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‘The Invention of the Concentration Camp: 1896-1907’

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The Invention of the Concentration Camp: 1896-1907

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On 18 May 1899, at the royal palace of Huis ten Bosch in the tranquil capital of the Netherlands, representatives of all the world's major powers, and some minor ones, assembled in an international conference. They had come to The Hague at the call of the Tsar of All the Russias. Nicholas II, in an 'Imperial Rescript' in August the previous year, had proposed to seek, "by means of international discussion, the most effectual means of ensuring to all peoples the benefits of a durable peace and above all of putting an end to the progressive development of the present armaments" (Eyffinger 1999: 17). The conference sparked world-wide interest, and was indeed a landmark in international relations. It was the first gathering in which representatives of all the most powerful states came together to lay down "authoritative statements of international opinion and consensus" (Gong 1984: 57). The conference did produce some important results, even though to peace campaigners, these were disappointingly limited and reformist, moderating war rather than getting rid of it. It was the Hague Convention that established a system of clear distinctions between combatants, prisoners of war and civilians, and which laid down definite rights and obligations for each of these categories of persons. Certain types of weapons - poison gas, missiles fired from balloons, and expanding 'dum-dum' bullets - were forbidden for use in combat. In respect to civilians, the Hague Convention provided a number of important legal protections. An occupying army, among other things, could not force civilians to take part in military operations against their own country, nor force them to swear allegiance to the occupying power, nor infringe upon the "[f]amily honour and rights, the lives of persons and private property, as well as [the] religious convictions and practice" of civilians (Eyffinger 1999: 316). Most importantly, the conference, realizing that it could not foresee all future contingencies, approved the inclusion of a blanket injunction to protect that became known as the Martens declaration, after its proposer, a Russian official and legal academic. Feodor Fedorovich Martens drafted the following words, which were incorporated into the 'Convention Regarding the Laws and Customs of War on Land', and which have remained a standard point of reference in humanitarian legal discourse:

> in cases not included in the present arrangement, populations and belligerents remain under the protection and empire of the principles of international law, as they result from the usages established between

> civilized nations, from the laws of humanity, and from the demands of conscience (Eyffinger 1999: 313)

Yet just two years later, a major political figure in the world's most powerful nation gave an assessment of developments on the battle field that was strikingly at odds with the optimism of the Hague moment. In London, on 14 June 1901, the leader of the opposition Liberal party, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, made a speech which was immediately to resound across the country, through the British empire, and around the world. The affable and patrician 'C-B' had until that time patriotically deferred to the Conservative government on the South African war. But now he launched a full-scale attack on Lord Salisbury's administration. "When", he asked, "is a war not a war? When it is conducted by the methods of barbarism in South Africa". His words were, oddly, phrased in the standard formula of a music hall joke, as if he were trying to soften their impact. He knew he was taking a risk, for he had a problem in holding together the anti-war radicals of his party, like the young David Lloyd George, and the pro-war Liberal Imperialists. But Campbell-Bannerman appears to have had a genuine crisis of conscience precipitated by the information he was receiving about the war from sources such as the Quaker humanitarian Emily Hobhouse (Wilson 1973). In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, Kitchener's army was systematically leveling Boer farm-houses, burning crops and slaughtering livestock. Boer women and children and African tenants and farm labourers were being interned in camps where they were suffering enormously high rates of mortality from disease.[1]

The moment around the turn of the century thus presents us with a remarkable conjuncture. First, an unprecedented involvement of states in attempts to regulate the cruelty of warfare. Second, the introduction into state practice and political discourse of extreme forms of militarized brutalism against civilians, and especially of what was already being called the concentration camp. And third, at a time which we stereotypically regard as the moment of the greatest self-confidence of the west, a serious questioning within European elites of their own claims to civilization.

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[1] Campbell-Bannerman's use of the notion of barbarism was a rhetorically explosive one. To cast doubt on Britain's civilizational credentials, at the very the very moment of the country's greatest imperial reach, was a bold move indeed. Campbell-Bannerman was criticizing the conduct of the army, an institution with which his own class had the closest possible links. And it is worth remembering that the liberal leader came from and was speaking to a classically educated elite, who tended to identify with Greece and Rome. They were, conscious of the strength of the line that which the classical authors in whom they had been educated, drew between themselves and the *barbaroi*. This distinction, interestingly, came out of a moment of warfare: the Greek struggle against the Persians in 480-479 BCE, and the hostility to the enemy which it generated. In his *Politics* Aristotle contrasted Greek freedom with barbarian servility, thus justifying the dominance of the former over the latter (Cartledge 2002: 54-75). My thanks to Danielle Allen for this reference.

In his enormously influential writings on the subject, Giorgio Agamben has made the now-famous claim that "the camp is the new biopolitical *nomos* of the planet". And much historical work has come to a similar conclusion. Roger Chickering (1994), in an influential article, while warning against the teleological tendencies of an argument seeing the rise of modern warfare as steady evolution of 'total war', nevertheless concludes that total war is useful concept if understood as involving the systematic and calculated incorporation of civilians as participants, and that it did reach unprecedented levels in the twentieth century. The period since the 1890s has seen a world in which civilians have not just been the casual victims of armies, but in which they have been subject to unprecedented levels of systematized incarceration, conscription, forced labour, violence and mass killing.

There has been a surprisingly high degree of agreement amongst social theorists and historians as to when and where the practice and discourse of the concentration camp arose. Almost universally, it has been identified as emerging either in the policies of the Spanish government in response to the revolt in its Cuban colony from 1894, or in British policies in the South African War of 1899-1902, or both. More recently, there has been some general acceptance amongst scholars that aspects of American policy in the war against the Filipinos of 1899-1902 and the German repression of the Herero and Nama revolts in Southwest Africa from 1904 to 1907 also constitute genuine early examples of the concentration camp. And in agreeing that the camps of such colonial wars were predecessors of the vastly more lethal camp systems of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and many lesser dictators, scholars have also recognized their significance for the major catastrophes of the subsequent age.

But what scholars have been much less good at addressing are questions of why and how the camp emerged at this time, and of its linkages forward to the practices of major totalitarian countries in mid-century. It is such questions that this paper seeks to explore. Agamben's treatment of the period is typical of much writing in the field . He simply notes that:

> Historians debate whether the first appearance of camps ought to be identified with the concentration camps that were created in 1896 by the Spaniards in Cuba in order to repress the insurrection of that colony's population, or rather with the concentration camps into which the English herded the Boers at the beginning of the twentieth century. What matters here is that in both cases one is dealing with the extension to an entire civilian population of a state of exception linked to a colonial war. (Agamben 2000: 37)

From there Agamben passes on, almost directly, to his central focus on the Nazi camps, without really specifying why this earlier history was significant for what came later. Similarly, Hannah Arendt (1966) in a chapter of her *Origins of Totalitarianism* which has attracted a great deal of renewed attention in recent

years, polemicizes powerfully on the point that there is a direct connection between the violence of colonialism and the practice of Stalinism and Nazism, but does not really identify the paths of the institutional and ideological continuities between colonial precedents and mid-century totalitarian practice.

So what we seem to have is a situation where both major philosophers of history and workaday historians agree that the moment of the turn of the century saw the birth of a new phenomenon, the concentration camp, and that this emergence is somehow linked to the larger-scale global catastrophes that followed. But what they seldom seem able to tell us is how these turn of the century precedents were important for what came afterwards. Why did the concentration camp emerge at this time, rather than earlier or later. What difference did their existence make? Why is it important to assert the link to subsequent events?

In this paper, I contend that new cultures of military professionalism were crucial to the emergence of the concentration camp in this period, and that the law of war was never able to protect civilians in guerilla wars from the instrumental logic of military cultures. This follows from the arguments of a number of contemporary scholars that the organized practice of war itself needs to be given a more central place in explanations of 20th century mass killing (Mazower 2002; Holquist 1997, 2003: Hull 2005; Kramer 2006). I argue that this focus on war-fighting and military culture provides an account of what was new in turn of the century warfare than explanations based on the generic use of the category of genocide, or on theories of the legal exception, biopolitics, or racial ideology. I also suggest that the discursive struggle around the wars of the era brought military culture into civilian discourse in ways which were ominous for the future.

My argument draws particularly on Isabel V. Hull's brilliant analysis of the military culture of the German Army in the 1870-1918 period. Hull shows that the Germany army developed an extremely tough line on civilian resistance during the Franco-Prussian war, with widespread execution of *francs-tireurs* partisans, the taking of hostages and massive destruction of civilian property. German military theorists subsequently elaborated a doctrine of military necessity as justifying extreme violence. Hull's analysis though, has much wider application to the problem at hand. As she points out, although the German case was an extreme one, similar processes were at work in other armies. Drawing on Arendt's *On Violence*, she views war as a process in which the means – violence – tends to overwhelm the ends. Hull (2005: 324) argues that " militaries, because violence is their business, do not need external ideologies or motivations to encourage excess; and their basic assumptions (the military culture) that develop to handle it may be sufficient in themselves". They do not need external ideological motivations to look for more extreme ways of winning a war.

In my view, this trend toward the intensification of violence was exacerbated by a rising level of military professionalism. The ability to use extreme means of

violence develops its own logic. The late nineteenth century saw a sharp turn toward professionalization of the armies of the major powers, even if the extent and nature of this varied considerably. Germany was at the forefront of this process. Despite the continued social exclusionism of the officer corps, its general staff organization was unparalleled elsewhere, and was a model admired by reforming leaders in other armies. Despite its small size the American army was creating a cadre of capable and educated cadre of younger officers (George Marshall, for instance, was one of the young officers in the Philippines). The winds of reform has even blown to some extent in the British army, where purchase of commissions had gone in the 1860s, and the Cardwell reforms under Gladstone had produced the semblance of an up to date structure. The Spanish army was affected by the generally slow modernization of the country (outside of Catalonia) but its command in Cuba constituted an energetic if brutal, leadership, capable of considerable organizational feats against weak opponents.

The claim that professionalism was conducive to brutality may seem a strange one, as one would imagine that professional soldiers are more likely to be rule-bound than commanders of loosely-organized formations. And indeed, generally they are. But while professionalism created a strong sense that combatants of other countries were members of uniformed regular armies who were worthy opponents, and should be treated decently as prisoners, conversely it led professional soldiers to see irregular troops as having placed themselves beyond the pale of the law (Janowitz 1971 : Strachan 1997 ; Schmitt 2007). Military leaders tended to be selective in their reading of Hague law. They welcomed the protections given to soldiers in formal armies, but were skeptical of the protections which the Hague clearly intended to give civilians.

Professional training provides efficient means, but it seldom asks good questions about ends. In Arendt's words:

> The very substance of violent action is ruled by the means-end category, whose chief characteristic, if applied to human affairs, has always been that the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means which it justifies and which are needed to reach it. Since the ends of human action … .can never be reliably predicted, the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals. (Arendt 1970:4)

In this section of the paper, I want to examine each of the four cases of the early use of the concentration camp. I argue that the decision of military authorities to pursue a policy of ruthlessly clearing the population from the rural areas in response to guerilla activity was the driving force behind the invention of the camps.

In Cuba, the rebel general, Maximo Gomez, adopted a policy of destroying the sugar plantations and taking control of rural life. Gomez's attacks left thousands of plantation workers jobless. What then ensued was a battle between the Spaniards and the rebels for control of the civilian population. Without a livelihood, many of the former plantation workers fled to the Spanish-controlled towns. But the revolutionaries demanded that the civilians move to areas under their control, threatening to shoot anyone found within a league of a Spanish-controlled town or fort. The Spanish position declined rapidly as the other leading rebel commander, Antonio Maceo, led an invasion from the rebel-held east of the island into the productive west. This situation set the scene for the Spanish drive to 're-concentrate' the civilian population under its control. In 1896, the Spanish commenced a policy of destroying the huts, crops and livestock of peasantry on a mass scale (Tone 2006). It is a mark of the real departure in the conduct of war that the policy of erecting concentration camps represented, that the Spanish commanding general in Cuba, Martinez Campos, recognized its military logic, but felt ethically unable to carry it out himself. War had often involved population movements and looting of civilians, but confinement of civilians on such a scale was a real innovation. Martinez Campos wrote to the Spanish Prime Minister, Canovas, that "I could reconcentrate families from the countryside to the towns". But he feared that this would lead to "horrible misery and hunger". He himself was not willing to do this: "I cannot, as the representative of a civilized nation, be the first to give the example of cruelty and intransigence" (Tone 2006: 121). Martinez's reluctance represents not a modern legal squeamishness but rather an old-fashioned, gentlemanly view of war which was being displaced. His successor, General Valeriano Weyler, in his conduct of the Cuban campaign in 1896-7 breached all accepted notions of 'civilized warfare'. During that period half a million people, more than a quarter of the whole population of the island, were moved to concentration camps. Over 100 000 are thought to have died of disease and starvation. The policy was implemented with particular class and political vindictiveness. Wealthy rural dignitaries and their entourages were exempted from 'reconcentration' if they could show loyalty to Spain. On the other hand, while people in the camps were allowed to practice agriculture in small plots on the periphery of the towns in order to feed themselves, women and children who were known to have a husband or father with the rebels were not permitted this concession and thus effectively condemned to starvation. In late 1897, following the assassination of Canovas, a more liberal regime came to power in Spain, which then recalled Weyler and ended the reconcentration policy. But most of the refugees had nowhere to go, and mass fatalities from disease continued in the reconcentration areas well into 1898 (Tone 2006).

The South African war commenced in late 1899, with a series of major battles, in which the Boers won surprising victories. After the British armies were reinforced and reorganized under Lord Roberts, they commenced an unstoppable march through the Free State and Transvaal in the southern hemisphere Autumn of 1900. As the Boers retreated, they turned to taking guerilla tactics. In reprisal

for their attacks on railway lines, Roberts began to destroy farm houses, take hostages and impose collective punishments. By the middle of the year the British had overrun all the main urban centers of the Boer states, and the Boers turned to full-scale guerilla warfare, which they were to sustain for a further two years. H.H. Kitchener, succeeding Roberts in command, determined to starve out the guerillas in the field by burning all Boer farm buildings, killing farm animals and destroying crops. This policy was ruthlessly and effectively implemented (Spies 2001; Pretorius 2001). In South Africa, the Boer women and children and African tenants and farm labourers displaced by the scorched earth policy were interned in concentration camps. The camps were very poorly organized and this led to mass fatalities from disease. There were perhaps 45000 deaths, approximately 25000 Boers and 20000 Africans. Pretorius (2001: 268) provides a fair and judicious assessment of the reasons for this attributing it to a combination of polluted water, unhygienic habits and customs of the inmates, inadequate administration, failure of officials to enforce cleanliness, poor nutrition and inadequate medical administration. But Kitchener must ultimately be held responsible, because he willfully ignored the situation in the camps. After the camps were placed under effective civilian control, partly as a result of Liberal political pressure, mortality rates dropped to fairly minimal levels (Pretorius 2001: 269). The leading historian of the South African camps, S.B. Spies (2001: 168-77), points out that the policies pursued by Kitchener were in clear violation of the Martens clause. But Kitchener simply ignored the Hague Convention and had open contempt for the notion of humanity in warfare (Nasson 2007: 85-111).

In the Philippines, it was by no means certain that the Americans would take occupation of the islands after their defeat of the Spanish in 1898. They could easily have followed the course adopted in Cuba, of granting formal independence under US hegemony. It was in this context that, after destroying the Spanish navy in Manila Bay, the American Admiral Dewey invited Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the recent, unsuccessful Filipino insurrection against the Spanish to return from exile in Hong Kong. But as opinion in the US flowed more and more in favour of annexing the Philippines, a stand-off developed between Aguinaldo's forces and US army and marines. On 4 February 1899 fighting erupted between the two sides, and two days later the US Senate voted for annexation. The Americans crushed the Filipinos in a series of set-piece battles in Northern Luzon. The Filipinos then turned to guerilla warfare. Once again, this led to immense devastation. As in Cuba, a relatively restrained commander, General Ewell J. Otis, was replaced by commander who was less concerned with the customs of war. This was General Arthur MacArthur. MacArthur emphasized aggressive pursuit of the guerillas and the infliction of collective punishment of civilians, the latter policy a clear violation of the Hague Convention. MacArthur's approach encouraged officers to push the envelope of legality and this continued after his replacement by General Adna Chaffee. At the end of 1901, Brigadier J. Franklin Bell was ordered by Chaffee to destroy the extensive guerilla activity on southwest Luzon. By 1902 mass destruction of huts, crops and livestock was being carried out in the area. Thus, in the Philippines the

Americans pursued the very policies which their popular press had denounced when carried out by the Spanish in Cuba. The most extensive implementation of this policy was by Bell in southwest Luzon. Bell decreed the arrest of all male members of communities in the region who were not actively assisting the American forces. Finding this insufficient, he went on to decree the killing or capturing of all able-bodied men found outside the towns. In the end, 300 000 rural civilians were forced into 'protected zones' in the provinces of Batangas and Laguna. In these camps at least 10 000 died, mainly of epidemic disease. Although earlier estimates of the fatalities directly resulting from American policies appear excessive in the light of more recent research, it is certainly the case that a mass cholera epidemic was generated across the islands by the war, with disastrous results. (May 1994; Smith 1999; Boot 2002: 99-128; Anderson 2005; Reyes Churchill 2007; Silbey 2007). The Americans appear to have started by waging the war in quite disciplined way, but in many places their practice spiraled downward into unrestricted violence as they became increasingly frustrated by the guerilla campaign (Kramer 2006). The most heinous incidents occurred on the island of Samar. There, after 38 marines were killed in a surprise attack by guerillas in August 1901, the war evolved into a pattern of vicious reprisals, under the command of General Jacob Smith, a grizzled veteran of the Civil War. On sending Major Littleton Waller into action with a marine battalion, Smith, by Waller's account, gave the following orders: "I want no prisoners. I want you to kill and the more you kill and burn the better it will please me … I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms' (Boot 2002: 120). Smith also told Waller to turn the interior of Samar into 'a howling wilderness'. Although American historians have tended to throw some doubt on how literally these orders were carried out, we do know that Waller, among other things executed eleven of his own porters and thought so little of the matter that he sent Smith a telegram telling him about it (Boot 2002: 120-122). Waller was subsequently court-martialed, and as he was unwilling to face the music alone, implicated Smith who was then tried and dismissed from the service.

The Southwest Africa case is strikingly similar to the South African and Philippine ones, in that the imperial army had a strong investment in the idea of regular warfare and saw guerillaism as inexcusable. The German army, which had taken criticism in Europe for its execution of French partisans during the war of 1870-1871, was particularly quick to label any form of guerilla war as a punishable breach of the laws of war (Hull 2003, 2005). When the Herero and the Nama revolted against German rule in 1904, there was a gradual intensification of the tactics of the imperial force, even though this was a particularly brutal campaign from the beginning. The German commander, von Trotha, did initially try to restrain his men from killing women and children. But after he failed in his attempt to trap and destroy the Herero forces at the Battle of the Waterberg (11-12 August, 1904), his tactics underwent a further radicalization. The Herero were systematically driven eastwards into the Omaheke Desert, where they were likely to die of thirst and starvation. Von Trotha established concentration camps for both Herero and Nama. In contrast to the stereotypic reputation of Germany,

logistics in the military were particularly poor because of the low prestige attached to non-combat functions by the national military culture. These camps were brutally run, and the diet was far worse than that given to African prisoners in the British camps in South Africa. The death rate, at 45%, was more than twice as high as in the South African camps (Hull 2003). The worst single incident involved the deportation of 1800 prisoners to a camp at Shark Island - only 245 survived (Smith 1999: 204).

A particular political dynamic of violence arose from the nature of German national military institutions, and the particular war doctrines that they generated. The term *Ausnahmezustande* (state of exception) was being used by General Julius von Hartmann at the end of the 1870s in explaining how war suspended all peace time legal restraints (Hull 2005: 123). In Hull's view rather than the colonial situation generating absolutely new military practices, it provided a more unrestricted scope for the exercise of a set of cultural practices which had already been in use in Europe three decades earlier. For Hull, German military culture manifested the following characteristics; an assumption of the desirability and necessity of quick victories; a low priority to logistical planning; a reliance on the supposed military virtues of officers, whose skills were supposed to bridge the gap between these high expectations of combat success and the low level of practical back-up, and standard operational procedures that involved a high level of brutality. In addition the German army as an institution was crucial to the prestige of the social order of the Reich; it could therefore not be seen to fail without serious political consequences. The German army thus placed itself under great pressure to win definitive victories in a short time, and this then pushed it toward radicalizing the means that it used to achieve victory.

Dabringhaus (1994) and Hull (2005) agree in their accounts of the multi-national Chinese punitive expedition in 1900, that the conduct of the German contingent was significantly worse than that of the other national contingents (which represented all the other major powers) and that this was to do with the specificities of Germany's military culture. Such a dynamic also showed itself in Southwest Africa, where the German policy towards the Hereros remains the worst of all these grim histories recounted here.. On 2 October 1904, von Trotha issued the following proclamation:

> Within the German border every male Herero, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot to death. I will no longer receive women or children, but will drive them back to their people or have them shot at. These are my words to the Herero people (Hull 2003: 155).

This was a local initiative taken by von Trotha. He deliberately delayed informing Berlin of it, and when his dispatch did arrive, the Chief of General Staff, von Schlieffen, disapproved of the proclamation. It is believed that the Herero were reduced to 20% of their original numbers by the end of the war, and that the Nama population was halved (Smith 1999: 2003).

Although the German case may be an extreme one, it is not alone in having provided a space where military ruthlessness and professionalism could come together in a decisive way. And the commanders of these wars had been through generational experiences which formed them in the direction of ruthless use of force. Roberts had participated in the mass executions that followed the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Kitchener had made his reputation mowing down the Sudanese at the Battle of Omdurman. Weyler had destroyed the labour movement in Catlonia and suppressed revolt in the Philippines. Almost all the senior American officer corps had had participated in the final wars on Native Americans.

Hull's argument, by connecting turn of the century German military practice and knowledge with the later practice of totalitarianism identifies a path of direct connections between early twentieth century events and the Holocaust. Unlike Arendt, she is able to show exactly how these events were linked. I would argue that similarly focused studies of different national military cultures would enable us to construct other genealogies of repressive practices for other armies. Peter Holquist's (2003) work for example, suggests how similar ideological linkages between Russian military practice, knowledge, and the Soviet camp system might be traced. Western commentators, including Arendt, tended to forget that the Soviet Union had a great Asian empire of its own. Russian military practice in this empire is crucial to understanding the development of the Gulag. Holquist (2003: 638) writes that "For most of Europe, the exercise of more or less unlimited violence was as yet geographically circumscribed to colonial territories … In Russia, however, the boundary between "colony" and "metropole" (as well as between the correspondingly different attitudes and methods of rule) was much less clear to begin with. Moreover, the 1905 Revolution had gone some way toward eroding the boundary between a colonial realm of militarized 'extraordinary rule' and a domestic civil realm".

How does a focus on war –fighting change our understanding of the dynamics of race in colonial situations?

The sheer brutality of these histories instinctively makes us reach for the term genocide. Yet genocide is a legal category, certainly an ethically important one, but it not necessarily helpful as a basis for sociological analysis. The term was developed by Rafael Lemkin in the 1940s for a very specific and commendable purpose – that of criminalizing Nazi violence. As a legal category genocide is, as Mark Mazower (2002: 1162) argues, both too narrow and too broad a concept for the purposes of historians. When the term was used in the 1948 UN Genocide Convention it was made applicable to attacks on ethnic, racial and religious groups, but not to attacks on economic and political groups. (A definition influenced by the Soviet Union, which had no desire to be called to account for its massacres of kulaks and opposition parties). So some mass murders count as genocide, others do not. On the other hand, while in common parlance we tend to

assume that genocide involves intentional dispensing of death to a whole group, the legal definition can include killings without a formalized intention to wipe out an entire group, and can also cover non-fatal acts of suppression of culture. The result is that not all of the numerous instances of large-scale murder in the modern world fit the legal definition of genocide, while some acts not involving violence do fit the definition. It is for this reason that historians have increasingly begun to use categories such as mass killing or mass violence, in preference to genocide. In the cases under consideration here, there is no doubt of the moral culpability of the armies involved, and that under twenty-first century international law there would be plausible cases for war crimes against most of their commanders. But of these cases, only the German action in South West Africa unequivocally fits the conventional, layperson's understanding of genocide. I would agree with Mazower (2002: 1163-1165) that instead of becoming mired in debates about whether particular forms of mass killing do or do not constitute genocide, it would be better to ask concrete historical questions about these events, such as the level of intentionality in the perpetrators actions, who organized the violence, what role the perpetrators played in the state apparatus, and how and when the decisions for particular forms of violent action were arrived at.

To what extent does such an argument that the path of scorched earth led to the camps complement or point away from the currently influential account of the camp offered by Agamben? Agamben's position is crucially about law and about biopower. Drawing on Carl Schmitt's theory of the exception he sees the camp as arising in the framework of martial law and the state of siege, which allows the legal state of exception to becomes the norm. But it is also about a Foucaldian concept of biopolitics. Agamben (2000: 40) characterizes the camp thus:

> Inasmuch as its inhabitants have been stripped of every political status and reduced completely to naked life, the camp is the most absolute biopolitical space that has ever been realized – a space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without mediation.

Foucault (2007), defined biopolitics as aiming "to treat the population as a set of coexisting living beings with particular biological and pathological features and which falls under specific forms of knowledge and techniques". This only gets us so far in the cases of the turn of the century camps. While there is certainly a remarkable departure in the scale of the social ambition of military to regulate society, what is striking in all four of the historical cases considered here is the sheer ineptitude of the military management of the biological and pathological features of the camps – in other words, the *lack* of 'specific knowledge and techniques'. In the Cuban, South African and Luzon cases, despite the absence of a genocidal intent on the part of the occupying forces, it was the indifference of the military to developing effective techniques of managing the population biologically that led to mass mortality. That such techniques were available is

demonstrated by the fact that civilian officials with public health training were able to reduce the deaths in the South African camps when they took over.

Of course it may be true that from the point of view of the self-interest of the military, the dire conditions in the camps may have seemed of no concern. As long as the civilian population were in a position where they could not provide the guerillas with food and other materials, they were safely out of the way. And both Kitchener and Weyler were personally notoriously unsympathetic to civilian suffering. Yet in each case considered here, the conduct of the military became a serious international and national embarrassment to their governments – with catastrophic results for the state in the Spanish case, because reconcentration provided American interventionists with a humanitarian rationale for going to war with Spain. The scorched earth strategy may have provided effective military returns for the generals, but it was not necessarily rational from the point of view of the great power interests of national leaderships

In fact the South African camps after the switch to civilian administration can be seen as a more insidious forms of social organization which can more accurately be described as biopolitical than the camps under the army. The senior British civilian administrator in Southern Africa, Alfred Milner, brought public pressure to bear in Britain to wrest control of the camps from Kitchener. The subsequent decline in mortality may in fact have had an international importance in creating the notion of a 'well-run' camp – a truly bioploitical institution. But it was the military and not the civilians who introduced the camp as a form of social organization.

Agamben's appropriation of Schmitt's idea of the exception to suggest that camp inmates entered a space beyond citizenship or the law certainly captures something of the appalling scenes of devastation that accompanied the establishment of the camps. But although his characterization may be valid for the camps of the twentieth century totalitarians, it somewhat overstates the legal character of the camps in the period with which we are concerned. Compared with the camps of Hitler, Stalin or Pol Pot, these turn of the century camps very limited affairs in terms of the levels of guarding, violence and discipline to which the prisoners were subjected. And they were not beyond the reach of civil institutions and law. The existence of international law did create space for challenging the military, and indeed for challenges within the military to extremist doctrine. Thus in the South African case, both the cabinet and the Chief of Military Intelligence did resist the attempt by the senior military commander, Lord Wolseley, to rule that the Hague Convention did not apply in South Africa (Hull 2005: 129). A crucial difference between the British and German cases was that whereas in Britain parliamentarians and bureaucrats could challenge the army, the constitutional structure of Germany, which made the army directly responsible to the throne, isolated it from political scrutiny. Civilian oversight, parliamentary discussion and public debate were crucial in restraining the military (Hull 2005 129, 184, 193). When Kitchener tried to radicalize the war

in South Africa further, by demanding the banishment of pro-Boer civilians, the expropriation of Boer property, and the deportation of Boer women and children, he was blocked by senior civilian officials and the cabinet (Hull 2005: 184-86). And as we have seen before, public political pressure on the government was crucial to changing conditions in the camps. The new Spanish government in 1897 did recognize Canovas and Weyler had overstepped the bounds of legality and reversed their policies. Senior American officers were held to legal account for their actions on Samar. This may not be very much to put beside the vast suffering that did occur. But it does mean that the there was a degree of legal and political mediation between power and 'pure biological life'.

It is tempting to see the power of racial ideology, so strong at the turn of the century, as explaining the conduct of Euro-American armies. Contemporary social theory has a tendency to present the role of racial discourse in colonial situations as both extremely powerful and somewhat static. Thus for example George Steinmetz (2005: 341) writes that "modern overseas colonial practices flowed partly from colonizer's racial/ ethnographic preconceptions of the people they were colonizing – images that preexisted the colonial context and were often quite resilient in the face of countervailing evidence". Certainly a powerful case can be made for this position. There is no doubt that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a high water mark of biological racist discourse, deployed in defence of colonialism (Lake and Reynolds 2008). Moreover as Gerrit Gong (1984) has shown, the distinction between 'civilized', 'barbarous' and 'savage' nations was an important feature of international law in this period, and the standard of civilization often served as a stalking horse for the idea of race.

But in contrast to Steinmetz's view, I would suggest that while racial ideology was indeed central in this period, it emerged in an interaction between metropolis and colony, was highly changeable, and was frequently intensified by the experience of war. In this, I follow Paul A. Kramer (2006: 171) who has convincingly argued, in the case of the American war against the Filipinos, for emphasizing that the "contingency and indeterminacy of the process by which … racial ideologies took shape, against the assumption that these ideologies were reflexive 'projections' or 'exports' from the United States to the Philippines". Kramer (2006: 71) notes that that American racial ideologies intensified in response to the war. In particular, he argues, the Filipinos' use of guerilla warfare was seen by the Americans as marker of uncivilized status in contrast to the idea that the 'superior' races conducted formal warfare. As guerilla war deepened, American racism became more extreme. Important to note here is the strong tendency of western militaries to equate formal warfare with civilization and guerilla activity with barbarism. This interaction between a notion of guerilla war as uncivilized and an increasingly racialized view of its practitioners can be seen elsewhere.

A striking variant of this was at work in South Africa. Mainly descended from Dutch, French and German settlers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the Boers were 'white' in the commonsense of contemporary racial discourse. At the beginning of the war, during the conventional stage of the fighting, the British had specifically decided not use Indian troops in combat in conformity with the notion that this was a 'white man's war'. But the Boer's guerilla tactics offended the British military's sense of propriety. The more that the Boers resorted to guerillaism, the less were the British willing to accord them privileged racial status. As the fighting deepened, the British were increasingly inclined to represent the Boers as racially degenerate, miscegenated and 'uncivilized' (Krebs 1999: 117; Nagai 2006: 95). For example, J.F.C. Fuller (1938), who served as a junior officer in the imperial forces (and was to become an important British military theorist and ultra-right ideologue), discussed the Boers in astonishingly racist terms when he wrote his memoirs in the 1930s. Fuller (1938: 41) described them in these words:

> Few humans are more uncouth than the average Boer … To me there was always something intensely animal about these people. They were brave and resolute, but also cunning and crude … They were frequently illiterate, and their ignorance was colossal.

Whiteness was thus a moveable feast. As Kramer suggests, although racial ideology was important in the era, it was not static but fluctuated in relation to the contingency of war. For this reason, I would be reluctant to see it as, in itself, motivating unrestrained warfare or the introduction of camps. In Cuba for example, colour does not seem to have been a factor in deciding which Cubans were imprisoned in camps. The Spanish strategy in Cuba was not justified in racial terms. The Spanish empire had always made a distinction between those born in Spain and *criollos*, those born in the colonies. In the Cuba of the 1890s it does seem that the former were more likely to be loyalists than the latter, but this was a distinction of birth, not race. Cubans were 'reconcentrated' regardless of colour.

Even at the level of the law, despite the prevalence of racial ideology amongst the major military powers, there was some resistance to codifying racial difference in international or national law on the conduct of hostilities. For example, the attempt of the British military delegate to The Hague to create a provision allowing for the dum-dum bullet to be used in colonial wars was overwhelmingly rejected, in favour of a blanket ban on these bullets (Eyffinger 1999: 227). While it is certain that there was an element of point-scoring by the European delegates against the British in this, it is significant that a distinction between colonial and metropolitan opponents was not upheld. The legal logic of this decision provided a basis for a notion of universal humanitarian standards. Similarly, US military lawyers' opposition to the use of torture was explicitly based on a rejection of the idea that a differential legal standard could be applied to different enemies. Protesting a lenient sentence imposes on an officer found guilty of using water

torture (today's 'waterboarding') on Samar, the army's top lawyer, Judge Advocate General George Davis, declared that no modern state, which was party to international law, could passively or actively sanction torture as part of military operations (Kramer 2008).

In her 1951 book, *Origins of Totalitarianism,* Arendt (1966: 186) traced the roots of Nazism and Stalinism to the process of colonization, especially in Africa: "Two new devices for political organization and rule over foreign peoples were discovered during the first decades of imperialism. One was race as a principle of the body politic, and the other a bureaucracy as a principle of foreign domination". These come together in the colonial setting in what Arendt calls 'adminstrative massacre'; but the full potential of the combination of race and bureaucracy, in her view, was only to be realized by the European totalitarians at home.

Arendt's is an extremely suggestive line of thought which has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention of late (King and Stone: 2007). But it has three main defects from the point of view of our present concerns. Firstly, although the idea of a linkage between bureaucracy and race is intuitively persuasive, Arendt does not specify the means by which this colonial-made fusion was drawn back into the political conflicts of Europe. Secondly, Arendt does not examine closely how the concentration camp made its first historical appearance. Thirdly, her (rather thinly researched)[2] account of South African history actually makes the course of events there rather puzzling. Arendt identified the Boers as the archetypal violent western perpetrators of race thinking. Boer conduct towards Africans in the nineteenth century certainly included large elements of violence, racism and coercion (as well as strong strands of negotiation, paternalism and economic competition). But the nineteenth century Boer states were characterized precisely by the weakness of their bureaucratic and administrative structures, and modern 'scientific' racism had almost no influence amongst the Boers in that era. It was not the Boers but the British who brought effective colonial conquest, strong bureaucratic government, and biologistic racial ideology to southern Africa (Marks and Rathbone 1982: 1-43). At the time Arendt wrote her *Origins*, the idea of a conjunction of race and bureaucracy was an extremely perceptive description of the newly emerging system of *apartheid*. But it bore little relation to the 19th century Boer states; Arendt seems to have projected what Afrikaner nationalists were doing in the 1950s back to the turn of the century. Her account of South Africa was at best a creative misreading.

In Southwest Africa, racial ideology did play a central role, but its operation can only be understood in relation to the dynamics of military culture. The colonial situation meant that there was greater scope to implement the practices inherent in

[2] In *Origins,* Arendt cites only two historians of South Africa of any substance, De Kiewit and Walker, both of whom held to a liberal position which located white South African racism in the context of Boer frontier wars, thereby overlooking the role of British bureaucrats, capitalists and trade unionists in creating 20th century South African racism. Otherwise Arendt's references on South Africa are to more-or-less journalistic texts.

the military culture, but those practices originated in Europe and pre-existed the war. In Hull's words, Europeans 'could try out abroad the techniques, assumptions, doctrines and scripts they carried with them, in an atmosphere relatively unlimited by law and conducive to the application of more force when the first allotment failed to achieve the goal" (Hull 2005: 233). Racial ideology, then, facilitated the radicalization of war but did not necessarily drive it; it could also function as an ex-post facto justification of extreme violence.

But there is another major dimension, beside the internal logic of war-fighting, which we need to add to our understanding of the politics of war in this era. Our period saw the rise of new, transnational publics engaged with the questions of war and peace. What made the existence of these publics possible, and gave them a new and unique character, was the combination of vastly expanding press both in the metropolitan and the colonized world, and the consolidation, over the previous three decades, of instant intercontinental communication via the undersea telegraph cable. This enabled, in the incisive words of P.K. Datta (2007: 37-38), a simultaneity which did away with "the fundamental distinction between the originative space of the event and the space of its social impact". In other words the fighting of war and the responses of political actors in both metropolitan and colonized countries interacted in something approaching what we would now call real time, a phenomenon utterly unknown it the first half of the nineteenth century. At that point the political culture of the metropolitan power, and its rivals, and the politics of anti-colonial movements in other countries, could become a material factor in the conduct of a war. The 1899 Hague Conference was itself a milestone in the production of the 'media event'. It constituted the first international conference of states to be accompanied by a major flurry of activity by what we would today call 'n.g.o.s' and the international press (Best 1999: 623). It became the focus of the hopes of the strong 'peace movement' which had emerged in the major countries. Such redoubtable representatives of that viewpoint as the novelist and activist Bertha von Suttner and the journalist W.T. Stead arrived in the Hague to lobby the delegates and to cover the proceedings in the press.[3]

[3] The international nature of the debate also generated a certain punditry about war and peace. A notable example was the international controversy around the writings the military theorist, Jean de Bloch. De Bloch was the nom de plume of one Ivan Bloch, a Jewish merchant from the Polish lands of the Russian Empire. After accumulating a personal fortune in railways, industry and finance, Bloch had turned to the task of writing a six-volume study of warfare. When his work was published in 1898, it contended that modern war had become 'impossible'. By this he did not mean that it literally could not be carried out, but rather that it had lost any connection with rational self-interest. The development of modern weapons would make for deadlock, as armies would be unable to succeed in offensives, instead experiencing mass casualties in an impassable zone of fire. This would imply enormously lengthy conflicts and, combined with the vast resulting costs, food shortages and the psychological maladaptation of modern men to the demands of war, would result in ultimate social collapse. Bloch was thus astonishingly prescient in foreseeing the course of World War One. He also provoked the ire of the British military establishment for his largely accurate analysis of the way in which their failure to understand key features of modern warfare had led them into the defeats by the Boers in 1899. Bloch's ideas were in fact instrumental in the Russian decision to call the Hague conference. It is sometimes argued

There were, I would suggest, four ways in which global pulbic spheres were influenced by the military discourses of the scorched earth and concentration camp.

Firstly, military leaders directly imposed their interests on the debate. As Geoffrey Best (1980:131) convincingly argued, in the late 19th century, there was not only a self-proclaimed peace movement, but also what he calls a 'war movement', exalting military struggle. The latter operated in a similar way to the peace movement, through national lobby groups, printed media and agitation. It is striking that military lobbies, far from seeing the peace groups as a paper tiger actually feared very much the encroachment of law onto their terrain (Best 1980: 144-146). Whereas the peace movement emerged from an expanding bourgeois culture, "ill at ease … with the brutalities of war" (Howard 1994: 5), the war movement can be thought of as emerging from rightist populism and military establishments. Both were able to benefit from the rise of mass-circulation print media. But this was a competition in which the party of peace was generally beaten by the party of war: no pro-pacifist organ could remotely rival the sales of the pro-war papers of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer in the United States and Lord Northcliffe's Daily Mail in the United Kingdom. Pulitzer and Hearst's promotion of the Spanish-American war and Northcliffe's role in selling the Boer War demonstrated that they were great powers in their respective lands.

What is interesting about the cultural flavour of the military establishments of the major powers at this time is that, in contradistinction to our easy assumption that the European powers unanimously embraced a notion of their world role as a civilizing mission, military hierarchs often were dubious about the very idea of civilization. Anti-rationalist, anti-modern and anti-urban themes were common amongst European intellectuals at this time (Hughes 1970), particularly in the right-wing circles liable to influence military officers. On the German right there was a widespread sense that *Zivilzation* stood for French articifiality and urbanism as opposed to *Kultur* which represented German profundity and connection to the soil (Elias 1978: 3-34). The senior German staff officer Colmar von der Goltz wrote admiringly of the benefits derived by the Boers from their

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that the only reason why the Russian government initiated the Hague was that they knew they were falling rapidly behind the western European powers in industrial and technological capacity and that they thought that by calling a halt to the arms race they could escape from a competition they could not win (Roberts 1994: 119). Moreover, it is often suggested that the delegates were simply going through the motions at the Hague, in order to head off public opinion, and they had no major intention of constraining themselves in future warfare (Best 1980: 139-140). But Bloch's theories crucial in influencing Nicholas II's personal thinking. Despite the apparent similarity of Bloch's views to liberal pacifism, his position was ultimately one consonant with the Tsar's fears of social upheaval. Bloch argued that the social chaos produced by a major European war would lead to revolution, and thus his concerns converged with those of the Tsar in fearing a social catastrophe to come (Travers 1979; Dawson 2002).

religious devotion, showing to "the living generation of Europe the practical significance of ideal goods such as faith, freedom and fatherland can only be of use and benefit" and also of the Boers' 'simple, hard' way of life: "Only through such a school can there be trained men who wage a desperate struggle for years … Our European cities do not produce such natures"(Yasamee: 204-5). In Britain military hostility to contemporary urban life was equally intense, and was reinforced by deep tendencies in this direction amongst the intelligentsia (Williams 1958; Wiener 1985). General Sir Ian Hamilton saw the Boers' military success as rooted in their 'backward' way of life, while Field Marshall Lord Wolesley thought that the popularity of singers and ballet dancers was evidence that the British nation was sick (Travers 1979: 267, 279). After leaving the military, Lord Roberts spent much of his time campaigning for compulsory national service, instead of a volunteer army, not only for military reasons, but also because he saw it as a way of imposing social discipline on a corrupted nation (Travers 1979: 279-283).

Secondly, anti-colonial movements, by and large did not reject the discourse of civilized warfare, but rather sought to re-define it in a way appropriate to their struggles. It tends too easily to be assumed today that the discourse of the superiority of civilization to barbarism was simply the property of imperial power-holders. But in fact a claim to defend civilization against barbarism was common among the most radical anti-imperialists of the age. Even Gandhi in formulating his critique of modernity made the claim for the status of India as a civilization, and as a morally superior order to that of the west:

> "Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty … The tendency of Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being" (Gandhi 2006: 67-71).

Gandhi of course was an exceptional pacifist, but anti-colonial leaders of a less peaceful temperament made the claim to civilization not just for their indigenous cultural order, but also for their way of war. Thus they overturned the standard identification of formal war with civilization. They reversed the signs of Euro-American discourse by portraying guerilla warfare as the truly modern form of fighting which would provide an accelerated route nationalism. This explains a notable, counter-intuitive phenomenon of the time: the popularity of the Boers amongst Chinese and Filipino revolutionaries. In his brilliant biographical account of the Filipino revolutionary nationalist Isabelo de los Reyes, Benedict Anderson tells us, that in the 10 September 1900 edition of his Madrid-based newspaper, de los Reyes ran an article entitled "The organization of the Boer Army". He claimed, certainly with the aid of a creative imagination, that the Boers had learned from the Filipino guerillas, and advised his struggling compatriots to learn from the discipline of the Boers (Anderson 2005: 223).

Anderson points out that

> Newspaper-reading Chinese nationalists eagerly followed events in … the Philippines –as well as the Boer nationalist struggle against [British] imperialism which Filipinos also studied – to learn how to "do" revolution, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism" (Anderson 2005: 3)

In her analysis of Chinese nationalism at the turn of the nineteenth century, Rebecca E. Karl (2002: 121) has demonstrated how for Chinese radicals of this period "The Boers … revealed the modernity of Africa just as the Filipinos revealed the modernity of Asia, both convincingly demonstrating their ability to … [unite] and to struggle". For example in his very influential 1903 pamphlet *A Bell to Warn the World*, the writer Chen Tianhua urged his countrymen to emulate the Boer military example: "Are the Chinese people any less capable than the Boers? … How could such a small country go to war with such a large one? … because the people of the Transvaal have an unshakeable spirit, and all of them are prepared to die on the battlefield, unwilling to become the slaves of others" (Karl 2002: 121). These Chinese radical nationalists were not supporters of the Boxers, who they saw as backward-looking and superstitious, as well as subservient to the 'foreign' royal house. Instead they posited the idea of a new Chinese ethno-nationalism (*minzu zhuyi*), forged through a modern nationalist military struggle against both the Qing and the imperial powers, and informed by the Boer and Filipino examples. These anti-imperial fighters were thought of as people previously seen as 'backward' who had sized modern and civilized status through warfare. Emilio Aguinaldo and Paul Kruger were hailed as exemplary leaders of a civilized ethnos (Karl 2002: 131). This was far from being empty talk: the nationalist leader Sun Yat-Sen was a strong admirer of how the Boers had conducted their struggle, and incorporated the lessons he had drawn from his studies of their tactics into military training classes he gave in 1903 (Schiffrin 1968: 307).[4] Sun wrote 'We are a people of a perished nation … Yet an ethno-nation [*minzu*] called Transvaal in South Africa consisting of only 200 000 engaged the British before succumbing … Han people, shall we take our subjugation lying down?" (Karl 2002: 138-9).[5]

Consequently, although the brutality of colonial armies was criticized, the radical thinkers of anti-colonialism gave relatively little attention to the concentration

[4] Karl (2002) does point out that another strand of Chinese radical opinion, while sharing the admiration of the Boers, did not take such an anti-Qing position, rather arguing for consolidation of a strong, unified nation-state.

[5] It is important to note that anti-imperialism in no way applied a sense what would later be called 'third world solidarity". Karl (2002: 122) shows that while in previous centuries the Chinese had regarded all foreigners as the equivalent of 'barbarians', by the late 19th century they had largely accepted that Euro-America was civilized. They now feared being cast into a barbarian category themselves. Chinese nationalists were entirely uninterested in the question of inequality between Boers and Africans within Southern Africa. Military modernity as exemplified by Boers and Filipinos appeared as a way out of reduction of the Chinese to the same status as colonized peoples. There is no necessary connection between revolutionary nationalism and global egalitarianism.

camp and other new practices of violence. Gandhi's great 1909 work, *Hind Swaraj*, is a salutary exception in that it does subject both western and anti-colonial practices to scrutiny in terms of the danger of the means overtaking ends in the practice of violence. In doing so Gandhi stakes a claim to attention as a serious political philosopher in a way which anticipates the argument of Arendt's *On Violence.* It sounds a warning for the consequences of militarism but it was relatively isolated in this attitude within the field of anti-colonial literature.

Thirdly, although the wars of the era enabled political radicals in Europe and the US to question the civilizational credentials of their own national leadership to an unprecedented extent, it led only to very partial questioning of fundamental colonialist and militarist assumptions. In America critics of imperial policy also weighed in on the question of barbarism versus civilization In the case of the 1900 China expedition American writers hostile to the war, including Mark Twain, frequently attacked the 'uncivilized' conduct of the allied troops, especially in relation to the massive looting of antiquities that had taken place (Hevia: 2007). This motif was also adopted by American critics of the war in the Philippines. Thus for example, in one Congressional debate, Representative John C. Sibley, Republican of Pennsylvania, commented on the campaign: "This is not civilization. This is barbarism … We are taking boys who left Christian homes, full of love of country, of patriotism and of humanity, and brutalizing them" (Hoganson 1998: 184). On the European left, anti-war politics was sharpened developed around support for the Boers, initially in Britian itself. James Kier Hardie's Independent Labour Party, the SDF and most leading trade unionists took a strong anti-war stance.[6] Although the European left were initially reluctant to champion the Boer cause because the right had been so prominent in their defence (often on a chauvinistic, anti-British basis), by 1900 it became an unavoidable issue, and actually led to a radicalization of the Socialists' position. In the September 1900 meeting of the Second International in Paris a sweeping resolution attacking the consequences of imperialism for both colonized peoples and the European proletariat was passed unanimously. The conference also passed a resolution proposed by Rosa Luxemburg which called for a new level of international coordination by socialists against the expansion of armaments (Kaarsholm 1988; Tichelman 1988).

However the great problem for the European socialists was that imperialism was in general popular outside the hard core of socialist supporters and radical liberals. Thus when the German Socialists blocked the legislative passage of funding for the Southwest African military campaigns, they were hammered in the subsequent 1907 'Hottentot Election', losing more than half their seats in the *Reichstag*.

[6] Admittedly this was at the price of a certain blindness to the racial politics of South Africa. Hardie in particular tended to portray the Boers as an idealized pre-capitalist society. However, this was more about ignorance than intrinsic racism – during the next decade Hardie for example became a strong supporter of African and Indian rights in South Africa.i

And most European socialist discussion at the time did not though develop a critique of either colonialism as such, or of the logic of violence within the practice of the military. To a large extent this could be traced to the progressiveist and militarist logic of Marx and Engel's. own thought. Bernstein could draw for authority on Marx and Engels. Marx's notion that only the displacement of rural society by capitalism could provide the basis for socialism had famously been defended by the founding father in his articles welcoming the progressive effects of British rule in India, while Engels had seen even the conquest of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia as representing the right of *'Zivilisation gegen Barbarei*' (Kaarsholm 1988: 56). Generally, in the 1890s European socialists were critical of specific elements of European policy abroad and of the way in which expansionism bolstered certain elites, but not of colonialism itself. Thus the German reformist socialist leader Eduard Bernstein for instance was willing to criticize specific acts of the colonial authorities, but accepted the justice of the subjection of 'savages' to a 'higher' culture.[7]

Fourthly, the discourse of the concentration camp was prepared for future use. An interesting example is provided by the Russian case. Holquist (2003: 636) has found that there was a great deal of reporting by Russian military officials on the measures imposed by the British in South Africa during the 1899-1902 war, and that the earliest published uses of the words *konsentratsionnyi lager* (concentration camp) in Russian occur during this period. The term was revived by the Soviet regime to describe the camps it established during the revolution. The first mention of the concentration camp in Soviet official discourse appears to have been by Leon Trotsky on 4 June 1918 when he called for Czech prisoners of war to be placed in such camps (Applebaum 2003: 8). Trotsky had avidly followed the South African events and this is the probable source of his familiarity with the term. Less than two weeks later, in an official document, Trotsky recommended to the government that the *'kontslager'*, as the term came to be contracted, be used to confine members of the bourgeoisie who were being compelled to do war work (Applebaum 2003: 8).

Conclusion

[7] A more complex and interesting variation on the theme though wast he German socialist leader Auguste Bebel denounced the German actions in SWA as "not only barbaric, but bestial" (Smith 1919: 217). Bebel's defence of the Herero was particularly implicated in the ambiguity toward civilization of contemporary German culture. He portrayed the Herero as a 'wild' people, very 'low' in culture. But he then made the remarkable rhetorical moves of identifying the Herero as a volk, asserting their right to resistance against oppression and comparing it to the ancient Germans' resistance to the Romans (Smith 1919: 217). This discursively destabilized the pro-colonial position, because the victory of the German Chief Hermann over the Romans at the *Teutobergerwald* was a great theme of the rightist rhetoric, and the monument to it, the *Hermannsdenkmal*, was a prime site of reactionary pilgrimage.

This paper has sought to show that the invention of the concentration involved both new military practices and new political discourses. It arose in the response of a professionalized military culture to guerilla warfare. The displacement of mass numbers of civilians by policies of scorched earth led, via the instrumental logic of military violence, to the establishment of camps as a way of containing and controlling subject populations. But the new simultaneity of war-fighting and global political debate and action, enabled by the technologies of the telegraph and the mass circulation press, meant that the wars in which the concentration camps arose were also media wars. This circumstance enabled anti-war and pacifist movements to attack the military practice, and anti-colonial movements to create their own version of what constituted civilized warfare. But it also allowed military establishments to add the practice of the concentration camp to their repertoire. And it brought the concept into the consciousness of the young future leaders of major authoritarian movements. The concept 'concentration camp' had been projected into the realm of political and military life, where it lay like an unexploded shell, awaiting its future moment of detonation.

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