' in their response to rebel atrocities.⁹⁶⁸ There were excuses for those who did not exhibit this required state. When British military leaders did not prosecute their campaigns, with enough vigour or severity, they were excused, as having been influenced by the words of a weak local or colonial administration.⁹⁶⁹ They were fighting a demonic foe. Towns and villages of India wrestled out of the 'demon grasp of the brutal sepoy' by British forces.⁹⁷⁰ The Europeans killed in India were described as martyrs.⁹⁷¹ They sought to punish the guilty 'and the guilty alone'.⁹⁷² It was a necessary task for them to undertake. A correspondent to the *South Australian Register* suggested that civilised communities, looked to the troops in India to provide those who had committed atrocities, against Europeans, in India 'a fitting doom'.⁹⁷³ Those who had shown no mercy to the women and children that they had murdered could expect none in return.⁹⁷⁴ There was an understanding for the need to show restraint. The British had to be careful to avoid their desire for blood becoming too like those

⁹⁶⁴ *Barbadian*, 3 October, 1857.

⁹⁶⁵ *Nelson Colonist*, 25 September, 1860.

⁹⁶⁶ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 12 December, 1857.

⁹⁶⁷ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

⁹⁶⁸ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

⁹⁶⁹ *Lyttelton Times*, 26 June, 1858.

⁹⁷⁰ *South Australian Advertiser*, 3 August, 1858.

⁹⁷¹ *The Band of Hope Journal and Australian Home Companion*, 22 May, 1858.

⁹⁷² *Empire*, 17 March, 1858.

⁹⁷³ *South Australian Register*, 9 February, 1858.

⁹⁷⁴ *South Australian Register*, 10 September, 1857.

of savages, an argument used in ‘no offensive sense’.⁹⁷⁵ Any criticism of the actions of the European forces, by their government, weakened and humiliated them in front of the native population. It was also dangerous as it limited the freedom of action of forces, sometimes thousands of miles away from the central authorities. That was a bigger threat than violations of ‘official etiquette’ and created distrust of authority.⁹⁷⁶ The *Nelson Examiner* suggested that the British populous backed the soldiery not the Indian authorities.⁹⁷⁷ The *Examiner* reported that during the siege of Delhi, against direct orders Indian prisoners were being executed by the soldiery. This it saw as a sign of seemingly lax discipline. The paper sought to ‘account’ for these summary executions, by explaining that the European troops were exasperated with the sepoys and determined to make an example of any prisoners.⁹⁷⁸ Attempts by the local authorities to stop them had failed, as the soldiery had ‘so great a rage for revenge’.⁹⁷⁹ How the Europeans had coped with the Rebellion was something that New Zealanders were to be proud of. On hearing the stories of pluck from both European men and women, how could any ‘English’ ‘remain unmoved’?⁹⁸⁰

The second key feature was that they were seeking legitimate vengeance in response to the actions of the rebels and their victims. The *Cape Argus* argued that innocents did not make ‘make war, and cannot have injured their assassins, and their blood poured out after outrages too horrid to think of and hitherto unimagined, calls aloud for vengeance’.⁹⁸¹ *Melbourne Argus* argued that though a desire for ‘savage vengeance’ was understandable, but the press had to be careful not to break with the rules of ‘civilisation and Christianity’.⁹⁸² The *Hobart Town Mercury* summed things up by arguing that a ‘day of retribution is at hand; and our brave fellows will demand a terrible reckoning for the blood that has been spilt’.⁹⁸³ The *Sydney Empire* took the line that those who were about to be murdered, knew that they would

⁹⁷⁵ *Taranaki Herald*, 16 January, 1858.

⁹⁷⁶ *Nelson Colonist*, 12 January, 1858.

⁹⁷⁷ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

⁹⁷⁸ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 5 December, 1857.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 12 December, 1857.

⁹⁸¹ *Cape Argus*, 23 September, 1857.

⁹⁸² *Melbourne Argus*, 9 January, 1858.

⁹⁸³ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 19 October, 1857.

be revenged by the British troops. The British were avengers, which separated their acts of brutality from those of the rebels.⁹⁸⁴ Although some papers like the *Belfast News-Letter* added their local colour, to their justification for retribution. The paper stated that those fighting to pacify India had ‘been summoned by a muster-call more piercing than the note of pibrochs – the death-cry of their murdered brethren, sisters, children; the wail of the survivors of sorrow and for vengeance’.⁹⁸⁵ The supposed violation of European women, by the rebels and the chopping to bits of their children was used to first justify the harsh treatment being meted out to captured rebels, and second to counter any arguments towards ‘imbecile mercy’.⁹⁸⁶ Those who doubted the ‘horrors’ in India were faced with a great deal of criticism, however valid were their views.⁹⁸⁷

One example of this is the case when British politician and archaeologist Austen Layard, after a visit to India, cast doubt on stories of ‘mutilated [European] women and children’ in India, the *Sydney Morning Herald* accused him of bias against his countrymen.⁹⁸⁸ The paper further stated that although the Indian press had provided no specific examples of such behaviour ‘there [were] many’.⁹⁸⁹ Others saw Layard and his motives differently. The *South Australian Register* saw Layard as someone ‘well known for honesty of purpose and sound judgment’ and worth listening too.⁹⁹⁰ A month later the *Morning Herald* published a critical assessment of Layard, his career and writings, suggesting that his views were ‘eccentric’.⁹⁹¹ The *Morning Herald* a year earlier had questioned whether British rule in India conflicted with a quest for freedom providing reasons for the Rebellion.⁹⁹² Both papers based their opinions on reports of Layard’s speech in the British press. They were the victims of unimaginable horrors reports of which will be examined below.

⁹⁸⁴ *Empire*, 27 November, 1857.

⁹⁸⁵ *Belfast News-Letter*, 16 July, 1857.

⁹⁸⁶ *Perth Gazette*, 12 February, 1858.

⁹⁸⁷ *Barbadian*, 3 October, 1857.

⁹⁸⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August, 1858.

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁰ *South Australian Register*, 17 August, 1858.

⁹⁹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 September, 1858.

⁹⁹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 October, 1857.

Imagining the Rebel.

Hall argues that the rebellions of 1848 altered British opinions which moved from paternalism to a more racist approach, that found its voice during the Rebellion.⁹⁹³ This change, already well in process by 1857, helped create an image of the Indian that populated the pages of the colonial press. Themes were common empire-wide. The characteristics the rebelling sepoy and by extension those in revolt were many. We might point to at least five;

First, he was cruel especially towards those weaker than him. Those who nailed young boys to walls and did unmentionable things to women⁹⁹⁴, who at Delhi had crucified European men and women, or chained naked European women to a bastion leaving her there until she went mad had displayed nothing but cruelty.⁹⁹⁵ This cruelty was in part a product of his religious beliefs.⁹⁹⁶ This cruelty would prove to be counterproductive as his atrocities would increase the 'vigour' of the troops trying to suppress the Rebellion⁹⁹⁷, and alienate the native population, who were almost immediately starting to take action to stop the rebels.⁹⁹⁸ It was also counterproductive, for the rebels had wasted their 'time and opportunities' on 'savage butcheries' rather than on military action.⁹⁹⁹ These accusations would not be applied to the British.

Secondly, he was cowardly. They were also as 'cowardly as they are cruel'¹⁰⁰⁰ While all sepoys were as bad as each other, the Bombay sepoy could be 'as cruel as his Bengal brother'.¹⁰⁰¹ As the tide of the Rebellion turned the rebels were quick to try and escape the

⁹⁹³ Catherine Hall, "'From Greenland's Icy Mountains ... to Africa's Golden Sand": Ethnicity, Race and Nation in Mid 19th-Century England' *Gender and History* 5 (1993): 219-21.

⁹⁹⁴ *South Australian Register*, 2 July, 1858.

⁹⁹⁵ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 22 March, 1858.

⁹⁹⁶ *Nelson Examiner*, 8 September, 1858.

⁹⁹⁷ *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, 19 October, 1857.

⁹⁹⁸ *Taranaki Herald*, 14 November, 1857.

⁹⁹⁹ *Ballarat Star*, 7 September, 1857; *Taranaki Herald*, 14 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ballarat Star*, 10 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 13 January, 1858.

avenging British.¹⁰⁰² He was always on the cusp of doing evil. At any opportunity 'the satanism of the sepoy wakens up in all its hideous deformity and revels uncontrolled in fiendish pollutions of unresisting humanity'. The massacres at Kanpur were good examples of the characteristic. Not seeking retribution would destroy the British reputation for 'manliness and chivalry'.¹⁰⁰³ An Indian was inherently disposed to commit evil acts, a Canadian paper, suggested rape was natural behaviour for Indians, a way to express animosity.¹⁰⁰⁴ He was lacking in humanity to an unheard of level.¹⁰⁰⁵ His crimes were so 'abhorrent to humanity',¹⁰⁰⁶ that the European troops in India would have to teach the rebels to respect the laws of humanity.¹⁰⁰⁷ The *South Australian Register* believed that simple extermination of the Europeans in India, would not have produced the intensity of the reaction, if it had not been coupled with atrocity.¹⁰⁰⁸

Third, he was like a wild animal. The rebellious sepoys were likened to Bengal tigers, if not below that level, and had the worst instincts of a wild animal. The specific characteristic of a wild animal, that the sepoys had acquired most was 'ferocity', which was often linked with their supposed perfidy. Like a wild animal he could show cunning, but only in a treacherous fashion¹⁰⁰⁹. The Europeans in India became the 'prey' of the mutinous sepoys.¹⁰¹⁰ The *Port Phillip Herald* stated that the 'native troops [had] turned against their British officers like wild animals against their keepers',¹⁰¹¹ and should be punished as such.¹⁰¹² It would be the only analogy used, to present the sepoys as something other than a legitimate force. The *Ballarat Star* likened them to criminals not combatants¹⁰¹³, and the *Taranaki Herald* used

¹⁰⁰² *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 24 April, 1858.

¹⁰⁰³ *Empire*, 19 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *True Witness*, 9 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Wellington Independent*, 9 December, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *South Australian Register*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *South Australian Register*, 30 September, 1857.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 15 December, 1857.

¹⁰¹¹ *Port Phillip Herald*, July 8, 1857.

¹⁰¹² *South Australian Register*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁰¹³ *Ballarat Star*, 10 September, 1857.

language of an epidemic to describe the Rebellion.¹⁰¹⁴ The *Perth Inquirer* used the same analogy presenting the mutinous sepoy, as someone who left unchecked could infect the other Indian troops, with the idea of rebellion.¹⁰¹⁵

Fourth, he was unfaithful to an almost universal degree¹⁰¹⁶ with those few that did remain so rare.¹⁰¹⁷ Another aspect of his unfaithfulness was his ‘consummate treachery’.¹⁰¹⁸ It was understood that it was too much to expect an Indian to remain loyal, as it was going against the Indian character.¹⁰¹⁹ Stories abounded of how Indians had offered Europeans safe passage and safety then murdered them¹⁰²⁰ or gave them to others to do the same.¹⁰²¹ He had unwarranted superiority. High caste sepoys were able to shed the blood of innocents, but not clean it up until forced to. Later they would be executed by those of lower castes.¹⁰²² The Rebellion had been led by the ‘criminally ambitious Nawab and the traitorous Rajah’.¹⁰²³ The poet Richard Rowe was a journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1857. Writing under the pseudonym ‘Peter Possum’ he argued that the rebels were ‘[p]ampered menials rising on their too indulgent masters’ whose actions had put them beyond the ‘pale of humanity’. They deserved the retribution being meted out on them.¹⁰²⁴ The unfortunate Jennings family were according to the *Cape Argus* murdered ‘in the presence and with permission of the King of Delhi himself’.¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰¹⁴ *Taranaki Herald*, 15 August, 1857.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Perth Inquirer & Commercial News*, 7 April, 1858.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Wellington Independent*, 18 November, 1857.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Lyttelton Times*, 7 November, 1857.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Taranaki Herald*, 4 September, 1858.

¹⁰²⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 5 July, 1859.

¹⁰²¹ *Empire*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁰²² *Daily Southern Cross*, 4 May, 1858.

¹⁰²³ *Empire*, 17 March, 1858.

¹⁰²⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October, 1857.

¹⁰²⁵ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

Fifth, and finally, he was the corrupter and slayer of innocents¹⁰²⁶ who as the *Straits Times* stated it had ‘stained India with the blood of innocent and unoffending [v]ictims’. The *Times* went on to describe them as ‘wholesale and merciless assassins’.¹⁰²⁷ The killing of innocents drew a negative response from all communities in the empire, creating similar copy in disparate papers. Irish nationalist papers reporting a massacre were clear that ‘there [was] reason to apprehend that the rebellious soldiers spared neither sex, age, nor condition’¹⁰²⁸ a sentiment that was echoed later in the conservative *Hobart Town Mercury*.¹⁰²⁹ The rebels had reportedly taken ‘young girls of from 10 to 14 years of age’ who had for a week been ‘exposed to the most villainous usage’ from rebel leaders.¹⁰³⁰ The Rebellion helped provide the Victorians in the mid Nineteenth Century with martyrs, creating a dichotomy between the heroic European Christian and the savage Indian. Accounts of sepoy atrocities focussed on European women and their children.¹⁰³¹ The Rebellion was quickly represented by images as the corruption of the domestic, the ‘fate of British women and the defilement of their bodies and their homes’.¹⁰³²

He was hard to please, as the East India Company had tried its hardest to deal with the religious and cultural demands of their troops but ‘accidentally’ giving offence was enough to trigger rebellion.¹⁰³³ He was heaping disaster on himself ‘for famine will follow the path of the sword, and the desolation will be complete’.¹⁰³⁴ He lacked the European level of civilisation. The *Pilot* newspaper suggested that the native population of India amounted to ‘millions of half-civilised people’.¹⁰³⁵ In light of that the *Nelson Examiner* argued that the British ‘deserved’ to win in India and it would be a major blow ‘to the cause of civilization

¹⁰²⁶ *Ballarat Star*, 10 September, 1857.

¹⁰²⁷ *Straits Times*, 4 August, 1857.

¹⁰²⁸ *Ulsterman*, 1 July, 1857.

¹⁰²⁹ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

¹⁰³⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

¹⁰³¹ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 19 October, 1857.

¹⁰³² Alison Blunt, “Embodying war: British women and domestic defilement in the Indian Mutiny, 1857–8”, *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, 3 (2000): 403.

¹⁰³³ *Empire*, 8 September, 1857.

¹⁰³⁴ *Head Quarters*, 25 November, 1857.

¹⁰³⁵ *Pilot*, 3 August, 1857.

and humanity' if they did not¹⁰³⁶. Part of that lack of civilisation was, as the Empire stated, an unwillingness to atone for their crimes.¹⁰³⁷

Murders by non-Europeans were thus compared, in savagery, to those committed by the sepoys in India. Those who kill the British, be they 'blacks' in Australia or rebels in India should be treated as the same problem, according to *Bell's Life in Sydney*. Those murdered in the interior of New South Wales were worthy of the same sympathy, as those who suffered the same fate in the subcontinent. The journal felt that those in the interior were being treated differently and not supported by their home government, that was taking the opposite approach to those in India.¹⁰³⁸ The *Lyttelton Times* reported a meeting held in Christchurch, New Zealand, to discuss relief for those from the province, who had suffered in India. One speaker argued that the colony should have similar feelings towards those in India, as they did for those who suffered from native attack locally and receive the same help as they did.¹⁰³⁹

When a German lady was attacked and raped by a group of Arabs in the Holy Land, it was with 'more than sepoy cruelty'.¹⁰⁴⁰ Attacks on Christians in Montenegro were the same, as those committed by the rebel sepoys.¹⁰⁴¹ The reverse was also the case with the mutineers being portrayed, as being likened to other racial groups, such as 'Red Indians', who were viewed as violent and primitive.¹⁰⁴²

As in the Straits Settlements where an individual could warranty praise whilst a racial group would receive criticism. This was not a blanket approach taken to all indigenous groups, other ethnic groups were classified in a positive way.¹⁰⁴³ In early 1858 the friends of the

¹⁰³⁶ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

¹⁰³⁷ *Empire*, 6 November, 1857.

¹⁰³⁸ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 19 June, 1858.

¹⁰³⁹ *Lyttelton Times*, 24 March, 1858.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Lyttelton Times*, 21 August, 1858.

¹⁰⁴¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November, 1858; *Maitland Mercury*, 11 November, 1858 amongst others.

¹⁰⁴² *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁴³ *Straits Times*, 11 June, 1859.

Church of England Mission to the Aborigines held their fourth annual meeting in Melbourne. The meeting applied the characteristics of ‘affection’, ‘generous boldness’, and a treatment of children similar to the Europeans to the aboriginal population of Australia and regretted the ‘decay’ in Aboriginal numbers.¹⁰⁴⁴

The chapter will widen the topic of discussion from how the rebellious sepoys were portrayed, to Indians as a whole, which provides a more nuanced and less simplistic viewpoint.

The Indian: Not a Simple Stereotype.

In the colonial press started an examination of the different facets of the Indian character. This produced a list of negative characteristics, plus positive ones put to a bad use. Some papers would within a few weeks of hearing about an atrocity create their own description of the Indian, which barely got above insults. The *Ballarat Star*, in September and October 1857 described them as having ‘venal and treacherous characteristics’ fanatical and religiously prejudiced, faithless and ‘a race of bigoted wretches, whom to call savages merely, would be almost a compliment’.¹⁰⁴⁵

The *South Australian Register* the character of the Indians had been ‘engendered by long ages of successive debasement from tyranny and oppression’ and even after a hundred years the British had not been able to alter it from that state.¹⁰⁴⁶ The paper believed that they simply could not be changed.¹⁰⁴⁷ If you could not change the Indian, you could control him. The Indian was seen to respond best to harsh treatment. The obedience of the Asiatic was produced by punishment, and if that threat did not hang over them, then uprisings were inevitable. Some ‘sound floggings’ might have stopped events in Meerut getting out of

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 17 February, 1858.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ballarat Star*, 7 September, 1857, 10 September, 1857, 18 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *South Australian Register*, 6 November, 1858

¹⁰⁴⁷ *South Australian Register*, 18 May, 1858

control and thus the rebellion spreading claimed the *Lyttelton Times*.¹⁰⁴⁸ The *Times* stated that whilst previous mutinies had been met with ‘grape and canister’, the present one had been met with ‘delay, vacillation, and insufficient punishment’. That the paper believed had allowed it to develop as it had.¹⁰⁴⁹ A lack of appropriate punishment was argued to lead to bad outcomes and weakness in the face of rebellion had allowed it to spread was the view expressed by the *Daily Southern Cross*.¹⁰⁵⁰ The very failure to punish those who had been rebellious had been seen as contemptuous by the Indians¹⁰⁵¹, and it had reduced the importance of the offense in the Indian eyes.¹⁰⁵² Force was so linked to power in an Indian’s mind, that taking ‘strong measures’ would also help remove the impression that British rule was in peril.¹⁰⁵³ Though predominant in Australasia, the strong approach had its detractors. The *Empire* suggested that if the native had been treated less harshly then ‘a different feeling would doubtless have been engendered in his breast than that of hatred’.¹⁰⁵⁴ The *Geelong Advertiser* disagreed placing the blame on treating the sepoys too like Europeans, although accepting that it was all too easy ‘to fit in results to suit assumption’.¹⁰⁵⁵ For the *Ballarat Star* it was simple; the British should be happy to be feared if not loved by the Indians.¹⁰⁵⁶ The *Empire* argued that if force on its own was not successful, bribery was also an effective method of controlling ‘the Asiatic’.¹⁰⁵⁷ The Indians needed to be controlled; dictatorship was after all seen as the ‘Asiatic’ form of rule according to the *Star*.¹⁰⁵⁸ This was a view that crossed political divides appearing in papers like William Lyon Mackenzie’s *Toronto Weekly Message* which believed that India was so savage it could only be ruled by ‘military despotism’.¹⁰⁵⁹

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Lyttelton Times*, 28 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Lyttelton Times*, 19 August, 1857.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1858: Retrospect of Year.

¹⁰⁵¹ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News*, 4 June, 1858.

¹⁰⁵² *South Australian Register*, 2 July, 1858.

¹⁰⁵³ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 21 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Empire*, 10 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Geelong Advertiser*, 20 November, 1858.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ballarat Star*, 19 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Empire*, 22 February, 1858.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ballarat Star*, 6 April, 1858.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Toronto Weekly Message*, 24 July, 1857.

Colonial copy was peppered with ethnic and cultural parenthesis about India and the Indians. The New Zealand paper the *Otago Witness* told its readers that the sepoy were taller than the average Englishman but weighed less. It went on to state that the average Bengali was both smaller and less heavy than an Englishman.¹⁰⁶⁰ The Empire argued that the Indian race had the capacity to be brave, but in a bad cause.¹⁰⁶¹ The *Colonist* stated that Delhi was 'remarkably clean' for an Asiatic city.¹⁰⁶² The *Perth Gazette* described the rebels as 'yellow-faced and narrow-minded people'.¹⁰⁶³ A letter did the rounds of the New Zealand papers reporting how the appearance and dress of the Highlander, confused and scared the Indian populous.¹⁰⁶⁴ Such an effect became a major plot device in the 1968 comedy film 'Carry On... Up the Khyber'.

The massacres at Kanpur and the siege at Lucknow made the Rebellion an empire wide news story, because they provided compelling copy. They also moved reporting away from criticism of the East India Company to them.¹⁰⁶⁵ Prior to the Rebellion ignorance and disinterest about India in Britain and through the empire caused concern, as evidenced by a *Calcutta Review* article written in mid 1857, that suggested that only a major crisis would change that attitude.¹⁰⁶⁶ Although the Rebellion did have that effect until events at Kanpur were published the public's attention was actually waning. All the negatives that the press saw in the Indians, as a whole, could be placed in one man, Nana Sahib.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Otago Witness*, 10 April, 1858.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Empire*, 20 January, 1858.

¹⁰⁶² *Colonist*, 8 December, 1857.

¹⁰⁶³ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News*, 12 February, 1858.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Letter from India published in a number of papers as *Otago Witness*, 10 April, 1858; *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 22 May, 1858.

¹⁰⁶⁵ See Laura Peters, "'Double-dyed Traitors and Infernal Villains': Illustrated London News, Household Words, Charles Dickens and the Indian Rebellion" in David Finkelstein and Douglas Peters (ed.), *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), 110-34.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Calcutta Review*, early June, 1857.

‘The Wretch’ Nana Sahib¹⁰⁶⁷: The Death of Innocents

Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the former Maratha Peshwe, Baji Rao, had led the rebellious sepoys and civilians at Kanpur, a location that became infamous to the British for two massacres of Europeans. Sahib had offered the British surrender terms including safe passage, which they accepted. When the British boarded riverboats, their pilots fled setting fire to the boats, and exchange of gunfire ensued. The Indians fired on the boats killing most of the British troops. The surviving women and children were led to a *bibighar* or ‘house of the ladies’ in Kanpur. On July 15, 1857 three men entered with knives and hatchets, attacking the occupants, killing most but not all, and their bodies, alive or dead, were thrown down a well. It is not clear exactly who ordered both massacres, but Sahib was the most popular culprit for the British.¹⁰⁶⁸ These events so shocked the British that ‘Remember Cawnpore!’ became a battle cry.¹⁰⁶⁹

‘Cawnpore’ became a byword for the horrors that were occurring in India as a whole. It was a story of valiant, but doomed, British resistance, ending in native betrayal, and a tale of savagery. It was not simple mass killing but one under the ‘most atrocious and revolting circumstances’.¹⁰⁷⁰ It was also an example of the rebels having broken the rules of behaviour, that the British held so important, but often did not follow themselves. The Indians had broken both their word and the rules of conduct towards the innocent, which would in turn be used to justify the same behaviour by Europeans.

Nana Sahib became ‘one of the bloodiest figures in the great Indian mutiny of 1857’ empire-wide and someone who had broken some of the basic principles that the British held

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Empire*, 8 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Rudrangshu Mukherjee, “The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857: Reply”. *Past and Present* 142 (1994): 178–89 and Barbara English, “The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857”. *Past and Present* 142 (1994): 169–78.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Waltraud Ernst, “Idioms of Madness and Colonial Boundaries: The Case of the European and “Native” Mentally Ill in Early Nineteenth-Century British India”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, 1 (1997): 153–81.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Hobart Courier*, 10 July, 1857.

important.¹⁰⁷¹ Sahib had betrayed the Europeans with whom he had been in contact with. He had betrayed those to whom he had made the offer of safe passage to, and those whose hospitality he had been eager to accept before the Rebellion. Sahib had been an honoured guest at many events organised by the Europeans in Oudh and had taken the things that the British had offered him only to use them against them.¹⁰⁷² He used his fluent English to lie and flatter. As the *South Australian Register* asked in September 1857, how did Sahib ‘act when his cherished friends are in imminent peril?’ He ‘destroyed’ them.¹⁰⁷³ This concept of betrayal was not uniquely aimed against Sahib, but for rebels as a whole. It was also the details of what had happened at Kanpur that gave Sahib, ‘a demon’ this distinctive position.¹⁰⁷⁴ Direct involvement in the murders of European civilians was attached to Nana Sahib especially in the antipodes¹⁰⁷⁵, which was another aspect was his ‘consummate treachery’.¹⁰⁷⁶ On 17 November 1857, two Sydney based papers, the *Empire* and the *Morning Herald*, printed ‘a letter from Cawnpore, dated the 22nd’. It summarised the British recapture of Kanpur and what was found there.¹⁰⁷⁷ The more detailed the reports of the massacres, such as the ‘barbarous massacre of the unfortunate [Kanpur] garrison’ and the subsequent events in the bibighar, the more reactionary the mood became.¹⁰⁷⁸

In this febrile atmosphere, wild and often exaggerated stories were accepted without question. Messages written on scraps of paper apparently found at Kanpur were reprinted, and reprinted.¹⁰⁷⁹ As a ‘gory tableaux of courage and pain, treachery and slaughter’ was formed reports of the Rebellion dominated the metropolitan and colonial press for most of the second half of 1857.¹⁰⁸⁰ Sahid’s supposed murdering of women and children had brought those two protected groups into the conflict. The language used became increasingly graphic to suit the

¹⁰⁷¹ *Oakleigh Leader*, 15 September, 1894.

¹⁰⁷² *Nelson Colonist*, 15 December, 1857.

¹⁰⁷³ *South Australian Register*, 30 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Melbourne Argus*, 6 May, 1858.

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Hobart Courier*, 9 September, 1857; *Empire*, 8 September, 1857; *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1858.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Cape Argus*, 8 August, 1857.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Empire*, 17 November, 1857 and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Port Phillip Herald*, 11 October 15, 1857.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 7 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste*, 14.

news from Kanpur. The *Nassau Guardian*, reported the ‘soul harrowing spectacle which there presented itself to [Havelock’s troops] beggars description’, a courtyard ‘swimming in blood’, women and children ‘barbarously slaughtered’, the women ‘stripped naked, beheaded, and thrown into a well’, then the children ‘hurled down alive upon their butchered mothers, whose blood yet reeked on their mangled bodies’.¹⁰⁸¹ The *Hobart Town Mercury* reported that the 78th Highlanders arrived in Kanpur and ‘found it a heap of ruins. Not a single European of Wheeler’s force was left to tell the dreadful tale all were murdered’. The newspaper continued that ‘[t]here is no parallel to be found in the history of the world to the deeds of frightful atrocity that were daily occurrence there before our troops arrived’.¹⁰⁸² The *Port Phillip Herald* felt that the events at Kanpur had justified ‘the severity of the reprisals’.¹⁰⁸³ This often graphic copy echoed, or directly quoted reports from those on the front line. Details of what had happened produced a ‘national shock’ in Britain that itself travelled as quickly as the telegraph, and steamers allowed.¹⁰⁸⁴

Like the term ‘sepoy’, Sahib’s name became a byword for an untrustworthy native leader or leaders¹⁰⁸⁵ whose actions had removed his right to exist.¹⁰⁸⁶ The ‘off-hand’ execution of Sahib and his troops, might have generated criticism in different circumstances, but their actions justified it.¹⁰⁸⁷ ‘Humanity shudders at the bare mention of such savage atrocities’ as those that had committed ‘crimes so abhorrent to humanity’ in Kanpur.¹⁰⁸⁸ Other reports had Sahib being ‘denounced as a murderer of women and children’ by his own troops who blamed their own misfortunes on him¹⁰⁸⁹ or that Sahib was holding onto some British hostages, so that he could obtain good terms for his surrender.¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸¹ *Nassau Guardian*, 14 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁸² *Hobart Town Mercury*, 7 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁸³ *Port Phillip Herald*, July 8, 1857.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Christopher Herbert, *War of No Pity: The Indian Mutiny and Victorian Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 250.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Wanganui Herald*, 14 March, 1883.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Empire*, 19 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Melbourne Argus*, 17 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Melbourne Argus*, 16 December, 1858.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Hobart Town Mercury*, 9 September, 1857.

Sahib became a totemic of evil and no language was too much to use to describe him. Sahib became the inspiration for poetry and plays.¹⁰⁹¹ A few verses of poetry by a staff member of the *Hobart Mercury* and two verses of S. Prout Hill's 'Say! Was it Fancy' were full of colourful imagery of Sahib offering up young children, as sacrifices while his soldiers were 'Tiger-like vampires' thirsting for human blood. The poet suggested that all this had happened because Sahib had given a 'false' oath.¹⁰⁹² To be sure that the reader understood what was meant by the verses the *Mercury* placed notes at the foot of the poem explaining what had happened and who Sahib was. Sydney's *Bell's Life* contained more factual poetry.¹⁰⁹³ The massacre of women and children in Kanpur was also the source of other rather over the top poetry.¹⁰⁹⁴ The New Zealand paper the *Colonist* reported on a British school staging a play called 'Satan's Address to Nana Sahib' which was proving difficult as the headmaster 'could not prevail upon any pupil to take the part of Nana Sahib, they having such abhorrence to the character, but several offered to take the part of Satan'.¹⁰⁹⁵

The interest in Sahib's fate continued well after the Munity. Sahib's apparent arrest was reported regularly.¹⁰⁹⁶ In the August and September of 1894 yet another series of accounts of the supposed capture of Sahib, by the Bombay police percolated through the press of Australia¹⁰⁹⁷, and New Zealand.¹⁰⁹⁸ Although these accounts were classed as 'well authenticated' by some of the papers that printed them, it was 'not the first time that a similar rumour [had] been circulated' and they proved to be false.¹⁰⁹⁹ Newspapers in New Zealand repeating the same copy, described him as a man who had 'turned traitor during the mutiny,

¹⁰⁹¹ *Empire*, 8 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁹² *Hobart Town Mercury*, 16 September, 1857.

¹⁰⁹³ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 18 July, 1857.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Hobart Courier*, 2 November, 1857.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Nelson Colonist*, 3 August, 1858.

¹⁰⁹⁶ For example at least ten separate occasions in the *New Zealand press from 1857-1900*.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Such as *Caulfield and Elsternwick Leader*, 15 September, 1894; *Hobart Mercury*, 30 August, 1894; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August, 1894; *South Australian Register*, 30 August, 1894, or *Queenslander*, 8 September, 1894.

¹⁰⁹⁸ As *Auckland Star*, 30 August, 1894; *Poverty Bay Herald*, 30 August, 1894; *Nelson Evening Mail*, 31 August, 1894, and *Colonist*, 31 August, 1894.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Oakleigh Leader*, 15 September, 1894.

and cruelly murdered a number of British, irrespective of age or sex'.¹¹⁰⁰ Reports of Sahib's death also appeared with regularity, and were transmitted from paper to paper. As early as November 1857 it was claimed that Sahib had drowned himself and his family.¹¹⁰¹ When these reports proved unreliable the news was transmitted the same way. Sahib's infamy persisted. Even as late as the 1920s Sahib's whereabouts generated interest and he was referred to as 'butcher'.¹¹⁰²

The fates of two of the key Indian players in the Rebellion show how a story migrated through the colonial press and how newspapers accepted the weaknesses in the information they had. In November 1859 the *Bombay Courier* carried a report from the *Lucknow Herald*¹¹⁰³ stating that Nana Sahib had died in Nepal.¹¹⁰⁴ This was reported as fact by several Australian journals, but with some caveats¹¹⁰⁵, during January 1860. The *Lucknow Herald* later cast doubt on its own claims of Sahib's death. Their copy was reprinted in the *Melbourne Argus*, and via one steamer, the ill-fated Hannah Nicholson, was again reprinted in many a number of other Australian papers. All were agreed that the report was 'very doubtful', and that they lacked 'the complete files of papers'. The *South Australian Advertiser* based that doubt on the suspicions of a journalist in India,¹¹⁰⁶ something the *Hobart Mercury* concurred with¹¹⁰⁷, whilst for the *Empire* in Sydney, it was the lack of authentication that was the issue.¹¹⁰⁸ There was also an acceptance that information would be incomplete, more so if it came from a letter unintended for publication.¹¹⁰⁹ Rumours of the death or suicide of other Rebellion leaders like the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah appeared regularly in the Antipodean press.¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁰ *Poverty Bay Herald*, 30 August, 1894.

¹¹⁰¹ *Empire*, 17 November, 1857; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November, 1857.

¹¹⁰² *Straits Times*, 18 August, 1928.

¹¹⁰³ Referred to as 'a Lucknow journal' in some papers.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Bombay Courier*, 29 November, 1859.

¹¹⁰⁵ Like the *South Australian Register*, 14 January, 1860.

¹¹⁰⁶ *South Australian Advertiser*, 12 March, 1860.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 10 March, 1860.

¹¹⁰⁸ *Empire*, 12 March, 1860.

¹¹⁰⁹ *Perth Inquirer & Commercial News*, 23 December, 1857.

¹¹¹⁰ *Taranaki Herald*, 7 November, 1857.

Though examining an image of a stereotypical villain that was created through Sahib, or to a lesser extent Bahadur Shah, a more complicated view in relation to defined groups of Indians or specific Indians is possible.

The Good Indian

These were not universal attacks on Indians, non Christians or minority groups in general. New Zealand's *Taranaki Herald* carried a letter in early 1858 sent from Meerut, which highlighted how certain groups fell outside the general view of the Indian. The 'Ghoorkas have behaved like Englishmen' and the 'Seikhs' have been loyal even when asked by mutineers to 'come to [them]'.¹¹¹¹ The Empire used to a 'them and us' attitude acknowledged that 'numerous tribes of the Punjaub, with propensities as fiendish as are those of their adversaries' had fought for the British at the successful yet costly siege of Delhi.¹¹¹² The *Head Quarters* praised the 'Goorka' and believed that only they, the Sikhs, Arabs, or Afghans were suitable for leadership.¹¹¹³ The same distinction between those two groups and the bulk of Indians was drawn by New Zealand's *Nelson Examiner*.¹¹¹⁴ Loyal Indians who helped suppress the Rebellion received praise.¹¹¹⁵ This was echoed in the way the loyalty or valour of a single Indian could be praised, in the midst of copy that was critical of Indians as a whole. When a Straits Settlement's Indian police officer, Jemedar Dondong, had been killed by pirates in the Straits of Malacca he was lauded and described as 'good-tempered and brave'.¹¹¹⁶ Reports of how sepoy and their families helped fleeing Europeans, peppered the press. Alongside these stories were ones that those Indians who helped, were often killed by the mutineers, if their European charges were discovered.¹¹¹⁷ When a 'venerable' Indian

¹¹¹¹ *Taranaki Herald*, 16 January, 1858.

¹¹¹² *Empire*, 20 January, 1858.

¹¹¹³ *Head Quarters*, 20 January, 1858.

¹¹¹⁴ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 21 November, 1857.

¹¹¹⁵ *Straits Times*, 10 July, 1858.

¹¹¹⁶ *Straits Times*, 11 June, 1859.

¹¹¹⁷ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 13 January, 1858.

noble, loyal to the British, died the *Straits Times* believed his death worthy of mention¹¹¹⁸, as was the death of another Indian monarch who was a ‘firm ally’.¹¹¹⁹ The *Nelson Examiner* reported how a pro-British Nepalese intervention in the Rebellion was politely declined, but later accepted. The Nepalese leader, Jang Bahadur Rana, wrote a letter stating that he was ‘to be trusted’ but was ‘rather disgusted’ by the distrust aimed at his offer.¹¹²⁰ The situation was calmed, which pleased the New Zealand press.¹¹²¹

The Rebellion was ‘carnage of an Asiatic scale’¹¹²² and the atrocities committed were ‘characteristically Asiatic’.¹¹²³ Or so papers from New Zealand and British North America argued. Those papers, and many others, believed that the Rebellion could be explained, in part, by the character of those involved in it. Although much of what was written was designed to insult and belittle, underneath it shows what a seemingly disparate colonial community, commonly thought of the Indians and native populations in general. It was more nuanced than the simple wrapping of all indigenous populations together in a negative. Individuals or groups of Indians could be praised, when others like Nana Sahib became arch villains.¹¹²⁴

Religion

The religious distinctions between Muslim and Hindu rebels and their Christian opponents was another method of describing difference. By August 1857 the *Straits Times* was adding a religious component to the Rebellion. The paper argued that the ‘insurrection in Continental India dropped its original military character and assumed the aspect of a religious war’. The

¹¹¹⁸ *Straits Times*, 7 May, 1859.

¹¹¹⁹ *Lyttelton Times*, 7 November, 1857.

¹¹²⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 28 November, 1857.

¹¹²¹ *Lyttelton Times*, 9 April, 1859.

¹¹²² *Launceston Examiner*, 24 April, 1858.

¹¹²³ *True Witness*, 9 October, 1857.

¹¹²⁴ Felicity Hand, “In the Shadow of the Mutiny: Reflections on Two Post-Independence Novels on the 1857 Uprising”, in Susana Onega (ed.), *Telling Histories: Narrativizing History, Historicizing Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 62.

paper was clear that it was the ‘hand of the Moslem lifted up against the Christian, whether adult or infant’.¹¹²⁵

In a letter written by an Australian lady in Calcutta to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and republished in other Australian papers, the Rebellion became a religious war between Christian and Muslim, ‘Indian troops, joined by the Mahommedan population, have risen against the English, vowing to exterminate the Christians, or eradicate Christianity, and to restore the Mahommedan supremacy’.¹¹²⁶ The paper itself argued that the ‘atrocities inflicted bear the stamp of the Crescent’. It was an uprising by Muslims, who could accept foreign Christian rule. Though Hindus had joined in the Rebellion it was Muslim ‘inspired and led’. Muslims had been favoured over the Hindu population, by the Company, but they had still chosen to rebel.¹¹²⁷ A letter published in the *South Australian Register*, also suggested that the Rebellion was a ‘struggle between the Crescent and Cross’, a popular belief. The author, Edward Bathurst, argued that attempts to Christianise the subcontinent had been hampered by the authorities.¹¹²⁸ Those authorities he went on to argue were as bad as any of the Indians that they ruled. Bathurst saw the ‘political fabric in India [as] composed of treachery, fraud, and force’, and those three aspects generated the same behaviour in the native population. Using the story of William Macnaghten’s death during the First Afghan War, as an example, Bathurst argued that those involved in treachery were themselves betrayed. Betrayal was not limited to Afghanistan. The Company authorities had, by playing native rulers against each other, betrayed those who had supported them. The authorities in India were reaping what they had sowed.¹¹²⁹ Populations preferred local rulers however ‘wild and bloody’ they are over foreign ones. The ‘assumption’ that a better British rule would be accepted over worse local ones had proven wrong.¹¹³⁰ An alternate view came earlier from JH van Renen, the promoter of Indian labour at the Cape, believed that a fear of Christianisation had made the Indians ‘mad’.¹¹³¹ Thus further missionary action would have just increased the threat.

¹¹²⁵ *Straits Times*, 23 August, 1857.

¹¹²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald* republished in *Perth Inquirer & Commercial News*, 14 October, 1857.

¹¹²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹²⁸ *South Australian Register*, 9 February, 1858.

¹¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁰ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 30 January, 1858.

¹¹³¹ *Cape Argus*, 9 September, 1857.

During the meeting in New Zealand, on providing aid to India, criticism of Company rule emerged. In general, it was over the Company's attempts to block missionary work especially from the clergy who spoke at it.¹¹³² *Bell's Life in Sydney* published a poem making it clear that it believed that the Rebellion had a religious nature. The rebels had taken up arms against 'the Christian race'.¹¹³³

The descriptions in the colonial press of Muslims, as a group, matched those of the rebels and Sahib in their ire. Muslims were 'proverbially licentious and cruel, and in this war have shown their worst tendencies in their darkest forms'¹¹³⁴, who lived a life of 'bigoted and sensual voluptuousness'.¹¹³⁵ Muslims were further presented as 'fanatical, fierce, a bitter hater of everything bearing the name of Christian'.¹¹³⁶ A report of the rebel capture of Delhi, 'the Mecca of India'¹¹³⁷, ascribed a clear religious nature to the atrocities in the city, with Muslims seeking out Christians to murder¹¹³⁸. This view was not universally held. The Empire reported two differing views on the nature of the Rebellion, one from Britain that it was military in nature, and the other from India, that it was a Muslim revolt.¹¹³⁹ Some journals chose to widen things out while others limited it. The *True Witness* suggested that people seeking a cause for the Rebellion need look no further than a plot 'amongst the Moslem population' to 're-establish Moslem supremacy'.¹¹⁴⁰ The *Quebec Gazette* countered that it was not 'merely Moslem Atrocities', but the 'characteristic trait of the Asiatic character' and all other barbaric half civilised nations.¹¹⁴¹ In the eventual summary, the Indian though, remained as cruel and sadistic as ever and that was the product of their 'heathenism'.¹¹⁴² The *Empire* reported that the Muslim population of Bombay, plainly

¹¹³² *Lyttelton Times*, 24 March, 1858.

¹¹³³ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 30 January, 1858.

¹¹³⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹³⁵ *South Australian Register*, 6 November, 1858.

¹¹³⁶ *Montreal Gazette*, 24 October, 1857.

¹¹³⁷ *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 25 November, 1857.

¹¹³⁸ *Melbourne Argus*, 6 January, 1859.

¹¹³⁹ *Empire*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹⁴⁰ *True Witness*, 25 September, 1857.

¹¹⁴¹ *Quebec Gazette*, 18 November, 1857.

¹¹⁴² *Nelson Examiner*, 8 September 1858.

concerned about their position during the Rebellion had felt the need to highlight ‘their most unshaken loyalty’. That was viewed by the Australian paper as ‘satisfactory’ news.¹¹⁴³

Hindus were not much better. Theirs was ‘a filthy and cruel system of idolatry’ that fostered a low moral condition’.¹¹⁴⁴ The image of a Hindu as an ‘impulsive being, easily excited, and wild in his aimless anger’ childlike emotionally but as ‘dangerous as a strong, unscrupulous, and crafty man’ changed.¹¹⁴⁵ The image of a naughty child changed into that of a ‘ruthless murderer’.¹¹⁴⁶ Small things ‘may impel [the Hindu] to strange excesses’.¹¹⁴⁷ Hindu beliefs in Bengal degraded humanity, and their gods, personifications of vice, which created a character in their adherents that was full of barbarity, licentiousness, and sin which could only be controlled by a ‘rod of iron’. Torture and death were modes of their religious practices.¹¹⁴⁸

Indian rulers had ‘deluded’ the rebels into believing a false prophecy¹¹⁴⁹, one about the end of British rule in India that had a religious basis.¹¹⁵⁰ The prophecy was that the Company's rule would end after a hundred years; a rule that begun with the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Nana Sahib would choose the battle’s anniversary for an assault on the Kanpur, so much had Plassey ‘assumed a supernatural significance’.¹¹⁵¹ The papers of Hobart, Tasmania highlighted how ineffectual the Indian rulers were proving to be. Their rebel forces were disorganised and did not obey orders from the ‘puppet King of India’, the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II. He was seen as ineffectual.¹¹⁵² Later when discussing Shah’s trial the *Hobart Town Mercury* described him as ‘a perfect picture of native apathy’.¹¹⁵³ The *Sydney*

¹¹⁴³ *Empire*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹⁴⁴ *South Australian Register*, 6 November, 1858.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Globe*, 24 July, 1857.

¹¹⁴⁶ *Edinburgh Review* reprinted in *Christian Guardian*, 6 January, 1858.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Globe*, 24 July, 1857.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Empire*, 8 September, 1857.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Otago Witness*, 24 October, 1857.

¹¹⁵¹ Lawrence James, *Raj, the Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: Abacus, 1997), 37.

¹¹⁵² *Hobart Courier*, 21 October, 1857.

¹¹⁵³ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 6 May, 1858.

Morning Herald said that the Rebellion had ‘no patriotic or national character’ it was just a rebellion.¹¹⁵⁴

All the supposed negatives of Islam and Hinduism could be changed by conversion to Christianity.¹¹⁵⁵ Victory had a religious aspect. The suppression was a triumph for the Christian god and divine providence, who had saved the British in India.¹¹⁵⁶ The *Wellington Independent* reported how the New Zealand Wesleyan community was pondering if the Rebellion would have occurred, if there had been attempt to Christianise the subcontinent.¹¹⁵⁷ Not all native religious traditions were to be overridden, however when they served to sate vengeance, rebel sepoys were executed by being tied to the barrels of canons for religious and caste reasons.¹¹⁵⁸

Although the image of a savage sepoy remained in the popular psyche, once the initial shock had worn off, attempts were made to cool the rhetoric against the Indian population. Events like the massacres at Kanpur interrupted this process, but did not derail it. A stark reality dawned on many. Although the Rebellion had been a shocking event, native troops were needed in India, and Indian labour was needed in the empire.

Those massacres and other apparent atrocities equally became topics of discussion, with debates on the validity of many.

Horror Stories

By the September and October of 1857 letters sent to relatives in Australia reached the newspapers. They fell into two camps, ones with details of atrocities supposed to have

¹¹⁵⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹⁵⁵ *South Australian Register*, 6 November, 1858.

¹¹⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November, 1857.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Wellington Independent*, 25 November, 1857.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 24 October, 1857.

occurred during the Rebellion, and more dispassionate and factual ones. In July 1857 a soldier based in India, sent his family in Sydney two letters detailing what he had witnessed, and stories he had heard. Extracts of these two letters found their way into the *Empire* newspaper of 19 September.¹¹⁵⁹ The soldier related an attempted uprising in Nagpore, in which the plan was to kill the European men, give women to leaders which was foiled at last moment, and in other locations the Europeans were apparently shot and those who did not die fast enough, were hacked to bits. Another letter from India, sent to relatives in Melbourne, reported in general the murders of ‘hundreds of ladies, women and children’. The author highlighted two specific atrocities, one where a child was hacked to pieces and then fed to his parents, and the second pouring gunpowder into the ears of children, then igniting it causing the head to explode. He further alleged that attractive European women were ‘ravished’ by fifteen to twenty Indians.¹¹⁶⁰ Another series of letters extracted by the *Sydney Morning Herald* told of infants, being pulled apart by four sepoys, in front of their parents, bayoneted and boiled alive.¹¹⁶¹ Although it is likely that most of these stories are either exaggerated or invented, it is wrong to view them as anything other than the circulating rumours that often persist through wartime. Extra credence would have been given to these stories as they mirrored ones that were found in the papers of the subcontinent.¹¹⁶² In August 1857 a soldier in India wrote to a relative in Melbourne about what had happened to the Kanpur garrison, three of whom they knew. His letter found its way into the 19 October edition of the *Melbourne Argus*, stating ‘the gentlemen in some cases mutilated before their wives, their bodies then hacked to pieces, and the quivering flesh forced down the throats of their wives and children; the unfortunate ladies in every instance ravished, and then put to death. One lady they allowed to live after cutting off her nose, ears, fingers, and toe’.¹¹⁶³ The word ‘ravished’ was used by the *Melbourne Argus* twice in articles three days apart. Tasmania’s *Cornwall Chronicle* also published a selection of letter extracts about events at Kanpur.¹¹⁶⁴ ‘English’ letters that the Australian press reprinted tended to be more colourful. The *Melbourne Argus* published a selection in October 1857. Published at a similar time as

¹¹⁵⁹ *Empire*, 19 September, 1857.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Melbourne Argus*, 16 October, 1857.

¹¹⁶¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 September, 1857.

¹¹⁶² Copy of *Ceylon Times* summarised in the *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, 19 September, 1857.

¹¹⁶³ *Melbourne Argus*, 19 October, 1857.

¹¹⁶⁴ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 25 November, 1857.

Cotton's the selection was full of horror stories and hyperbole.¹¹⁶⁵ The most graphic extracts were published, unattributed, apart from the generalised comment, 'from a letter'.¹¹⁶⁶

There was a general belief that letters from the subcontinent presented 'an unvarnished and unexaggerated picture of life, as it is at present' Indian.¹¹⁶⁷ This proved not to be the case. Localised doubts appeared in colonial papers. Inaccurate stories of sepoy advances to Calcutta were repeated but created disbelief in the Australian press.¹¹⁶⁸ Debates about the accuracy of reports brought from India soon followed. A letter to the *Hobart Courier* doubted that Calcutta had been captured based on the number of false reports he had received about his son's death.¹¹⁶⁹ In the same edition the *Courier* republished a letter from a John Douglas, complaining that people doubted the veracity of his reports about events in India.¹¹⁷⁰ He had been accused by the *Empire* of being 'famous for his cock-and-bull stories'¹¹⁷¹. The *Maitland Mercury* was concerned that the repetitions of stories of horror 'assume a magnitude in the public eye far beyond their real importance' as important as they were.¹¹⁷²

The Rebellion gave those in Britain's colonies cause to examine both the nature of what was happening in India, and those who were rebelling against East India Company rule. At the start the Rebellion was something that the British were capable of putting down. It was no different from other rebellions and mutinies in the subcontinent. As more casualties, military and civilian, mounted the more seriously it was taken and the more colourful the language used. An example of this development can be seen with the *Hobart Courier* whose copy about the fall of Delhi where 'nearly every European [was] killed...not sparing age or sex' is for the paper bland and merely factual. By September as news of the Satichaura Ghat massacre at Kanpur reached Tasmania the *Courier's* prose had become more purple.¹¹⁷³ It

¹¹⁶⁵ *Melbourne Argus*, 30 October, 1857.

¹¹⁶⁶ *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 23 January, 1858.

¹¹⁶⁷ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 October, 1857.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Ballarat Star*, 30 September, 1857.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Hobart Courier*, 2 October, 1857.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁷¹ *Empire*, 25 September, 1857.

¹¹⁷² *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 19 November, 1857.

¹¹⁷³ *Hobart Courier*, 10 July, 1857.

reported that Nana Sahib, ‘the arch-scoundrel, whose name is now one of eternal infamy’ had ‘fifty ladies and children, and some officers of the late Cawnpore force, in his hands to enable him to obtain terms for himself when the day of retribution arrives’.¹¹⁷⁴ When constructing its ‘Retrospect of Year’ 1857 the New Zealand paper the *Daily Southern Cross* summed up a commonly held belief about those in rebellion in India, the ‘mutinies revealed his true character, and proved forever the great fact that civilization of itself has no power to correct the innate, ineradicable love of wickedness in an Asiatic’.¹¹⁷⁵

Each colonial society created images of those conducting the rebellion, which can say as much about those societies, as the people that they were describing. Those images were both expressed and influenced by what they read. It also allowed the commonalities of viewpoint to emerge, but also debates to ensue. Their purpose has been debated from the beginning.¹¹⁷⁶ Were they attempts to justify future atrocities or for explaining past ones? Or a way of establishing further control over the native population? Or simply an immediate reaction to stories about horrific events, real or invented? The response in Britain was mirrored later in the colonies, as the news seeped through. Killing of innocents held a special revulsion and interest in Victorian sensibilities, if it was others doing it.

The most graphic copy that arrived in colonial papers came directly from letters and articles printed in English language Indian papers.¹¹⁷⁷ ‘Atrocity’ became a buzzword in letters to papers and articles found in them.¹¹⁷⁸ These atrocities deserved ‘dire revenge’.¹¹⁷⁹ The severity of the atrocities committed against the innocents justified the British response.¹¹⁸⁰

¹¹⁷⁴ *Hobart Courier*, 9 September, 1857.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 April, 1858 (Continued from a Supplement of April 23).

¹¹⁷⁶ Karen Beckman, *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 31–3.

¹¹⁷⁷ *South Australian Register*, 24 October, 1857; *Cornwall Chronicle*, 21 October, 1857; *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 October, 1857.

¹¹⁷⁸ Letter reprinted to *Melbourne Argus*, 22 May, and *Melbourne Argus*, 8 July, 1857.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Melbourne Argus*, 8 July, 1857.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Wellington Independent*, 18 November, 1857.

Reports of apparent atrocities received criticism, both at the time and in later academic studies. It is problematic to impose modern ideas and prejudices onto the copy of historic newspapers, without considering the context of those articles. A number of feminist writers have argued that British newspapers, and by extension their colonial contemporaries, covering the Rebellion became ‘obsessed with voyeuristic fantasies of Indian men raping Englishwomen’ appearing to be a sign of the British male transposing their own desires for ‘other’ females¹¹⁸¹ creating a ‘rape motif’¹¹⁸² or being used as a method of control.¹¹⁸³ The reality though was simpler, a desire to fill space with stories that would appeal to their readership, coupled with a general inability to check material. There is no evidence to support ascribing such motives to these press reports. The irregular nature of reports from India made the creation of a false narrative almost impossible. This led to editors ‘joining the dots with conjecture’¹¹⁸⁴ and print material that they otherwise might not have. The checking of veracity, already rare, became non-existent. The copy of other newspapers, especially those in India, was used to collaborate stories altering them from ‘rumour’ to being ‘fact’.¹¹⁸⁵ Information could cross itself again and again with subtle changes creeping in. The ‘fears’ of Indian writers were presented as fact.¹¹⁸⁶

Accounts of what happened in Kanpur were reprinted, without any care being taken to establish if the original was authentic. For example, extracts from the journal of the British spy ‘Myoor Tewaree’ were first published in the *Friend of India*, and then reprinted all over the empire.¹¹⁸⁷ The murder of the white women in Kanpur, mutated into a legend that there

¹¹⁸¹ Beckman, *Vanishing Women*, 33.

¹¹⁸² Lynette Felber, *Clio's Daughters: British Women Making History, 1790-1899* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 59.

¹¹⁸³ Nancy Paxton, “Mobilizing Chivalry: Rape in British Novels About the Indian Uprising of 1857” *Victorian Studies* 36 (1992) 5-30; Jenny Sharpe, "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency," *Genders* 10 (1991): 5-30.

¹¹⁸⁴ Simon J. Potter “Empire and the English Press c.1857-1914” in Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 43.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Empire*, 11 July, 1857.

¹¹⁸⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July, 1857.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Daily Southern Cross*, 22 January, 1858.

had been rapes too. This spawned a cultural fear of European women being raped by Indian men, EM Forster's 1924 novel *Passage to India* and Paul Scott's 1966 *Jewel in the Crown*.

The colonial press obtained its news from where it could which made any planned approach unlikely, if not impossible. Colonial papers, either due to the lack of other more reliable sources or a desire for information, would report lurid tales from Indian papers. The *Melbourne Argus* reprinted such a horror story from the *Ceylon Times* which claimed that children were 'shut up in a box and burnt alive' while women were 'strapped together [naked] and paraded through the streets' or 'flayed alive'.¹¹⁸⁸ This led to the reproduction of copy that was highly emotive and could not possibly be accurate,

'Six European ladies had taken refuge in a room. One of them, very young and beautiful concealed herself under a sofa; the other five were subjected to outrage by the mutinous soldiery and then beheaded; the blood trickled under the sofa and the young female concealed there betrayed herself by uttering a shriek. She was seized and taken to the harem of the King of Delhi'.¹¹⁸⁹

The content of material sent into newspapers was often chosen by the correspondent and not the paper. The journal simply reprinted what they had. In December 1857 the *Nelson Examiner* printed extracts from letters they had received from a correspondent with relatives in India. That correspondent précised the extracts, stating that they contained no 'new information' but stating that some of the paragraphs that they might be of use to the *Examiner's* readers. 'Unwilling' to provide details of the Kanpur massacres because of their 'frightful' nature the correspondent feels it right to allow the printing of text about retribution.¹¹⁹⁰ It was assumed that tales of Europeans suffering in India, both generated feelings of sympathy but also 'must have thrilled every English bosom' in the dominions.¹¹⁹¹ This 'thrill' had the effect of stifling opposing views. Those who took a more moderate

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ceylon Times* reprinted in *Melbourne Argus*, 5 September, 1857.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Melbourne Argus*, 3 October, 1857.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 9 December, 1857.

¹¹⁹¹ *Otago Witness*, 1 May, 1858.

approach found themselves, both surprised, at how quickly their fellow countrymen demanded retribution and how isolated from them they became.

The press in certain colonies was influenced by the source of their information. The Australian press obtained much of its news about the Rebellion, directly from English language Indian papers, and reprinted articles verbatim. European news would often take thirty days or more to arrive in Australia.¹¹⁹² So the Antipodean papers would attempt to place things in a clear coherent order but were most often been left with ‘hotchpot’ collection of facts to print.¹¹⁹³ While they had only limited concern for their veracity this precludes collusion as the material printed came from too many disparate sources. While papers claimed they would not print or reprint the full ‘particulars of the brutal outrages and assassinations’ in order not to hurt ‘the feelings of surviving friends and relatives’ they often did just that.¹¹⁹⁴ Those in Geelong, South Australia, ‘with parties in India’ who were concerned about what was happening must have found the copy printed in the Melbourne papers, just round Port Philip Bay, hard to read.¹¹⁹⁵ These atrocities proved to be isolated incidents of barbarism, punctuated by the decency of Indians who protected many Europeans, which were in general ignored.

Rape Stories

Incidents of rape, committed by Indian rebels against European women and girls, were rare during the Rebellion. Inaccurate, or falsified reports of rapes were accepted as factual and these were often used to justify the excesses of the British reaction to the Rebellion. These newspapers printed various apparently eyewitness accounts of English women and girls being raped by Indian rebels, that were later found to be, in general, false. Many of the tales of real atrocities were attached to the myth of wholesale rape of British women. One such account published by *The Times*, regarding an incident where forty eight English girls from ten to

¹¹⁹² *Ballarat Star*, 9 January, 1858, *Melbourne Argus*, 9 January, 1858.

¹¹⁹³ *South Australian Register*, 16 January, 1858; *Nelson Colonist*, 3 November, 1857.

¹¹⁹⁴ *Melbourne Argus*, 7 July, 1857.

¹¹⁹⁵ *Geelong Advertiser*, 17 July, 1857.

fourteen years had been raped by Indian rebels in Delhi. The original story, that was reprinted in colonial newspapers¹¹⁹⁶, claimed to be a propaganda story by Karl Marx in the *New York Daily Tribune*.¹¹⁹⁷ Marx believed in general that all reports of atrocities were being ‘deliberately exaggerated’¹¹⁹⁸, and the specific story he claimed was penned by a ‘cowardly parson’ in Bangalore ‘more than a thousand miles...distant from the scene of the action’.¹¹⁹⁹ Although unsurprisingly critical of the East India Company and the British administration in India, Marx was able to show concern for those in peril in India.¹²⁰⁰ The story, though invented and a near verbatim copy of a report in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, would have created or reinforced an image of the rebel sepoys that the truth would find difficult to counter.¹²⁰¹ It was not just Marx who doubted the veracity of atrocity reports, with Canadian radical William Lyon Mackenzie suggesting in his newspaper that they were inventions of the British press.¹²⁰² The sheer amount of atrocity stories countered this opinion.

These rape stories helped create a justification for violent reprisals and were commonplace in letters, novels, and the press.¹²⁰³ It does not follow that the stories themselves were invented for that purpose. It is more likely that they are the product of rumours that were not given the proper scrutiny. The contemporary account of atrocities against Europeans, both in generalities and specifics, were riddled with exaggerations and inventions. It was these reports of atrocities that the colonial press responded to.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Melbourne Argus*, 24 November, 1857.

¹¹⁹⁷ *New York Daily Tribune*, 16 September, 1857.

¹¹⁹⁸ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence 1857–1859* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), 83.

¹¹⁹⁹ *New York Daily Tribune*, September 16, 1857.

¹²⁰⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, 13 October, 1857.

¹²⁰¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 August, 1857.

¹²⁰² *Message*, 15 January, 1858.

¹²⁰³ Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 66 also see Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Nancy Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999); and Nancy Paxton, “Mobilizing Chivalry: Rape in British Novels about the Indian Uprising of 1857”, *Victorian Studies*, 36, 1 (Autumn, 1992): 5-30.

Although the outline of what had happened in Kanpur was clear, the detail was more ‘blurred’.¹²⁰⁴ An example of such a blurred detail comes in the fate of Margaret Wheeler. Margaret who was the daughter of the British commander at Kanpur, Hugh Wheeler, was abducted along with fellow Englishwomen, Amy Horne, during the siege of the Company positions outside the city. Although Horne was to appear at the home of a relative in Allahabad telling stories of abuse and rape, of Margaret nothing was then known.¹²⁰⁵ Into this vacuum of information one story gained credence, that to avoid rape Wheeler had killed her assailant then herself.

New Brunswick’s the *Head Quarters*’ in their ‘news-boy’s address’ to their patrons wrote about how Margaret Wheeler ‘filled with patriot ire, And dreading many other maiden’s fate, her capture slew’ then to save herself from rape ‘Plunged headmost’ into the grave.¹²⁰⁶ The *Empire* in Sydney was pleased to be able to report the supposed ‘vengeance’ that Margaret Wheeler had been able to take on her would be rapist.¹²⁰⁷ The paper portrayed her as an avenging nemesis.¹²⁰⁸ Another version of the story from Australia, suggested that Margaret had been killed after her abductor had argued with his wife over her¹²⁰⁹ and another suggested that her actions had scared off those Nana Sahib had offered her to.¹²¹⁰ *Bell’s Life in Sydney* described her as a ‘noble girl’ of ‘rare courage’ whose ‘heroic resistance will long be remembered as a bright page in the sad history’.¹²¹¹ They based this view of Wheeler on the reports published in other journals, which were in part an attempt to replace what might have happened, with what the Victorian public wanted to have happened, Margaret killing

¹²⁰⁴ Barbara English, “The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857”, *Past and Present* 142 (1994): 169.

¹²⁰⁵ David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 220.

¹²⁰⁶ *Head Quarters*, 6 January, 1858.

¹²⁰⁷ *Empire*, 24 November, 1857.

¹²⁰⁸ *Empire*, 20 January, 1858.

¹²⁰⁹ *Friend of India* reprinted in *South Australian Advertiser*, 2 October, 1860.

¹²¹⁰ *Empire*, 24 November, 1857.

¹²¹¹ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

her rapist then herself.¹²¹² The reality was somewhat different; Wheeler was eventually found living as her captor's concubine or wife.¹²¹³

When the Rebellion was in its final death throes the *South Australian Register* contrasted the European with the Asiatic. The European it argued had a 'consciousness of power, controlled by strong will...directed by unfailing energy, pursues a course under reverse or success essentially alike in all its aims, confident that the end is certain' whilst it argued that the Asiatic had a 'pervading sense of inferiority, mistaking the paroxysms of passion and the frenzy of religious hatred for patriotism, rush heedlessly on'.¹²¹⁴ It was these differences that would the journal believed produce an inevitable, if protracted, British victory over its enemies on the subcontinent. For the New Zealand newspaper the *Nelson Examiner* those under siege were heroic, those besieging them barbarous.¹²¹⁵ For a Sydney newspaper those who had attempted to defend the entrenchment in Kanpur were gallant and recklessly brave as opposed to the cruel fiendishness of those besieging them.¹²¹⁶ This became a common distinction between the two with those in defence portrayed as 'heroic' and those attacking them as the reverse.¹²¹⁷ This clear dichotomy between the two sides in the insurrection was not a product of a universal viewpoint that existed across the Empire, but the predictable inherent nature of people to see their side as good and the other as bad. This is evidenced by the fact that whilst there are commonalities in reaction no single unified vision is created.

The stream of rape and stories of other atrocities committed by the rebels, both shocked the colonial press but gave them good cause to doubt their veracity.

¹²¹² David, *The Indian Mutiny*, 220-22.

¹²¹³ Nancy Paxton, "Mobilizing Chivalry: Rape in British Novels About the Indian Uprising of 1857" *Victorian Studies* 36 (1992): 8.

¹²¹⁴ *South Australian Register*, 18 November, 1858.

¹²¹⁵ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 27 February, 1858.

¹²¹⁶ *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 24 October, 1857.

¹²¹⁷ *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 20 October, 1857.

Conclusion

This chapter shows the changes in how Indians and Europeans and matters related to them, were viewed by the colonial press and how simple generalisations turned into nuanced opinions. Initially the press created two images of those on both sides of the Rebellion. The rebels were presented as universally negative and the Europeans positive. Initially this would seem to run against the theme of this thesis, that the reaction was local rather than empire wide. This was not a planned or unified reaction but how those who wrote for the colonial press would view any rebellion. Much of the colonial press would always support the British administration of a colony over anyone seeking to overthrow it, though some as we have seen in Ireland and British North America did not or were late in doing so. As the Rebellion progressed this dichotomy continued but with a more nuanced approach towards groups of Indians, such as Gurkhas or Sikhs, or specific Indians who conducted themselves well or behaved with bravery. Certain individuals, such as rebel leader Nana Sahib, would be singled out for the opposite treatment. Those seen as the murderers of innocents would never have been viewed positively however critical a newspaper was of the British state or how it ran its colonies. The press would report but also be sceptical about the tales of atrocities committed against Europeans. It would remain a trope that things of the East were corrupting and primitive.

Conclusion

The inhabitants of a disparate and diverse group of colonies, the citizens of the British Empire would hear about what they would primarily describe as the ‘Indian Mutiny’ from reports that would arrive on the first steamer in port carrying the news. Further news came when the next ship docked with appropriate copy from other newspapers, or other sources of information such as letters from the subcontinent. The copy from a substantial number of colonial newspapers was examined in both the context of each settlement and the nature of the newspaper business at the time. The reaction of the colonial press to the Rebellion demonstrated the existing prejudices, beliefs, and fears of those who worked for and read those newspapers.

From these certain themes arose from the copy and subsequently attached to the domestic situation in each colony, as much as a reaction to the Rebellion itself. The Rebellion as much an analogue or trigger for the debating of these domestic issues as a news story.

The Rebellion was quickly linked to local sources of conflict. Those who inhabited the Straits Settlements were concerned about how the East India Company was administering the settlements, recent uprisings and the threat engendered by the importation of Indian Labour which was primarily convict, that was increasingly outnumbering the European population.¹²¹⁸ This local fear of an Indian uprising was validated, by what was occurring on the plains of northern India and created a heightened sense of insecurity that gave insurrectionist motivations to random often prosaic incidents. Those in British North America had recently experienced two rebellions against British control, had disaffected minorities and had been in regular border disputes with its aggressive southern neighbour, the United States. On the island of Ireland, there had been in living memory a series of rebellions that had sparked continuing sectarian discord. In both British North America and Ireland, the French, Irish or Catholic replaced the Indian as the possible source of threat. The inhabitants of the two colonies in present day South Africa, whilst trying to develop their economies

¹²¹⁸ David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9–10, 53.

found a need for Indian labour and disturbances on their frontiers creating a sense of uncertainty and risk. In Caribbean island and mainland plantation colonies there was a fear of further violence from indentured Indian labour. A similar debate occurred on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius with its developed plantation economy. The extent of the possible threats to specific colonies and the Empire became expressed in the ultimately farcical search for an external agent who had orchestrated the Rebellion for their own benefit.

Many settled colonies saw the Rebellion as an opportunity to show their worth to the imperial centre and rest of the empire, by providing aid coupled with their reaction to others they viewed as not contributing appropriately. The Cape Colony could provide horses, the Australian and New Zealand colonies could provide financial aid, and Canada, amongst others, could provide men to fight. All was dependent on the contributions not putting the security and development of the colonies at risk. When their fellow settlers were not as forthcoming as others hoped they would be; this was put down to a lack of understanding of the plight of their fellow Europeans in India, not to a general unwillingness to contribute. For those who did contribute, and chide those who did not, it was an important sign that they belonged. This would be the product both of a feeling of kinship with those in need and being part of a larger whole. It also gave colonies a method of showing how capable they were, even if their efforts were in vain, such as the regiments, they raised never reaching India.

The Rebellion highlighted existing concerns about Company administration in the Straits Settlements and Burma or colonial administrations in locations such as British North America or Ireland. A few colonies, more so those under East India Company governance, found that they could use the suggested poor administration of India, as a forum through which to criticise their local government. The European citizens of these colonies expected to be treated as they would in the motherland, believing that they should be treated differently to those of other races and live somewhere that the East India Company exported its problems to. When their rights were endangered, they were quick to complain and petition for change. The Rebellion would become a useful tool as it provided them with ammunition to use against the Company. It was the product of poor governance in India and thus a similar threat existed in the territories that the Company controlled elsewhere. In the Cape Colony the reaction of the local governor Sir George Grey's attempts to provide aid, highlighted opinions

on the tensions between his local administration and the British state. An existing debate about the position in the empire of Ireland and how it was administered was given a Rebellion flavour through an analogue, between the poor East India Company governance in India and what some saw as the same domestically. This produced a negative reaction, with those making that argument, being linked to the Indian rebels. The debate over Ireland's place in the Empire used the Rebellion as a new forum and no single answer was reached as Bender suggests.¹²¹⁹ Many contradictory and antagonistic ones were.

The desire to increase the development of their settlements using Indian labour, free or convict, allowed the rebellious sepoy to be seen both as a threat and a potential asset to the community. Across the Empire the planting classes wanted to import labour, but others were concerned about the proposals. Those troubled by the idea were not just white and British. The black population of the Caribbean was as concerned and used similar language to the white population. They had an added impetus to complain, as they saw the Indian immigrants as competition for plantation work. The black population also sought to distinguish themselves from the Indians to avoid being viewed as the same. On Mauritius the French language press had similar concerns, when thousands of Indian labourers were imported without adequate checks on their recent activities. The Rebellion became a motivation to counter localised disruption. Religious festivals that already had been sources of violence were banned at the time and later when violently suppressed, the Rebellion was used as an excuse for doing so.

The final chapter contrasted the images of the relevant the European in the Colonial press. These produced generalities that amounted to little more than one side being negative and the other positive. Notwithstanding the use of terms like 'sepoy' as an insult, thought moved past a simple dichotomy. The commentary would shift to noting how subsets of Indians and individuals had remained loyal and shown bravery. This distinction played a crucial part in

¹²¹⁹ Bender, "Mutiny or Freedom Fight", 107-8; Jill Bender, "'The Irish 'Sepoy' Press: Irish Nationalism and anti-British agitation during the 1857 Indian Rebellion'" in Brad Patterson and Kathryn Patterson (eds), *Ireland and the Irish Antipodes: One World or Worlds Apart?* (Sydney: Anchor Books, 2010) 241-51.

the British success in suppressing the Rebellion.¹²²⁰ This corresponds with Gilmour's approach to inter-ethnic relationships¹²²¹ but runs counter with the good versus bad dynamic which fills mid twentieth century histories.¹²²² Stories of atrocities against Europeans filled the pages of colonial newspapers, some were real, some invented, most were exaggerated. Such stories were often analogues of local concerns as Chakravarty suggests but in relation to the British press.¹²²³ This was not a planned attempt to provide an excuse for British retribution as it was often repeating copy. There was doubt at the time. The piecemeal nature of information coming to each colony led to an attitude that some news, however unlikely, was better than none.

The limitations of this study relate mainly to the source material but also includes limiting it to one event and one source type. As with a survey using primary sources this thesis is limited to what is available. After changes in taxation and improvements in printing technology in the middle of the nineteenth century, there had been a marked increase in both the numbers of and circulation of newspapers.¹²²⁴ Areas that had not been served by newspapers found themselves with one or possibly more journals. Consistency becomes an issue, as a number of journals, more so in less populous areas, were often report in nature, lasting a few years or as short as a few months. Bias is also a difficulty. As today, newspapers represented the interests of various groups though this is generally clearly identifiable either based on the copy or the editorial staff. The target readership of the colonial press tended to be limited. Newspapers of the period mainly served a middle class, but there were newspapers which served minority groups, ethnic, economic and racial. Other limitations on using newspapers as source material, include the prevalence of journals in settler colonies opposed to those with smaller European populations and the nature of some journals as government newssheets. This thesis is limited to examining the reaction to one event. Though

¹²²⁰ John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India and Progress in the Colonial Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 195.

¹²²¹ David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 15, 17-18

¹²²² Sir John Kay, *Kaye's and Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8, Volume I* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), xii.

¹²²³ Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹²²⁴ David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste* (London: Pimlico, 2007).

it was arguably the primary news event of the period and the most important threat to the development of the Empire, the focus is narrow.

Commonly presented as an increasingly centralised and homogenous entity the period between the relaxing of duty on the press and the completion of the imperial telegraph network created an environment in which opinion and speculation played as much prominence as the actual news. This in turn produced an environment in which the news was discussed in more detail than in later periods, if only to fill the pages. Existing local concerns would be discussed through other events, in the case of this thesis, the Indian Rebellion. Thus, the primary conclusion of this thesis is that although the Rebellion was ostensibly the topic, the discussion was primarily about local issues of identity, ethnicity, loyalty, governance and security with cross imperial commonalities being the product of a standard reaction to sides in any conflict.

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