Threads of Memory: A Culture of Commemoration in Kenya Colony, 1918-1930

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

The centenary of the First World War (2014-2018) proffered new interpretations of the conflict as a global war that stretched far beyond the Western Front. Historians of the Great War, however, have continued to characterize the African theatres of the war as 'sideshows.' Similarly, Africa has been largely absent from studies of the commemoration and memory of the First World War. While memory studies have contributed to an understanding of the long-term legacy of the conflagration for contemporary nation-states, Africa remains a regrettable exclusion. This study addresses a particular case study – Kenya Colony – as a locus of memory and meaning-making in the wake of the Great War. I argue that Imperial organizations, colonial administrators, and settlers all fashioned the First World War as a validation of the colonial project in East Africa, and the trajectory of the British Empire more generally. In the process, settlers, administrators, and the Imperial War Graves Commission pulled on Empire-wide threads of First World War memory, creating knots of memory that denied Kenyans a meaningful place in the public commemoration of the conflagration. Through their commemorative infrastructure, white settlers in Kenya Colony bolstered their political and social power by referencing the First World War. The memory of the First World War, however, was not homogenous within Kenya's white community. The culture of commemoration that emerged during the 1920s in Kenya was multifaceted and politically charged. What resulted was a debate on the nature of colonialism in East Africa, where different interest groups posited different interpretations of 1914-1918. Ultimately, even though at least 45,000 Kenyans died in the First World War, on the eve of decolonization the First World War was no longer nationally significant in Kenya, relegating its history to the background of Kenyan politics and history.

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<u>Preface</u>[1]

Historians of the First World War have almost invariably described the African theatre as a 'forgotten front.' Although there have been numerous published academic accounts since the early-2000s, some important dedicated journal issues and edited volumes since the late-1970s, and plentiful fictional and popular portrayals since the 1940s, the continent of Africa remains on the periphery of First World War studies. Although it may have appeared a 'sideshow' from the perspective of the metropoles of Europe, fighting from 1914-1918 left no part of Africa untouched, whether by direct involvement in the fighting, supplying the troops on the continent, or through personnel and resource demands. As recent scholarship has shown, the African theatre is essential to the story of the Great War. The continent, however, rarely appears in instructional materials on the conflict, contributing to the erasure of the million Africans who enlisted from 1914-1918 and the countless other casualties who became fodder in the war. Although this neglect may be driven by a lack of interest and relevance to the Western Front rather than a dearth of source material, Africa's First World War is a history that we forget at our peril. Recent historians of the First World War have pressed the issue with more vigour, especially during the years of the centenary, but the publications pale in comparison to those for the Western Front, the Eastern Front, the Middle East, and Asia.

While historians dedicated to the study of the First World War in Africa have kept the story alive in academic circles, the Great War in Africa left a commemorative footprint beyond 1918 that is almost completely forgotten. Settler and African communities grappled with the consequences of battle, diseases, injury, and economic loss, remembering those fateful years – as colonies, as communities, and as individuals – in distinct ways. The Imperial War Graves

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Commission (IWGC) left concrete evidence of the war in their cemeteries, memorials, and monuments, adding to an extant settler commemorative landscape and speaking to fundamental changes to the colonial encounter in the wake of the Great War. This was the foundation upon which settlers, administrators, Indians, Asians, and Africans participated in remembrance practices throughout the interwar period. Although only a part of their struggles to negotiate the texture of their societies, these activities helped animate everyday life in newly constituted African colonies.

The penetrating effects of the First World War on nationhood and social organization in Europe and its offshoots has been the object of study and mythologization since the Armistice. Unfortunately, this same analysis has not been extended to Africa, although it stands to reason that if communities in Europe and its offshoots grappled with the shock and loss of the First World War, communities in Africa did so as well.[2] Though most official records reflect the experiences of settler communities, the sheer numbers of Africans who lost their lives and livelihoods from service, famine, and disease leave little doubt that it must have been just as fundamental to post-war life for these casualties of war as well. Though the traces are fewer, the oral histories of many African communities spoke to the reckoning of the First World War in Africa, offering lasting evidence of the extensive material and emotional ramifications that it had for the continent.

The memory of the First World War in Africa thus remains an area for further exploration to more fully understand the effects that conflict wrought upon the continent and, relatedly, the role that it played in constituting the world we inhabit today. The preoccupation with memory in the 20th and early-21st Centuries – what Jay Winter has termed the "memory

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[2] Please see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of the literature on the memory and commemoration of the First World War.

boom" in Western culture[3] – has scarcely extended beyond Europe and North America. The First World War, which has been at the centre of "memory studies" since Paul Fussell's seminal *The Great War in Modern Memory*,[4] has been party to this erasure of non-European memory studies within the historical discipline. I hope that this dissertation contributes to the recapturing of an African memory of the First World War, which in turn might help historians rediscover its importance and end its undeserved marginalization as a mere 'sideshow' from the main conflagration in Europe.

Nevertheless, the memory of the First World War in African communities is not the subject of my study. While historians of the war in Africa should aim to reconstitute the traces of First World War memory into a fuller understanding of how it affected Africans, my expertise is not suited to the oral histories that would be necessary to do so. Further, I believe that it is not my story to tell, and I hope that dedicated Africanists – from the continent itself – will fill this void. What my experience and expertise do allow me to pursue, however, is an analysis of settler memories of the First World War. As a settler historian from Canada, I believe it is imperative to turn the lens of analysis inwards to understand how those with power manipulated the memory of the First World War, often unwittingly, in ways that extended their control over Indigenous populations. Self-reflection and analysis is why this study concerns the settler population of Kenya and the meaning of the First World War for the colonization of Kenya throughout the interwar period. This dissertation could have taken many forms, but it is with this perspective, and through a re-evaluation of my own relationship to Africa, that I turned to a history of state-driven and settler-initiated commemoration in Kenya.

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[3] Jay Winter has written widely about the 'memory boom' in Western academia. See: Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), especially Chapter 1.
[4] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

My journey to studying the First World War in Africa has been a roundabout one. My fascination with the continent has persisted throughout my academic career and has driven most of my projects. Part of this fascination stems from my upbringing: my 'Uncle' Sam, who immigrated to Canada from Ghana after the fall of Kwame Nkrumah's government, remains a close family friend who always engaged in my childhood hijinks and inspired me from a young age. As a wonderful traditional drummer, a translator in Toronto courtrooms, and a man with deep connections to his home in Kumasi, Ghana, he opened my eyes to a range of experiences that were indispensable to a child growing up in a small town of 6,500 people. I could not imagine writing this dissertation without his influence and perspective over the years.

This healthy relationship to the continent changed with my own political awakening in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and subsequent US actions abroad. Driven by that familiar imperative to 'help' Africa, I dove headfirst into the literature on contemporary Central and East African conflicts, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo, neighbouring Rwanda, and the genocide in Darfur. I lectured friends and family about the catastrophic loss of life in those regions, self-assured that just my knowledge of the conflicts removed my complicity in the machinations of neo-colonial policies and economics that drove the unrest in the first place. It was selflessness through selfishness that drove my pursuit of knowledge, replete with the altruistic – yet often demeaning – narratives that so often mark aid discourses, environmental activism, and, at its worst, Western intervention in African, Asian, and Latin American affairs. I was convinced that, eventually, I could do my part in rectifying the underdevelopment of Africa – if only I could find a foothold.

My opportunity to grab hold of a future in aid and international development seemingly materialized in the Spring of 2009, just before I entered studies at the University of Ottawa,

when I decided to participate in a Habitat for Humanity Global Village build in Zambia. I relished the opportunity to both see the continent that I had studied so intently and to help contribute to a struggling community just outside of Lusaka, the capital of the country. After completing the build portion of the trip, however, we proceeded to Livingstone, the tourism capital of the country, to see Victoria Falls or Mosi O' Tuna, one of Africa's greatest natural wonders. Known to many as the 'Disneyland of Africa,' the town that bears the name of the most famous European explorer of Africa – David Livingstone – severed my connection to the families that I had met just days earlier. I was riveted by Victoria Falls and the wildlife in many of the ways that have become symbolic of the European presence in Africa since the 19th Century. Unironically, I mimicked the pose of a statue of David Livingstone that had recently been erected leading into the main trails with access to the Falls.

Another monument at the Falls took on more considerable significance during my graduate studies in military history. A cenotaph, adorned with a bronze sword, sits in a wooded area just beyond the parking lot. I had been unaware that the First World War had stretched to Africa, and I was curious to see such a familiar cenotaph in Zambia. After some guesswork and research, I realized that this monument was erected to remember settlers who had fought in the various theatres of the First World War. But this memory of the Falls faded quickly, only resurfacing when I returned to Zambia in 2016.

I had, however, come to encounter other remnants of Africa's First World War on other travels to the continent. In 2011, when I travelled to Ghana with my Uncle Sam to meet my extended family, I visited the military museum in Kumasi – the traditional seat of power for the Ashanti Kingdom – that sat upon the ground where the Akan peoples mounted their last offensive against British rule in the War of the Golden Stool. Therein I encountered objects that

seemed out of place in my mind: a German flag captured in 1915, military medals from African soldiers who had fought in the West African Frontier Force, and even a captured Nazi flag. Though I remained focused on contemporary politics in Africa, my archive of evidence that the First World War had featured an African theatre continued to grow.

To draw a straight line between these visits and this project, however, would be dishonest. At the outset of my doctoral studies, I intended to write a transnational history of Indigenous participation in the British First World War effort, of which only part would have concerned Africa. It was only in my return to Zambia in 2016, while I was completing the qualifying year, that I saw the potential for this project, spurred again by the seemingly out-of-place cenotaph at Victoria Falls. I was inspired by the wave of literature on commemoration driven by the centenary of the First World War. Once again, I had hoped that I could undertake a more transnational project, which would have focused on the Imperial War Graves Commission's (IWGC) work throughout the African continent. Ultimately, I opted for a case study approach, homing in on Kenya, where two of the organization's most prominent African projects remain today: the African Monuments in Nairobi and Mombasa. In seeking to understand the IWGC's endeavours in Kenya, I have also unearthed some of the deeper connections between the First World War and Kenya's settler society, which has helped give the project scope and specificity. Ultimately, this is a project that I could not have imagined when I decided to pursue graduate studies, but it is one that I am happy to have found.

Introduction: Conflict, Colonialism, and the Politics of Memory

In 1964, as the Kenyan Legislative Assembly prepared to declare itself an independent Republic, Mr. Kamau Munchunu rose to address his fellow politicians concerning the importance of acknowledging Kenya's history in public spaces. "In other countries," he lamented, "the monuments of the people who fought for freedom are displayed where the public can see them, remember them. But here nobody is bothering to even put up one statue."[1] He recommended erecting a statue of Dedan Kimathi in Nairobi's city centre to honour the sacrifice of those who had fought for Kenya's freedom from colonial rule. The representative made clear that acknowledging the freedom fighter's sacrifices went hand-in-glove with ensuring the new government of Kenya would care for "the heroes who freed this country from the imperialist yoke."[2] The importance of public memorialization for Kenya's future, he argued, was in providing cues for state action on important issues. From his perspective, public consciousness ought not to forget the fighters who earned Kenya its freedom. If Kenyans and their government did forget them, the country would not reward their deeds or acknowledge their needs. If Jomo Kenyatta believed that "Mau Mau was a thing best forgotten,"[3] as David Anderson argues, then the antidote to forgetting was not only compensating those who had lost life and limb during the crisis but memorializing their sacrifices for posterity.

Munchunu's call would remain unanswered by Jomo Kenyatta's inaugural government. Kenyatta was deliberately conservative in his approach[4] and did not share in the admiration of Mau Mau, especially its militant leanings. He saw himself as the scion of a peaceful transition to

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[1] Kenya. The National Assembly (henceforth NA), Hansard, 5th August 1964, 1335-1336.
[2] Ibid., 1336.
[3] David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 2005), 1006, iBooks.
[4] Ibid., 1001.

statehood in direct contradistinction to the 'hooligans' who drove the rebellion.[5] Kenyatta had a particularly complex relationship with Mau Mau, only selectively acknowledging their role in achieving Independence and "[fearing] their dissenting voices."[6] While Kenyatta was careful to acknowledge Mau Mau, he remained wary of centring their experiences. If Mau Mau remained the ascendant force in the Independence narrative, it would have been difficult for Kenyatta to maintain his legitimacy as the leader of the new Kenyan Republic. For if the route to Independence was paved by a movement in which he had no part, a Mau Mau veteran explained to historian Lotte Hughes, "'Who could have become the first president of Kenya? Is it Kenyatta or Kimathi?... Kenyatta was there to say [to the British], 'Kill Kimathi! Let him die!' Because he knew that he would [otherwise] have no chance of being President.'"[7] Certainly, Kenyatta's narrative of Mau Mau did not echo the British narrative of a "subversive, superstitious, tribalist, racist, anti-Christian, intimidating, brutal, criminal, committed to winning personal power for a few individuals and to establishing an ethnic tyranny." However, he did view it as "a pariah movement."[8] Public veneration of Mau Mau thus posed a threat to the very legitimacy of his government.

In 1979, just eleven months after Kenyatta's death, the Legislative Assembly considered the Kimathi statue again. The stakes of public memorialization were different than they had been 15 years earlier. Responding to a motion by Kenyan historian Dr. Godfrey Muriuki, the Minister for Co-operative Development Paul Ngei drew a direct comparison to the Imperial War Graves Commission's (IWGC) First World War African Monument in place on Kenyatta Avenue, where

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[5] Ibid., 1007.

[6] Ibid., 1006

[7] Lotte Hughes, "Memorialization and Mau Mau: A Critical Review," in *Dedan Kimathi on Trial: Colonial Justice and Popular Memory in Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion*, ed. Julie MacArthur (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017), 347.

[8] Marshall S. Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs: History, Memory, and Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 34.

it had sat since the colonial government unveiled it in 1928. "When I saw this Motion," he recalled, "I thought of the monuments which are in one of our main streets in Nairobi where you have the statues of the soldiers who were recruited to fight for the continuation of imperialism and colonialism."[9] For Ngei, the cityscape was a meaningful space where the fledgling nation could define itself against its pre-Independence self. The time was ripe for remembering "the fighters who really did it… [, who fought] to free ourselves from the colonialists; to gain our national integrity, and to retain once again our national sovereignty." Unlike the struggle for Independence, worthy of recognition and remembrance, "the 1914-1918 monument portrayed…an African who fought without knowing what he was fighting for. We know the British and the Germans were fighting for an extension of their imperialistic outlook and colonialism in Africa." [10] In post-colonial Kenya, the urban landscape was a political battleground where historical memory came to bear upon the spirit of the Kenyan nation-state. Despite Ngei's impassioned entreaty, the call to erect a Kimathi statue again went unheeded.

In making his plea to commemorate Kimathi and other freedom fighters, however, Ngei mustered a compelling juxtaposition between the Kenyan mentality under colonialism and its rebirthed version after the long struggle for freedom from Britain. In a roundabout fashion, Ngei was erasing the lived experiences of soldiers and porters who, whether they enlisted voluntarily or were compelled to do so, were cognizant that they were part of a transformational moment in history, even if they only recognized it through changes to their lives and their families lives.[11]

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[9] NA. 27th July 1979. 911.

[10] Ibid., 912.

[11] Michelle Moyd's recent call to action amongst historians of the First World War to eschew the idea of the Great War in Africa as a 'sideshow' simply because it did not figure prominently in strategic planning, highlights the ways in which the end goals of the war should not necessarily determine our conception of its effects upon particular regions. That is, the First World War in Africa might be easily dismissed as a war without consequence for the liberation of sub-Saharan Africa from colonial rule, but that must not obscure the deep and lasting impact the course of fighting inflicted upon African communities (and their prospects for self-rule). Michelle

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Nonetheless, to commemorate those sacrifices was to vindicate the Imperial underpinnings of the First World War, according to Ngei, in turn vilifying the memory of Mau Mau. The passage of time and the frustration of over two decades of repressing the memory of Mau Mau created a competition between Mau Mau and the First World War for space in the collective storytelling of the nation. The Kenyatta government pushed the fighters who had fought for freedom in the forests of Mount Kenya to the margins of the Independence story,[12] even if the second half of his tenure saw an increased sensitivity to Mau Mau.[13] For its supporters, finding a central role for Mau Mau in the Kenya's national storytelling thus meant decentring the First World War.

When the debate came to the Legislative Assembly again in 1984, political elites and the media reacted with more fanfare than with previous motions. High-profile politicians, including President Daniel arap Moi, attacked the suggestion of replacing the First World War memorial as an erasure of history, tantamount to casting aspersions upon the memory of Kenyans who participated in the Great War. As a concerned citizen opined, "Those soldiers died for us. Those who survived came back with the idea of getting our Independence. We should remember them. The statue should remain where it is."[14] Even though the public conceptualized the First World War memorial as "a living testimony to our people's forcible participation in that ugly war," the vast majority of commentators in the mainstream media resented "the possibility of distorting

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Moyd, "Centring a Sideshow: Local Experiences of the First World War in Africa," *First World War Studies* 7 (2) 2016: 111-130. I will return to this argument in more depth in a subsequent portion of this introduction.

[12] Anais Angelo has recently argued that this was much more than just a nationalist retelling of Mau Mau. Indeed, Angelo argues that Kenyatta's presidency actively repressed remaining Mau Mau fighters through the use of its intelligence and military services. While Kenyatta sought to posit himself as the natural leader of Mau Mau, dismissing the leadership of its more militant members, while integrating agreeable Mau Mau leaders into the new government. Referencing an early thrust in the historiography of Mau Mau, Angelo links the repressive politics of Kenyatta's presidency – including its secrecy – to the "politics of 'orderly amnesia' that held together contradictory narratives: Kenyatta was both the 'friend of the Mau Mau' and the president who never verbally acknowledged the Mau Mau's struggle for independence, while also filling his government with those who 'reneged' on a movement he continuously denounced as a 'disease'." Anais Angelo, "Jomo Kenyatta and the repression of the 'last' Mau Mau leaders, 1961-1965," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 11 (3) 2017: 442-459.

[13] Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs*, 250.

[14] *Sunday Nation*, 1 April 1984. As quoted in Laragh Larsen, 107.

history at the expense of praising our freedom fighters – and our political achievements."[15] A distinct post-colonial memory of the First World War emerged in Kenya, where the significance of 1914-1918 was wholly ambivalent. Kenyan politicians, echoed by the media, construed the conflict as a symbolic reminder of the brutality inherent in colonial rule and warfare while also patching its memory into the fabric of its Independence story. The Askari soldiers and hapless porters had gifted the spirit that drove the Independence movement, according to this interpretation, without having had any choice in the matter. They were passive victims of colonialism despite their status as the forbearers of heroes.[16]

Yet the debate over Kimathi's statue was much more than a competition between First World War memory and the memory of Mau Mau. Despite a popular understanding of the latter conflict as part of the united struggle for Kenyan liberation, the Gikuyu dominated the political and economic life of Kenya proffering uneven rewards for different regions and socio-political groups within the newly formed nation-state.[17] Gikuyu dominance had roots in colonial rule, wherein elements of the community effectively mimicked British culture by converting to Christianity and achieving high levels of education, in turn galvanizing political activity – and

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Dipesh Chakrabarty's powerful discussion of historicism is essential to understanding the ways that post-Independence identity-creation depended on familiar rhetorical devices that drove colonialism. The collision of Mau Mau and First World War memory, in Ngei's proposal, assigned to porters and Askari a specific place in the natural progression to Kenyan independence, which pre-dated the political mobilizations of the 1920s through to the 1960s. In doing so, he relegated porters and Askari to an eternal "waiting room of history." Their status as victims of colonial rule stripped their agency and humanity. In the 1984 debate, however, their victimhood was turned on its head, now representing an inspiration for the progression towards Independence, yet still paling in comparison to the measuring stick of Independent Kenya. They were, in essence, pre-political actors, who could not be conceived in the same way as the educated political activists who had ostensibly gained Kenya its freedom. Strikingly this mimicked the ways the Kenyatta government approached Mau Mau, albeit with a substantially different tone. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8-12.

[17] The literature on early political formations in pre-Independent and post-Independent Kenya is plentiful. The most instructive inclusion here is John Lonsdale, "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty & Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought," in *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa: Book II: Violence and Ethnicity*, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale eds. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 315-467.

internal divides – within Gikuyu communities.[18] However, it was the governments of Jomo

Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi – themselves dominated by Gikuyu politicians – who denied the

memory of those they saw as the radicals who had participated in violence against fellow

Kenyans during the Emergency.[19] Much like the Askari and porters who the IWGC had

commemorated over half a century earlier, Mau Mau, and Kimathi specifically, occupied a space

of ambivalence[20] in Kenya's collective memory. The same political divisions that had cast their

shadow upon the Kenyan Republic also clouded the construction of a useable memory of its

Independence, or at the very least, Mau Mau's role in achieving it.

Some clarity might have been achieved in February 2007, however, when the Kibaki

government took its first step towards its commitment to immortalize Mau Mau fighters and

leaders in stone and metal.[21] On the 50th anniversary of Kimathi's execution, President Kibaki

unveiled a statue in his honour at a juncture in the city centre that bore the rebel leader's name.

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[18] See, for example, Marshall Clough, *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918-1940* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1990); John Spencer, *The Kenyan African Union* (Boston: KPI, 1985); Robert Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[19] There is a great debate in Kenyan historiography about the nature of Mau Mau, especially whether it should be understood as a liberation movement, a Gikuyu civil war, a terrorist group, or a decentralized anti-Colonial movement. For an overview of the debate from the 1960s through the 1990s, especially the heated debates of the late-1970s and 1980s, see David William Cohen, *The Combing of History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), Chapter 3.

[20] Drawing on Homi Bhabha's conception of ambivalence as the phenomenon of colonized subjects mimicking and mocking the colonizer, I see post-Independence Kenya inhering this hybridized identity. On the one hand, Kenyatta and Moi needed to acknowledge the role of Mau Mau in achieving Independence as part of their governing identity, while also repulsing the elements that mocked their non-combatant status. This manifested materially, as Angelo has noted, by the selective inclusion of certain Mau Mau leaders and the exclusion of others. The formation of a unified post-Independence 'nation' demanded an "ironic compromise" wherein Mau Mau was "almost the same" as the conservative anticolonial movement but "not quite." The failure of Mau Mau, that is, ensured the necessity of Kenyatta. See Homi Bhabba, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis (Spring, 1984): 125-133; Angelo, "Jomo Kenyatta and the repression of the 'last' Mau Mau leaders."

[21] See Annie E. Coombes, "Monumental Histories: Commemorating Mau Mau with the Statue of Dedan Kimathi," *African Studies* 70 (2) (2011): 202-223. More recently, in 2015 the UK Government and the Kenyan government collaborated on a memorial to Mau Mau in the wake of a court decision that allowed survivors of British atrocities the right to pursue legal action. See Wangui Kimari, "A Monument for the Mau Mau at last, but no land," *Africa is A Country*, 9 September, 2015, https://africasacountry.com/2015/09/a-monument-for-the-mau-mau-at-last-but-no-land.

Supporters had won their victory in what was then a four-decades-long struggle to have Kimathi's likeness etched into Nairobi's landscape. But the inequitable division of political power that had relegated Kimathi to the space of ambivalence in Kenya's collective memory had violent consequences after the 2007 Kenyan election. Just over a year after Kibaki unveiled Kimathi's statue, Kenya began its recovery from two months of post-election violence that saw as many as 1500 people killed and over half a million displaced from the violence. While there was no direct correlation between the Kimathi statue and the crisis, the latter is a reminder that the socio-political effects of collective memory are often matters of life and death. The power to construct and mould historical memory tells us much about the locations of political power and social control that drove resentment and violent confrontation after the 2007 election.

Indeed, the placement of the two statues prompts associations that cut to the core of the Kenyan nation. The First World War memorial, a colonial imposition, remains on Kenyatta Avenue, a name that Kenya's most prominent commentator – Ngugi wa Thiong'o – associated with the continuation of colonial rule.[22] The street itself is dotted with buildings with colonial ancestry, even if they have been repurposed since 1964. The old City Hall, the settler Memorial Obelisk, the Bank of India building, and the Stanley Hotel, remain as reminders that Nairobi once served as the hub of white rule in Kenya. Fittingly, Kimathi Street cuts through Kenyatta Avenue, just as his legacy interrupts Kenyatta's. Nonetheless, the corner upon which his statue stands is isolated by the two main thoroughfares that frame the city centre, named for Kenyatta and Moi. Fittingly, the Kimathi statue's location in Nairobi's cityscape is only navigable through reference to the heads of state who attempted to curate his absence/presence in Kenya's official history. Kimathi is relegated to a side street, both literally and figuratively.

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[22] Carol M. Sicherman, "Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Writing of Kenyan History," *Research in African Literatures* 20 (3) (Autumn, 1989): 347-370.

Kimathi, Kenyatta, and Moi are not the only anti-colonialists emblazoned on Nairobi's street signs – a necessary reminder that public consciousness and collective memory are not orderly avenues but instead they are individual channels that criss-cross like city streets. It is only from the benefit of distance, or cartographic representation, that we can see those individual pathways as parts of integrated wholes. Individually, each of the streets may be, in Pierre Nora's powerful terms, *lieux de memoire* – sites of memory – where Kenyans remember figures from their histories in their own ways through unified languages of remembrance.[23] Collectively, however, as part of a larger memorial landscape, their conflicts and contradictions gesture towards what Michael Rothberg has termed *noeuds de memoire* – knots of memory – that belie attempts at "territorialisation (whether at the local or national level) and identitarian reduction."[24] As the debate over Mau Mau (and especially its clash with the memorialization of the First World War) indicates, the sites of memory of Kenya's Independence "are rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference…[that are] contingent and open to resignification."[25] Even with disproportionate power to determine the grand narrative of Independence, the political elite in Kenya's first decades of Independence could not straighten out the knotted interpretations of its past.

This story, however, is not about Mau Mau or Dedan Kimathi. Those topics have been the subject of an impressive body of work, which has delineated the implications of the rebellion

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[23] This is not to suggest that Kenyans all remember the same, regardless of their community identification. Contrarily, as I have outlined in my discussion of the contested nature of the Independence narrative, the interpretation of these sites of memory are as varying as the communities that make-up post-Independence Kenya.

[24] Michael Rothberg, "Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de memorire to Noeuds de memoire," *Yale French Studies* 118/119 (2010): 7.

[25] Ibid.

for Kenyan politics since the 1960s,[26] although work on the collective memorialization of Mau Mau is much more recent.[27] The critical role of Mau Mau in determining the trajectory of Kenyan history in the latter half of the 20th Century notwithstanding, it was the First World War that stood as the defining event in Kenyan history prior to Independence. Its material effects were far-reaching and left no community in Kenya untouched. Further, as the Imperial powers in Europe divvied up former German, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian colonies, the British Empire, in particular, reached its apex. The First World War was the backdrop upon which the fledgling Colony came into being and began to define itself as a distinct entity within the British Empire.

Just as Mau Mau's malleability was a historical construct, so to was Kenya's First World War. The memory of the conflict was a palimpsest[28] upon which settlers, colonial administrators, and Imperial organizations etched their marks. It was no coincidence that the collective memory of the First World War became 'knotted' with Mau Mau in the post-colonial era. European control extended further into Africa through the former event, while Kenyans had ostensibly expelled Imperial power in the wake of the latter. In other words, conceptualizing Independence

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[26] See, for recent examples, David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005); Julie MacArthur ed., *Dedan Kimathi on Trial: Colonial Justice and Popular Memory in Kenya's Mau Mau* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2017).

[27] Lotte Hughes, "Memorialization and Mau Mau: A Critical Review," in *Dedan Kimathi on Trial: Colonial Justice and Popular Memory in Kenya's Mau Mau*, Julie MacArthur ed., (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2017): 339-374.

[28] Jay Winter has used the word palimpsest in the context of commemoration to highlight the malleability of war memory. He uses the term to highlight the diachronic aspects of memory and the multivocality of memory creation. Describing collective memory as a palimpsest is particularly useful because so often memorialization is enshrined in stone, strengthening the analogy. See Jay Winter, "In Conclusion: Palimpsests," in *Memory, History, and Colonialism: Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts*, Indra Sengupta ed. (London: German Historical Institute, 2009), 167-174. Santanu Das has more recently expounded upon this concept in the context of the Sepoy experience and memory of the First World War. He uses the term throughout his analysis, though he discusses the stakes of colonial memory most pointedly in his Afterword. See Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), especially 406-417.

and nationhood meant not only untangling the present but also wrestling with the historicity of Imperialism, intrinsically linked to the wartime mobilization of Metropolitan control. The growth of the Kenyan state from 1914-1918 galvanized and extended Imperial control of what was up until then largely a commercial colony, which Europeans had only sparsely settled.

Centralized control over colonies during the Great War, however, did not portend straightforward political arrangements devoid of conflict over the nature of local control in its wake. In Kenya, settlers – many of whom came to the Colony as part of the 1919 Soldier Settlement Scheme – clamoured for political power, social dominance, and relative autonomy from London and the Colonial Office (CO). Thus it was not only in the cauldron of war but in the post-war narration of it that the implications of 1914-1918 would help to shape the trajectory of Kenya Colony. The politics of memorialization followed from the 'struggle for Kenya'[29] wherein the CO, the central colonial state, and the settler population were knotted together in a struggle for control of the colony. Ultimately, none of the factions could win the day, owing to their own internal diversity as social groups and the structure of white supremacy that they held in common. Commemoration of the First World War thus responded to the political dynamics of the Colony.[30] While the state was able to achieve some level of hegemony over the official narrative of memorialization, settlers consistently re-signified those narratives to meet their own social needs.

Politics was not the only social arena wherein First World War memorialization mattered. The white community of Kenya, broadly defined to include administrators and colonial politicians, was concurrently building its culture, at once derived from British institutions,

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[29] Robert M. Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya: The Loss and Reassertion of Imperial Initiative, 1912-1923* (Missasauga: Associated University Presses, 1993).

[30] Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (Athens: James Currey, 1990), 66-68.

traditions, and leisure habits, yet distinctly shaped by the Kenyan context.[31] The collective

remembrance of the First World War featured prominently in settler culture and, as such, was a

touchstone for defining what it meant to be a settler in Kenya throughout the interwar period.

The negotiation of distinct settler practices of commemoration in interwar Kenya was not just

about the outward spread of British commemorative practices to the colonies then, but something

that evolved internally as well. Kenya's settlers were part of an international surge in

memorialization and commemoration in the wake of the First World War, but their

commemorative culture was as responsive to its internal social and political needs.

This study thus stands at the intersection of several fields of inquiry that have, to varying

extents, touched upon the effects of the First World War in Africa. On the one hand, it is an

analysis of the myriad of strategies that colonial administrations used in Kenya as they attempted

to establish their legitimacy, with historicism paramount among them. On the other, it attempts

to expand upon the dynamics of identity creation in a Colony that straddled the boundaries

between being a commercial colony, a settler colonial state, and an interregnum before African

self-rule. Binding these fields of inquiry is the massive rupture that was the First World War.

While the material effects of the conflict remain secondary to my analysis, its status as the

defining event of the early 20th Century requires careful description and dissection. It is my

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[31] Dane Kennedy's seminal work on the establishment of white settler cultures in Rhodesia and Kenya remains essential to any study of settler culture in Southeastern Africa. Brett Shadle has more recently analyzed the development of a distinct culture of Whiteness in interwar Kenya. CJD Duder, Chris Youé, and Will Jackson have also detailed the cultural development of Kenya's settler community, focussing especially on soldier settlers in the interwar period. These works stand out as examples of studies that look beyond state formation, colonial control, and Imperial policy, which has been the standard approach to Imperial history in Kenya. Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Brett Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk: White Settlers in Kenya, 1900s-1920s* (Manchester: Manchester Universtiy Press, 2015); CJD Duder, "The Soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919 in Kenya," (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1978); CJD Duder and Chris Youé, "Paice's Place: Race and Politics in Nanyuki District, Kenya, in the1920s," *African Affairs* 93 (371) (Apr. 1994): 253-278; Will Jackson, "White Man's Country: Kenya Colony and the Making of a Myth," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5 (2) (2011): 344-368.

claim, however, that in remembering and memorializing the First World War – in finding *meaning* for that conflict in the Kenyan context – that we find evidence of the use of its memory as a fillip in the governance of Kenya colony, and a consistent referent in the creation of a distinct settler society in the East African territory.

While this is a case study of Kenya, the Colony was not in isolation throughout the inter-war period. As such, the analysis follows a careful path, integrating Empire-wide, cross-cultural, and regional dynamics. The first section of the study interrogates the impact of the First World War in Africa more generally, moving to a discussion of the particular effects of the conflict on Kenya from 1914 to the early 1920s. With this foundation, I move to a discussion of First World War remembrance and commemoration in the second chapter, buttressed by an analysis of the manifold intersections of First World War memory and Imperial, national, and, to a lesser extent, individual identity. Taken together, these two fundamental historiographical analyses form the basis for conceptualizing the global phenomenon of reckoning with the First World War. The overriding goal of the project is to bring Africa into the fold as a site of complex, contested, and substantive memorializations of the Great War.

The case study consists of seven chapters, focusing on three distinct, yet often overlapping, threads of memory in inter-war Kenya. From the first instant, soldier settlers and those who experienced the First World War from East Africa forged their commemorative traditions and permanent memorials in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. The settler thread of memory, itself diverse and multifaceted, spans the entirety of the period under consideration. Complimenting the settler thread of memory was an Empire-wide drive to commemorate the First World War in unprecedented fashion, driven by the IWGC and its founder Sir Fabian Ware. The IWGC's memorials and cemeteries outlived formal Imperialism in Kenya, remaining today

as the lasting remnants of the British Empire's drive to remember those who lost their lives from 1914-1918. The permanence of its material culture notwithstanding, the IWGC was active in Kenya for but a short period, from the early-1920s until 1928. Finally, the administrative memory thread – as encapsulated by state memorialization, ritual, and remembrance – structured the official face of First World War memory in Kenya. My focus is on the governorship of Sir Edward Grigg, from 1925-1930, who oversaw the vast majority of the IWGC's unveilings and the establishment of formal rituals of remembrance in Kenya. The standards set during the Grigg administration remained in place and mostly unchanged up until the Second World War. While each of the threads of memory competed for ascendency, it was only through entanglement that they could be articulated in any meaningful fashion. At each instant of remembrance and site of memory, the threads referenced and amplified one another.

This dissertation is structured around two introductory chapters detailing the First World War in Africa and the implications of First World War remembrance and commemoration for settler-colonial societies. Five chapters, each interrogating specific forms of commemoration in inter-war Kenya follow from these introductory chapters, constituting the bulk of my analysis. I have divided this study into two sections: the first focuses on the historiographical and theoretical underpinnings of the case studies that follow in the second section.

In the third chapter, which opens the case study section of the dissertation, I define the IWGC's work throughout the Empire, with its particular projects in Kenya as the main object of analysis. Here, I challenge recent work on the IWGC's projects, specifically whether race is the best lens through which historians should evaluate the organization's work in the Kenyan context. The literature on the IWGC's work is expanding as a result of the Centenary of the First World War, highlighting the importance of its work in both uniting the British Empire in

remembering the dead, while also being open to interpretation by its constituent parts. Ultimately, Kenya Colony remains an understudied aspect of the IWGC's work, a lacunae that this study addresses in part.

In the fourth chapter, I turn to the major settler and state-driven memorial sites of memory, which established the memorial infrastructure of the Colony. I situate settler memorialization within the context of early post-war politics in Kenya Colony, emphasizing the shared goals of self-governing status amongst both settler and official cadres of society. By comparing memorial projects borne of private initiative with those established through official avenues, I read a counter-memory to the IWGC's version of memorialization, which ostensibly included Kenyan contributions to the First World War. While the IWGC may have failed to live up to its egalitarian principles when it came to colonial subjects, it was settlers and administrators who forged a white-washed version of First World War history up until 1924, albeit with different forms and constraints upon memorialization messaging. Set in the context of Kenya Colony's political history, First World War memorialization was a convenient reference in settler agitation for political independence.

Meanwhile, as I detail in the fifth chapter, elements of civil society beyond the political elite tugged at the threads of memory in post-war Kenya. Specifically, missionaries and women – occupying liminal roles in Kenya Colony's public sphere – crafted memorialization projects that went beyond monuments and ceremonies. While missionaries and settler women had differing goals, they shared in their political difference. Yet their memorialization schemes contributed to the alienation of a Kenyan memory of the First World War in civil society, thus fashioning the First World War in white settler terms. I analyze the work of the East African Women's League and the British Legion in preparing for Poppy Day and organizing events for settlers on

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Armistice Day. Through the Poppy Appeal, Legion Balls, and other social events, the settler community gave itself an exclusive space for performing First World War memory, animating their own collective identity and whiteness in the process. Social functions worked against the colonial administration's script by eroding the artifice of inclusion and racial collaboration essential to Armistice Day ceremonies. I argue that it was not only in official rituals of commemoration – moderated exclusively by men – but in the woman-centred and often non-official performances of commemoration where settlers constructed a colonial memory of the First World War. In taking care of the settler community, from a maternal perspective, women in Kenya also shaped the memory of the First World War and the collective identity of settlers in the Colony.

Finally, in the sixth and seventh chapters, I interrogate the colonial administration's use of these sites, alongside the language of First World War memory, in several critical political battles in inter-war Kenya. I read the settler counter-memory of the First World War against the colonial administration's political uses of war memory. In the process of articulating the memory of the First World War, I argue that the imperial thread of memory morphed into a colonial memory thread, itself split – though still entwined – into administrative and settler forms. While white supremacy tethered administrative and settler threads of memory together, differing interpretations of Empire defined the unique character of each.

The sixth chapter follows the administrative uses of First World War memory in the debate over Closer Union with Tanganyika and Uganda. Under the leadership of Governor Sir Edward Grigg, settlers envisioned greater autonomy from London through the policy, which required establishing the means for the colony's defence through the Defence Force Ordinance, and a greater role for settlers in taking on the 'civilizing mission' through the Dual Policy of

Development. In the debate over Closer Union, I argue, Grigg referenced the First World War carefully, presenting a particular vision of Empire that, over the course of his tenure, set out a distinct vision of colonization in Kenya Colony.

In the seventh and final chapter, I trace the emergence of Armistice Day in its distinct colonial form. Therein, I argue that the colonial administration's script for Armistice Day was an 'invented tradition'[32] meant to maintain the appearance of a unified white society in Kenya. This administration designed the script to conform to Empire-wide traditions, but the colonial context consistently undermined it. More specifically, the consistent presence of African, Arab, and Indian bodies at the ceremonies reiterated the frailty of the settler community, requiring disciplinary forms of suppression, primarily through adherence to the norms associated with rituals of remembrance. Further, the Kenyan environment created challenges to rituals specific to the colonial context. Bodily contact with colonized subjects and the environment thus reminded settlers and administrators of their uneasy position in the Colony. This was the un-script of Armistice Day, which undermined the illusion of uniformity in rituals of commemoration.

Despite my contributions to the study of commemoration and Kenyan settler culture, this dissertation suffers from many silences. Africans, Indians, and Asians are mostly absent, as speakers, from the documentary evidence that drives my analysis and argumentation. The archives from which I drew my primary evidence document white settlers and administrators, either based in London or Nairobi. I have drawn from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's archives in Maidenhead, UK, the National Archives in London, as well as the collection of colonial-era newspapers and Colonial Office documents in the East African Collection at the Bird Library, Syracuse University, New York. The bulk of the evidence I have

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[32] Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in *The Invention of Tradition*, Terrence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 211; 229.

compiled here, however, comes from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, Kenya, alongside associated fieldwork to locate war memorials in situ.

Similarly, because my focus is commemoration, memorialization, and remembrance practices, rather than a more diffuse study of memory, my analysis centres on the elite cadres of Kenya's European population, both among administrators and settlers, rather than smaller communities and individuals. As the more recent developments within Kenya's historiography have made clear, the central government cannot stand-in for the colonial administrative structure writ large nor can the urban elite and 'Happy Valley' set amply represent settler society.[33] Admittedly, the elision of these complexities within Kenyan society stems from my focus as a historian of commemoration and the First World War. Historians of colonialism in Kenya might draw a different set of conclusions. However, in arguing that there was not one commemorative culture but many that co-existed, amplified, and structured one another, I hope to avoid homogenizing the collective memory of the First World War in Kenya, instead gesturing towards heterogeneity open to breaking the silences I have helped author.

Ultimately, this dissertation is a snapshot of how settlers and colonial administrators in Kenya collectively remembered the First World War. The overriding goal is to extend the global dimensions of the literature on commemoration and remembrance while giving further leverage to the argument that Africa was not a 'forgotten front' of the First World War, especially when viewed from the continent itself. The First World War was a formative moment in the history of colonization in Kenya, and the way it was narrated, conceived, and mobilized in the inter-war era helped shape the socio-political life of the Colony. Settlers and administrators in East Africa

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[33] Will Jackson, "Settler Colonialism in Kenya, 1880-1863," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (New York: Routledge, 2017), 231-245. See Chapter 4 for a brief discussion of the 'Happy Valley' and its relevance for understanding settlers in Kenya Colony.

responded to the Empire-wide program of commemoration in their distinct ways, not only by mourning and celebrating the dead but by creating connections with one another, in turn shaping their 'islands of white'[34] through reference to the First World War.

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[34] Kennedy, *Islands of White*.

1 – Britain's First World War in Africa: Between the Myth and the Reality

As the camera pans down through the African jungle, accompanied by a haunting soundtrack of jungle creatures bellowing out from the deep, the audience is brought to the 1st Methodist Church in the Kingdom of Kungdu. The Hollywood version of C.S Forester's *The African Queen* starts in a familiar setting for colonial Africa, with a beleaguered missionary leading a parish of half-naked Africans in religious hymn. A truculent Katherine Hepburn bangs at the piano when the rugged, cigar-smoking, liquor-chugging Humphrey Bogart blows a whistle from his steamer, the *African Queen*, with news and mail for the remote outpost of the British Empire. Playing the Canadian, Charlie Allnut, Bogart delivers the news to the only two Europeans of the village that "I probably won't be comin' around this way for a couple of months." The surprised pastor, Samuel Sayer, prompts Allnut, "Oh really, what about our mail?" Quietly, the disinterested mailman responds, "I don't think there will be any mail for a while…the Germans will hold it up…on account of the War." "Where? Between Whom?" Sayer retorts. But the reality of a world war, continents away, was lost on Allnut, with details he could not keep straight.[1]

Just after his departure, as Sayer and his sister kneel to pray to God to bless "the arms of England," a frantic and unintelligible local comes to alert the Europeans of the approaching German officers and their African *askari*. Before they can resist or flee, the Germans burn the village to the ground, sending Sayer into a spiral of despair that leads to his illness and death. (The fates of the African residents appears immaterial to the story.) Thus was one of the first entries into the popular history of the Ice Cream War, as it would come to be called a half-century later.[2] Where, as the story goes, British settlers were caught unprepared by German

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[1] *The African Queen*, DVD, directed by John Huston (1951; Twentieth Century Fox, 2004).
[2] William Boyd, *An Ice-Cream War* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1983).

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aggression while they completed their God-given task to civilize the African continent. Since Forester penned his famous novel in the 1930s, refashioned for the silver screen in the 1950s, the popular conception of the Great War in Africa has taken the form of "a boy's patina of derring-do and adventure,"[3] at odds with the carnage and blood-soaked terrain that has characterized the Western European front.[4]

That the image of the First World War in Africa was much rosier than the Western Front remains a cruel irony that belies the carnage and loss of life on the African continent. As Akinjide Osuntokun calculates, the First World War touched tens of millions of Africans under colonial rule, most of whom would not be part of the military apparatuses in Africa, but were instead collateral victims from famine, disease, and warfare.[5] The disparity between civilian and military casualties notwithstanding, Africans bore the brunt of the fighting in East Africa and shouldered the majority of support roles and resource demands as well. For Africans, veteran Chikani Mkali described to historian Melvin Page, the war as "unlike any war that they had known before…[and] they strained to understand why they should suffer so for a cause which seemed not to be their own."[6] The disproportionate burden Africans bore from 1914-1918, and the smaller number of white casualties in the African campaigns, undoubtedly influenced Anglo-European assessments of the African theatre as a field of adventure rather than a no-man's land. This is an impression of the Great War in Africa that, if it is remembered at all outside of academia, remains to this day.[7]

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[3] Anthony Barker, "African Queens and Ice-Cream Wars: Fictional and Filmic Versions of the East African Conflict of 1914-1918," in *Personal Narratives, Peripheral Theatres: Essays on the Great War (1914-1918)*, Anthony Barker et al. eds. (Cham: Springer, 2018), 225.

[4] See Daniel Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2005).

[5] Akinjide Ostunokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1979), 5-9.

[6] Mevlin E. Page, "The War of *Thangata*: Nyasaland and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 19 (1) (1979): 87.

[7] Bill Nasson, "More than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck: Sub-Saharan Africa in the First World War," *Geschicte und Gesselschaft* 40 (3) (April-June 2014): 160-183; Barker, "African Queens and Ice-Cream Wars."

This chapter offers a brief summary of the First World War in Africa. I focus on the broader effects of the war upon British colonialism rather than the intricate details of the fighting. In the process, I establish the key themes that have driven the legacy of the First World War on the continent, while I also consider the historiographical trends that have informed our understanding of the socio-political effects of the war in Africa. This general overview is essential to undertake any analysis of how British colonies commemorated the conflict in the interwar period. With this in mind, the chapter first details the major concerns within colonies stemming from the course of the First World War on the continent, followed by a focused analysis on the events during the war and in its immediate aftermath that determined the trajectory of what would become Kenya Colony. This offers a sketch for detailing how and why the First World War and its memory were a preoccupation of settlers and administrators in interwar Kenya.

The Opening Salvos: The First World War Begins in West Africa

While Germany and Britain may have temporarily agreed to a truce on the continent in July and early-August 1914, hoping to avoid embroiling nascent commercial colonies in a costly conflict, or exposing Africans to their white rulers fighting one another,[8] the loss of life and suffering in African communities laid waste to much of the continent throughout the war. Settlers on the spot may have also wished to stay out of the conflict to maintain and extend their

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Nasson highlights the historiographical trend to focus on individual exploits, especially Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, rather than engaging with the wider impact of the First World War, especially in East Africa. Barker, on the other hand, analyzes popular portrayals of the East African Campaign, which remain the lasting image of the conflict in popular culture.

[8] Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2. Edward Paice argues that neutrality was simply a 'cynical ruse', meant to remove any post-war culpability for the hostilities in Africa. Edward Paice, *World War I: The African Front: An Imperial War on the Dark Continent* (New York: Pegasus, 2008), Location 731, Kindle.

control over subject populations and colonial economies, but the realities of global war meant their connections to the metropole would embroil them in the fight and expose their dependence on the African population. Once the fighting began, it was clear that the conflict offered the opportunity for the extension of colonial possessions at the expense of other colonial powers. While, as Bill Nasson notes, the African continent was always more important for the British and French than it was for Germany,[9] the 'second partition of Africa' from 1914 on required the warring nations to factor Africa into its overall strategies. Fundamentally, however, the First World War in Africa cannot be conceived of through a European lens. It was not transposed into the African context, but a distinct theatre of war, the contours of which responded to the varying circumstances in which it was fought.[10] It is thus only from the continent itself that the myth of Africa in the First World War might give way to a better understanding of its legacy there.

As the name implies, the First World War was much more than "a civil war within the European community of nations."[11] Alhaji Grunshi of the Gold Coast Regiment certainly understood this as the first soldier of the British Empire to fire a shot in 1914, a full two weeks before British troops saw their first action at the Battle of Mons.[12] Though the July Crisis might have been contained within the echelons of high politics in European capitals,[13] it was clear that the "Guns of August," in Barbara Tuchman's famous refrain, would bellow out beyond the

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[9] Bill Nasson, "British Imperial Africa," in *Empires at War, 1911-1923*, Robert Gerwath and Erez Manela eds. (London: Oxford University Press, 2014), 130-151.

[10] Melvin Page, "Introduction," in *Africa and the First World War*, Melvin Page ed. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1978), 1.

[11] Quoted in Melvin E. Page, "Introduction: Black Men in a White Men's War," in *Africa and the First World War*, Melvin E. Page ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 1.

[12] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 1.

[13] The literature on the July Crisis is extensive and subject to bitter historiographical debates. For overviews of the debates on the July Crisis see Holger Herwig, ed., *The Outbreak of World War I: Causes and Responsibilities* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1997); John W. Langdon, *July: 1914: The Long Debate, 1918-1990* (New York: Berg, 1991); Annika Mombauer, ed., *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Longman, 2002). The debate was rekindled, to a certain extent, by Christopher Clark's bestselling book and subsequently during the centenary of the Great War. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

confines of France and Belgium.[14] Grunshi was part of a colonial force targeting German

colonial possessions in Togoland, where the strategic radio outpost at Kamina connected German

African colonial possessions to each other and allowed communication with its Atlantic shipping

routes.[15] This was a local initiative rather than result of strategy in London, lending credence to

the unique African contours of the campaign.[16] The Togoland campaign lasted just over two

weeks, with the Germans surrendering the entirety of the territory, mostly without bloodshed, by

24 August 1914. The rout of German positions, however, did not signal the end of the war in

West Africa, which would continue well into 1916.

Following the Togoland successes, the British and French armies moved into the

Kameroons, which represented key positions for the Germans on the West African coast. While

the British took the port of Duala on 27 September and the French secured their objectives by 6

October, the Kameroon campaign underlined what would become a common tactic in German

warfare in Africa: strategic retreat.[17] German forces fell back to the interior of the colony,

keeping a supply line open through the port at Muni and thus ensuring well-supplied defences on

its frontier outposts.[18] The war in the Kameroons, unlike the swift advance in Togoland, did not

see similar success despite the British hold on Duala. The Germans would remain in the fight

there until the spring of 1916, when German forces retreated into neutral territories. The defence

of the colony persisted longer than any German planners had expected but the Germans saw it as

an overall failure. Post-war comparisons to the East African Campaign sullied the West African

theatre's successes.

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[14] Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Ballantine, 1994).
[15] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 17.
[16] Ibid., 34-38.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

For West Africans under British rule, however, the prolonged campaign in the Kameroons caused uncertainty, chaos, and disorder. While French West African troops numbered around 200,000, the British did not view colonial troops as viable options in a white man's war until circumstance dictated a reversal in policy in 1916.[19] As such, the British sent approximately 25,000 West African troops to the Togoland and Kameroon Campaigns,[20] alongside just over 41,000 carriers throughout the period from 1914-1918, including to the East African Campaign.[21] But the German flight from the Kameroons left an administrative vacuum that was never fully filled by the British or the French. The British Army secured Ghana and Nigeria, at least meeting the limited strategic goals for the campaign.[22] Allied, and especially British, grand strategy, however, focused more on the South West Africa Campaign through 1915, and the East African Campaign thereafter.

The internal dynamics of the colonies underwent significant change from 1914-1918. In Nigeria, revolts and overt rebellion weakened an already tenuous British grasp, exacerbated by the lack of military personnel left in the colony due to the war.[23] While Osuntokun concludes that the First World War represented a place in between the initial resistances to colonialism and organized nationalist movements in the interwar period, the economic and human toll of the First

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[19] For an exceptional overview of British racial policy in military recruitment during the First World War see Timothy C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[20] Roger Thomas, "Miliitary Recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War," *Cahiers D'Etudes Africanes* 15 (57) (1975): 57.

[21] The majority of carriers were recruited from Nigeria, with smaller numbers from Ghana and Sierra Leone. See David Killingray, "Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast," *The Journal of African History* 19 (1) (1978): 46-47. James K. Matthews puts the total number of carriers from Nigeria at 37,000. James K. Matthews, "Reluctant Allies: Nigerian Responses to Military Recruitment 1914-1918," in *African and the First World War*, Melvin E. Page ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 95. The total for the entirety of West Africa is just short of 52,000. David Killingray and James Matthews, "Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 13 (1/2) (1979): 10.

[22] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 53-58.

[23] Akinjide Osuntokun, "Disaffection and Revolts in Nigeria during the First World War, 1914-1918," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (5) 2) (Spring 1971): 191-192.

World War exposed the 'thin white line' in Nigeria and brought the entire colonial enterprise into question, providing fertile ground for revolt.[24] James K. Matthews, however, argues that the First World War "accelerated political change in Nigeria."[25] Manpower demands, largely met through cooperation with local leaders, undermined traditional rule in Nigeria, with a young, educated elite pressing for political change. Ultimately, "by discrediting the traditional rulers, the British undermined the foundation of their own rule."[26] Matthews' African-centric approach highlights the need to view the legacy of the First World War through careful attention to both local and global developments.

In Ghana, historians also have generally seen the conflict as a stepping stone to anticolonial resistance but with the corollary of short-term gains for the colonial administration. The explanation for the lack of political disturbance after the war lay in what Kwabena Akurang-Parry has identified as increased power for colonially sanctioned chiefs and the African intelligentsia.[27] David Killingray, however, sees the First World War as an event that brought global sensibilities into the Gold Coast. Although he does not couch it in the terms of global or transnational historiographical trends – nascent fields in the 1970s – the seeds of anticolonial politics were planted from 1914-1918. According to Killingray, "Wilsonian ideas of self-determination and liberal democracy, an enhanced race consciousness, pan-African idealism, and a belief in post-war reconstruction" undergirded the belief that "they might be consulted over the peace settlement, gain greater equality of civil opportunity, and a representative voice in the

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Matthews, "Reluctant Allies," 111.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, "African agency and cultural initiative in the British Imperial military and labor recruitment drives in the Gold Coast (colonial Ghana) during the First World War," *African Identities* 4 (2) (2006): 213-234. See also Elizabeth Wrangham, *Ghana During the First World War: The Colonial Administration of Sir Hugh Clifford* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2013), especially chapters 8 and 9.

government."[28] Unfortunately, the legacy of the First World War in West Africa remains underdeveloped as a subject of historical study. Nonetheless, several broad themes help structure our understanding of the impact of the First World War on African communities as well as the colonial administration and economics.

First, Africans bore the brunt of military and resource demands in the African theatre, owing in equal parts to the difficulty of prosecuting an offensive campaign on the continent[29] and the paucity of available white troops. The environment, difficulties in transport and communication, and the consistent threat of disease impeded the British, French, and German forces, especially in the Kameroon Campaign.[30] Roger Thomas explains that the lasting effect of the disproportionate burden upon African communities, alongside "the colonial administrations [being] weakened by wartime calls on their own personnel, made opposition to colonial rule, or to its African agents…practicable."[31] This was accompanied by substantial economic disruptions, increased prices on imports upon which African depended, and labour shortages driven by military demands.[32] Linking these two aspects together, it follows that while colonial politics and economic policy originated in global phenomenon, the African reaction was often locally circumscribed. Michael Adas argues, however, that this also meant that educated Africans made strong connections with intellectuals on other continents under the colonial yoke. In his words, "the circle in which the postwar discourse unfolded was initially small, in the following decades it contributed much to the counterhegemonic ideas of the Western educated

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[28] Killingray, "Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast," 57.

[29] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 44-60.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Roger G. Thomas, "The 1916 Bongo 'Riots' and Their Background: Aspects of Colonial Administration and African Response in Eastern Upper Ghana," *The Journal of African History* 24 (1) (1983): 57. See also Michael Crowder, "The First World War and its consequences," in *General History of Africa VII: African under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935*, A. Adu Boahen ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 283-311.

[32] See Akinjide Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London: Longman, 1979). See also Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 17-18.

intellectuals of Asia and Africa, ideas that were taken up by the peasants and urban labourers who joined them in revolt against the European colonial order."[33] Indeed, as the studies of West Africa mentioned herein have highlighted, perhaps the greatest legacy of the First World War was the interactions that combatants and carriers had with other Africans, European soldiers, and colonial troops. While the legacy of the First World War speculative and open to interpretation, the West African colonies clearly underwent significant change from 1914-1918.

Shifting Foci and Imperial Politics: Tanga, German South West Africa, and South Africa

The end of hostilities in West Africa, however, did not signal the end of West African combatants' and labourers' service in the African theatre. By 1917, the war in East Africa demanded increased labour and military manpower from the British colonies as the massively outnumbered German commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck's pesky campaign continued to derail Britain's goals in Africa. East Africa was the defining campaign of the African theatre, not only in its protracted length but in its long-term legacy in the annals of First World War history. Britain's colonies stood mostly alone in their pursuit of the German army in East Africa, with British East Africa, Uganda, Nyasaland, the Rhodesias, and South Africa all contributing personnel and resources. Lettow-Vorbeck was responsible for putting German East Africa on a war footing, to the ostensible chagrin of Governor Heinrich Schnee.[34] In the field, he depended heavily on white-officered but African-manned *Schutztruppe*, a force of well-trained *askari* who would force the British to use its own colonial troops in East Africa, most of whom had been in the employ of colonial administration's seeking to maintain internal control.[35] On 25 November

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[33] Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History* 15 (1) (2004): 61.

[34] Ross Anderson, *The Battle of Tanga, 1914* (London: Tempus, 2002), 26-30.

[35] Ibid.

1918, South African forces accepted the last German surrender of the war on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, which finally brought an end to the campaign, constituting the last hostilities of the First World War even after the Armistice in Europe.[36]

But the East African Campaign had begun in earnest in November 1914, not with African troops but with Indian forces who were assigned to East African defence as defined by the Committee on Imperial Defence.[37] For Britain, it was the coastal ports of German East Africa that took precedent in the early months of the war. With its eyes firmly set on the port of Tanga in German East Africa, and South African troops indisposed with internal disruptions, the British called upon a rejuvenated Indian Expeditionary Force 'B' to secure the coast, with the assistance of Indian Expeditionary Force 'C', mostly responsible for defence and under the control of the Colonial Office.[38] What followed was a dual attack at the port of Tanga in German East Africa and a simultaneous assault on the hills of Mount Kilimanjaro. IEF 'C' formed the main British forces for the attack on Mount Kilimanjaro, while IEF 'B' would land at Tanga, which von Lettow-Vorbeck defended with a much thinner force of *askari*.[39]

The British Admiralty authorized the landing to take place between the 2nd and 5th of November 1914. In what became one of the better known stories of the East African campaign, the outnumbered Germans defended the port city against malnourished, undertrained, and travel-weary Indian forces.[40] The German *askari*, who had prepared their defences based on Lettow-Vorbeck's reconnaissance on bicycle, used thick bush buffering the town from the beaches and

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[36] Bill Nasson, "More than Just von Lettow-Vorbeck," 160.

[37] Ross Anderson, *The Forgotten Front: The East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (Dublin: The History Press, 2015), 21-24. Digital Edition.

[38] Anderson, *The Battle for Tanga*, 33-34.

[39] Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: Norton and Co., 1989), 159-163.

[40] Charles Miller, *Battle for the Bundu: The First World War in East Africa* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974), 56-57.

heavy machine gun fire from close range to repel the Indian forces.[41] In what must have seemed to the British an omen that the landing was to fail, a "seemingly trivial incident, bees [played] a significant role at Tanga as they attacked without discrimination."[42] In one particularly important case of bee fury, an entire infantry battalion "was attacked by a swarm of enraged bees. This disrupted the battalions advance and it took some time to gather the scattered troops."[43] In Anderson's evaluation of the attack, "The African bee was not to be underestimated."[44] As fantastical as this episode in the landing at Tanga might be, the natural conditions in Africa continually affected the conduct of warfare throughout the African theatre.

Despite the impediments, however, Lettow-Vorbeck's situation was untenable by 5 November but the British had already decided to evacuate Tanga.[45] IEF 'C' had failed in its objective to secure the towns of Longido and Moshi at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro and, in Hew Strachan's assessment, the British commander Arthur Aitken "had handed his adversary a major victory"[46] (which ultimately led to Aitken's dismissal from command in East Africa). While both attacks were failures, Tanga struck the hardest blow. As Charles Miller surmises, the victory at Kilimanjaro may have "assured the security of German East Africa for a long time to come. But this fight went all but unnoticed alongside the humiliation of the British at Tanga, which was to have an immeasurable effect on the conduct of the ensuing four-year campaign."[47] Surely Tanga shook British confidence in Aitken and the Indian forces on the continent, boosting German morale and enthusiasm in the process. As Edward Paice recounts, had the British

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[41] Anderson, *The Battle for Tanga*, 81-82.
[42] Ibid., 98.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid. Byron Farwell labelled the entire affair the "Battle of the Bees," although it should be noted that his account was intended for a popular audience. Farwell, *The Great War in Africa*, 171.
[45] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 111.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, 71.

followed the War Office's advice to attack Dar es Salaam and Tanga rather than Kilimanjaro, "Lettow-Vorbeck's name may have been forgotten."[48] From planning to execution, Tanga was an embarrassing loss.

The failure precipitated another fateful decision for the war in East Africa as command was transferred from the India Office, in tandem with the Colonial Office, to the War Office. While the East African Campaign was a major preoccupation for the latter, the War Office insisted on the defence of its colonies in 1915 rather than mounting another offensive against Lettow-Vorbeck.[49] But in order to fully define British strategy in East Africa until 1916, it is essential to turn to another front of the African theatre: South West Africa. For if British plans in 1914 hinged on local initiative in West Africa and Indian responsibility in the East, each depended on the status of South Africa. The bulk of British military power, and indeed the strength of British colonialism South of the Sahara more generally, rested in that most tumultuous and antipathetic colony on the Southern coast of the continent.[50]

Imperial politics proved to be the biggest obstacle to South African involvement in East Africa. Just 15 years earlier, Britain and the Afrikaner population of South Africa fought for control of southern Africa, the culmination of tensions that defined the 19th Century on the cape. The complex relationship between Britain and the Union of South Africa at the outbreak of war was driven by this history, which highlighted the fiercely independent streak within the young British colony. Indeed, it remained uncertain if South African loyalties would remain British, lean towards neutrality, or if its Afrikaner population would side with its German neighbours who shared closer ancestry and culture. Nonetheless, South African leadership, personnel, and

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[48] Paice, *World War I in Africa*, Location 1066.
[49] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 131.
[50] Ibid., 133.

resources were essential to British hopes on the African continent, even if Lord Kitchener greatly desired their help on the Western Front.[51] By the end of the war, Jan Smuts emerged as the strongest force in South African politics, stemming from his leadership during the war.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 the Union of South Africa was already walking on thin political ice.[52] The idea of moving into South West Africa stirred anti-British sentiment, fracturing the Union in October 1914 through political and military rebellion. British and South African plans for South West Africa were on the backburner until Prime Minister Louis Botha and Jan Smuts could establish control over the political and military disorder. Internally, the problems were mostly sorted by the end of November 1914, with Botha and Smuts carefully conceding to rebellious factions, while ensuring that the most problematic figures would be punished accordingly.[53] But one particularly thorny officer, Colonel Marnie Maritz, continued the military rebellion into 1915. Maritz and his men fled across the border into German territory, stoking fears that his forces might meet up with Lettow-Vorbeck's, strengthening his outnumbered force. Maritz's rebellion continued in exile until February 1915, when South African forces mounted an attack against South West Africa, quashing rebel factions. The rest of Southern Africa, however, had to wait for South Africa to establish some stability, giving Lettow-Vorbeck breathing room in what had now become a raiding expedition.[54]

In the meantime, the South West Africa Campaign was a sweeping success for the young Union of South Africa after it had dispensed with the Maritz rebellion. The opening that the

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[51] Ibid. I have chosen to focus on South Africa's role in the African theatre in this chapter. I will return to the legacy of South Africa's involvement on the Western Front in Chapter 2, while the details of their engagement in Europe is beyond the confines of this study.

[52] Anne Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East Africa Campaign, 1914-1918: The Union Comes of Age*, (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2006), 80.

[53] Ibid., 85; Kent Fedorowich, "Sleeping with the Lion? The Loyal Afrikaner and the South African Rebellion of 1914-1915," *South African Journal of History* 49 (Nov. 2003): 74.

[54] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 75.

simmering tensions between Britain and its Afrikaner subjects[55] had provided to Germany

proved transient. Germany possessed neither the personnel nor the supplies to seize the initiative

from a temporarily paralyzed South African military.[56] By July 1915, Jan Smuts and Louis Botha

launched a dual pronged attack meant to envelope German forces with overwhelming cavalry.[57]

The Union of South Africa achieved its own strategic goal in the process, fulfilling its long-time

desire to unify the Cape coast of Africa;[58] German South West Africa, now Namibia, remained

under South Africa's control until 1989. As such, the Great War in Africa took on a uniquely

African character. South Africa, for its part, had "laid the foundation for South Africa's own

brand of colonialism in 1918," ensuring that "it was the South Africans who would be relied

upon to assist in various theatres of war…[reinforcing] the white South African prejudice that

[they] were of superior quality."[59] South African successes in South West Africa helped

maneuver the colony into a position of post-war influence. Under the leadership of Smuts and

Botha, South Africa sought to capitalize on its leverage by contributing the decisive forces in the

East African Campaign.

For Northern Rhodesia, the South West African Campaign also signalled their increased

involvement in the First World War. While the East African Campaign consisted mostly of

border raids and naval activity in 1915, with both British East Africa and Northern Rhodesia

squarely in Lettow-Vorbeck's sights, the 1st Northern Rhodesia Regiment formed the north side

of the South West African pincer, with a force of 67,000 soldiers and 33,000 labourers.[60] During

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[55] Fedorowich, "Sleeping with the Lion?," 71-95.
[56] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 74-76.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Samson, *The Union Comes of Age*, 90.
[59] Ibid., 92.
[60] Edmund Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia, and the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 70-75. Paul McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers: The Rhodesian Experience in the First World War* (Bulwayo: Books of Zimbabwe, 1980).

this phase of the war, officials in Northern Rhodesia were wary of African troops serving

alongside white soldiers (as was the case throughout the Empire),[61] and Northern Rhodesians

insisted that white supremacy must be safeguarded before they could draw upon black troops or

labourers.[62] Indeed, the joint pressures of German raids and tenuous imperial control meant that

if Northern Rhodesia decided to defend its borders with African personnel, it might risk internal

disorder.[63] Nonetheless, it was clear that African personnel were essential and demands on their

communities stoked anticolonial sentiment and worsened the state of a colony already in crisis.

Administrators' fears stemmed from troubles in another British colony that bordered

German East Africa: Nyasaland. There, the administration dispatched African troops to defend

its norther frontier against German raids with some early successes. After those early

engagements, however, it became clear that without consistently defending the border Lettow-

Vorbeck might be able to move into the interior.[64] Through local leaders, the military recruited

askari and carriers from across the territory. In some cases this was a welcomed opportunity for

financial gain, reclaiming traditional warrior heritage, or, as British propaganda put it, defending

against the threat of far worse German overlords.[65] John Chilembwe, an American-educated

pastor, led a rebellion against colonial rule in 1915, not exclusively in response to recruitment for

the war, but accelerated by its effects.[66] Although the rebellion was short-lived and unsuccessful,

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[61] Ibid., 65-67.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Edmund Yorke, "The Spectre of a Second Chilembwe: Government, Missions, and Social Control in Wartime Northern Rhodesia, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 31 (1990): 374.

[64] Melvin E. Page, "The War of *thangata*: Nyasaland and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 19 (1) (1978): 88-89.

[65] Ibid., 89. Timothy Stapleton has detailed similar circumstances in Southern Rhodesia, indicating that rural Africans in the colony were not disinterested in the war, becoming one of the primary motivations for joining the Rhodesia Native Regiment. Timothy J. Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2006), 23-30.

[66] Jane Linden and Ian Linden, "John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem," *The Journal of African History* 12 (4) (1971): 629-651.

it spread fears across British colonies that educated Africans might present a future challenge, especially as increased numbers of Africans were learning to fight in a 'white man's war.'[67] Much like West Africa, the colonial administration balanced collaborating with local leaders and managing dissent from within their colonies. In either case, the First World War laid bare the artifice of white control.

Despite the uneasiness in most of Britain's southern African colonies and an unwillingness to allow any French assistance as a means of pursuing their own aspirations of extending colonial possessions,[68] the need to move against Lettow-Vorbeck broke British procrastination in East Africa. A complete reorganization of command in the wake of Tanga, alongside a conquered German South West Africa, meant that South Africa could take the lead against the German commander. Further, the entirety of British Africa was on a total war footing, meaning there was exponentially more personnel and resources that it could throw at East Africa in the hopes of expelling Germany from the continent for good.[69] South Africa's confidence was at an all-time high given the rout of German forces in South West Africa and the 'proof' that only their military was capable of taking the fight to Lettow-Vorbeck with the failure of Indian forces in 1914. What had been the "leading opposition…to British Imperialism,"[70] was now the lynchpin of success in the African theatre.

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[67] Yorke, Britain, Northern Rhodesia, and the First World War, 65; 79-90.
[68] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 111-112.
[69] Anne Samson, *World War I in Africa: The Forgotten Conflict Among the European Powers* (London: IB Taurus, 2013), 230.
[70] Anderson, *The Forgotten Front*, 250. Anderson's account of the East African Campaign is now the standard reading on operations from 1915-1918. In tandem with his work on the Tanga landings, *The Forgotten Front* far outstrips any other account. While Anne Samson and Hew Strachan have also contributed key works on the topic, the former focuses much more on the Imperial politics at work on the African front, while the latter took on the ambitious task of detailing the entirety of the African theatre.

Jan Smuts Takes the Lead: The Long Road to November 1918

In London, the potential for an East African offensive caused great consternation within the Coalition Government, with Lord Kitchener wanting East Africa to remain on the defensive, while Andrew Bonar Law "wanted a sufficiently large force to conquer German East Africa once and for all."[71] When the War Office sent Kitchener to the Dardanelles to observe, the path was clear for a wider offensive with expected reinforcements from South Africa, alongside new troops from India. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was given charge of the offensive, although he had worries about the preparedness of the troops sent to complete it, but he fell ill on route to East Africa. With that turn of events, Bonar Law's original choice, Jan Smuts, replaced Smith-Dorrien on 5 February 1916, moving quickly towards and offensive by the end of the month. For the balance of 1916 Smuts attempted to pin Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa, himself advancing from British East Africa in the North, with fellow South African Jacob Van Deventer and Sir Edward Northey advancing from Northern Rhodesia in the South, and the Belgians and Portuguese pitching in from the West and the South respectively. Despite advances deep into German East Africa, the heavy rains of late-spring and other environmental factors, disease, lack of supplies, and inadequate personnel prevented Smuts from defeating Lettow-Vorbeck. The Imperial War Cabinet called Smuts to service in London, transferring his command in East Africa to Sir Reginald Hoskins in January. Hoskins promptly lost support in London, despite improvements to supply and communication, and by May 1917 van Deventer was in charge.[72]

Lettow-Vorbeck, for his part, realized that he could not hope to win decisive battles against the numerically superior British forces, even if he wished to do so.[73] East Africa, from

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[71] Anderson, *The Forgotten Front*, 255-256.
[72] Ibid., 259, 261, 268, 271-73, chapter 5, 560-62.
[73] Ibid., 662.

1916, was a hit-and-run campaign, meant to "preserve lives and ammunitions."[74] But driven by the experience in South West Africa, wherein movement had ensured the minimum number of casualties, Lettow-Vorbeck lured Smuts into his trap, drawing British resources and manpower away from the European conflict. Strachan argues that "the lessons of South-West Africa were being applied in circumstances that were totally different,"[75] and by the end of 1916 the South Africans had been battered by disease, the environment, and a strategy that played into the hand of Lettow-Vorbeck.[76] At that point, even the most reluctant colonies such as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia recognized that the East African Campaign precluded any illusions of a white man's war. While "Africans were not considered to have a major role to play in the war" prior to 1916, "the enormous manpower drain on the European community threatened to bleed the colony dry."[77] The East African Campaign was thus further Africanized by 1916,[78] marked by the increased use of African labour and military personnel.

As van Deventer planned his renewed offensive for June 1917, the urgency to end the campaign and accompanied resource demands was strong in London. The War Cabinet resolved to throw everything they could at Lettow-Vorbeck, reinforcing van Deventer with as much as they could spare.[79] Deventer's advance was successful; German plans to draw resources from Britain's Western Front had been thwarted by the Africanization of the conflict, and the British had halved Lettow-Vorbeck's forces by November.[80] But Lettow-Vorbeck's strategy evolved alongside Britain's, as he took a reduced force with more mobility across the border into Portuguese East Africa, ensuring that the campaign would continue into 1918 and, so the strategy

[74] Strachan, *The First World War in* Africa, 137.
[75] Ibid., 142.
[76] Ibid., 150.
[77] Paul McLaughlin, *Ragtime* Soldiers, 73.
[78] Samson, *World War I in Africa*, 116-118. Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 165.
[79] Anderson, *The Forgotten Front*, 573-574.
[80] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 173-176.

assumed, strengthen Germany's claim to a presence in Africa at the end of the war.[81] Smuts'

decisions earlier in the war to maneuver rather than to confront Lettow-Vorbeck in the field gave

the Germans the advantage. Contrary to popular belief, it was British bungling and Lettow-

Vorbeck's supply deficiencies that brought about what resembled guerrilla warfare, not (as myth

has it) that Lettow-Vorbeck had divined the strategy himself.[82] In any event, British inability to

effectively pursue the German commander, in tandem with weak Portuguese resistance,

prolonged the war in East Africa.

By November 1918, the British pursuit was in a panic. Northern Rhodesia's war effort

was grinding to a halt, with "the Colonial Office…[banning] compulsory recruitment in Norther

Rhodesia" in response to the pleas of a heavily indebted British South Africa Company.[83]

Lettow-Vorbeck crossed into the territory from Portuguese East Africa and General Northey

could not muster the manpower to transport his forces and stop the movement. Strachan surmises

that if the war would have continued into 1919, Lettow-Vorbeck would have been in a good

position to continue his campaign.[84] Nonetheless, desertion, exhaustion, and illness dogged all

sides in 1918. Lettow-Vorbeck's movements traversed Northern Rhodesia, which had seen little

action within its borders in the first three years of the war. The last engagement of the East

African Campaign occurred on 12 November at Kasama.[85] Thirteen days later, the German

forces formally surrendered. The War Office, apparently lauding Lettow-Vorbeck's fight, re-

issued his sword in a ceremonial parade.

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[81] Ibid., 174.

[82] Ross Anderson and Hew Strachan have both dispelled the Lettow-Vorbeck myth, instead pointing to British failures to thwart the German forces in East Africa, just as they had done in West and South West Africa. See: Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 94;183, and Anderson, *The Battle for Tanga*, 132.

[83] Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia, and the First World War*, 185. Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 182.

[84] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 183.

[85] Anderson, *The Forgotten Front*, 770.

For those on the ground in Africa, the war was much more than a hard-fought battle against a worthy opponent. Almost all of the territories in Southern Africa – British, German, Portuguese, and Belgian – had seen protests and rebellions against forced labour, increased taxation, and personnel and resource demands. In the British colonies, Northern Rhodesia had been brought to a standstill, with the administering BSAC left in a precarious position. By 1923, the British declared Northern Rhodesia a protectorate, with limited governing powers to white settlers there, along the same lines as Nyasaland. To the south, Southern Rhodesia evolved much differently as a result of the war. Settlers there demanded representative government and, consequently, it remained a self-governing British territory until 1965. By contrast, South Africa had earned its seat at the post-war table. By 1926 – although it was a self-governing colony after 1910 – South Africa had gained its status as a Dominion of the British Empire with the Balfour Declaration, joining Canada, India, Australia, and New Zealand. Each of the territories' African populations suffered disproportionately to their white rulers. To varying degrees, Yorke notes, returning *askari* and porters "played a distinctive, if not leading role…within [a] framework of a new social and economic awareness."[86] Most of all, it was the death, sacrifice, and injuries African communities sustained that drove their resentment and mourning after 1918.[87]

Kenya's First World War: Labour, Trade, and the Question of Settler Ascendency

At the risk of trivializing the histories of other British African possessions, the First World War most affected Kenya's fate as a colony. South Africa certainly gained the most out of

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[86] Yorke, *Britain, Northern Rhodesia and the First World War*, 285. Albert Grundlingh argues that "it would be claiming too much to aver that the war was responsible for a completely original departure, but in certain respects the pace of change was accelerated" in South Africa. Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting Their Own War*, 167.

[87] The strongest African narrative of the First World War, driven by interviews with its veterans, is Melvin E. Page, *The Chiwaya War: Malawians and the First World War*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000).

the conflict, stemming from its leadership in South West Africa and East Africa, alongside its contributions on the Western Front. Its internal dynamics and long-standing independence from London, however, make it a better comparison with its fellow Dominions, a topic to which I return in the succeeding chapter. Kenya, on the other hand, was neither a commercial colony akin to Nyasaland or Northern Rhodesia, nor a full-fledged self-governing territory as Southern Rhodesia emerged after the war. Will Jackson observes that "Kenya was alone amongst Britain's colonies in Africa, administered from Whitehall, in which there existed a significant settler population."[88] These dynamics proffered wartime and post-war crises of control pitting the Colonial Office (CO) against the settler population.[89] From 1914-1923 the ensuing debates over where power lay in the young colony are inextricable from Kenya's First World War. In the process, the African population was caught in the crossfire.

Any retelling of Kenya's First World War must begin with the Carrier Corps. Variously known throughout the war as the Military Labour Bureau or the Military Labour Corps,[90] the plight of carriers remains the unspoken tragedy of the First World War's African theatre. Until the centenary, when several public-facing scholarly and artistic projects shone light on the trials of carrier life, popular memories of the First World War in Africa rarely focused on African labourers in East and West Africa.[91] Far more likely to appear was the sinking of the vessel *SS Mendi* after it collided with another vessel, carrying 615 members of the South African Native

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[88] Jackson, "White man's country," 346.

[89] Robert Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya: The Loss and Reassertion of Imperial Initiative, 1912-1923*, (Toronto: Associated University Press, 1993).

[90] Donald C. Savage and J. Forbes Munro, "Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 7 (2) (1966): 313-342.

[91] See David Olusoga, *The World's War: Forgotten Soldiers of Empire* (London: Head of Zeus, 2014); "William Kentridge on the Head and the Load," About, theheadandtheload.com/about; "John Akomfrah on Mimesis: African Soldier," History, August 14th 2018, https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/John%20Akomfrah%20on%20Mimesis%3A%20African%20Soldier.

Labour Contingent to their deaths.[92] Remembrance of the *SS Mendi* disaster saw somewhat of a revival during the centenary, but it remained a hallmark of African participation in the First World War in South Africa until after the Second World War in both white and black communities.[93] This event occurred off the coast of France rather than on the remote terrain of Africa, which partially explains why the episode was more visible. The fact that it was accidental rather than the result of brutal conditions like those of the porters in East Africa made it an event that could be remembered without the associated guilt and culpability of white supremacist policymaking.

In East Africa, however, the change in British strategy towards Africanization precipitated demands upon the African population of British East Africa that brought the colony to a breaking point.[94] By the end of the war, military and carrier deaths amounted to at least 100,000, of a total of more than one million African participants. The actual number of Africans who served was certainly much higher.[95] 45,000 of those deaths alone came from British East Africa.[96] The associated drain on available labour for settler farms instigated demands for compulsory enlistment. Labour procurement had long been a difficult issue for colonial administrations in Africa, especially when "there was often insufficient incent to induce local populations to enter the labour market freely."[97] As allied military strategy shifted from the defensive to the offensive, the War Office demanded more of British colonies already stretched

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[92] Albert Grundlingh, "Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering the *SS Mendi* Disaster, 1917-2007," *South African Historical Journal* 63 (1) (2011): 20-37. See also Norman Clothier, *Black Valour: the South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918, and the Singing of the Mendi* (Pietermaritzburg: University of natal Press, 1987).

[93] Ibid.

[94] Paice, *World War I: The African Front*, Location 5930-5936.

[95] Ibid., Location 361.

[96] Ibid., Location 8105

[97] Savage and Munro, "Carrier Corps Recruitment," 313.

thin by the first two years of the war. The war may not have brought novel challenges to the East

African state but it certainly exacerbated existing tensions.

The system for carrier recruitment in British East Africa from 1914-1915 presented great

difficulty and variability; District Officers were responsible for recruiting a proportion of the

available population for service through the appointed headmen or chiefs.[98] In response to

growing concerns, the administration announced the Native Followers Recruitment Ordinance in

August 1915 which, in tandem with the Native Registration Ordinance, made compulsory

recruitment and registration of available labour a paramount priority. While the administration

drafted the former Ordinance specifically to meet the demands of the Carrier Corps, settlers

pushed for it to apply to acquiring labour for their farms as well. The administration did not

extend the Followers Ordinance, but it did make leaving employment rather difficult for Africans

considering they would be enlisted in the Carrier Corps should they do so.[99] As a result, the

colonial administration, and by extension the settler population, gained greater control over the

labour supply in Kenya. Indeed, Robert Maxon's study of CO-settler jockeying during the war

identifies the Native Followers Recruitment Ordinance as the first step in wartime governor

Belfield's greater interest in the war in East Africa, when he also fell "literally prostrate before

almost every economic and political demand made by the settlers. While this would be done to in

the name of patriotism and maximizing the war effort, some also served to meet long-standing

demands of the settler community."[100] Until 1914 the colonial state may have been able to ride

the line between "the conflicting requirements of peasant and settler political economy,"[101] but

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[98] Ibid., 316.
[99] Ibid., 321-322.
[100] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 90.
[101] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa: Book One: State and Class* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1992), 77.

the mounting pressure of the wartime economy and demands upon the settler population accelerated policies favourable to the 'big men' who drove settler production in the White Highlands. For his War Council, for example, Belfield drew his advisors equally from the official cadres of the state and from settler society. In the process, Belfield "opened the door for the council to involve itself in all aspects of both civil and military affairs in EAP [East Africa Protectorate]."[102]

In short, the military structures and civil authorities in East Africa were ill-prepared to capture the necessary labour to meet the needs of the East Africa campaign in 1914. The four-year military campaign in East Africa galvanized African agitation.[103] Despite military aversion to using carriers on a large scale early in the war (driven partially by the India Office's control of operations), the Ordinances of 1915 helped spark general enthusiasm amongst settlers for the war effort. Labour could now be tracked with the issuance of *kipendes*, the equivalent to identity discs on the Western Front, that were required for labourers to receive pay – even when working outside of the military.[104] Settlers believed that military service roused African out of their naturally idle states and were now induced to contribute to the settler economy.[105] Beyond their perceived necessity for the war effort, the self-serving benefits of the ordinances are confirmed in the decision of the settler contingent of the War Council to reduce carrier pay by half. This reduction only applied to labourers not serving on the front-lines or already in service, meaning the Ordnance affected primarily non-military labour, induced into settler farm labour or infrastructure building.[106] Further, due to fear of punishment, labourers lost bargaining power

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[102] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 91.
[103] Hodges, *The Carrier Corps*, 13.
[104] Ibid., 37-38; 40.
[105] Savage and Munro, "Carrier Corps Recruitment," 319.
[106] Hodges, *The Carrier Corps*, 40.

because they could either join the Carrier Corps at rates far below the market rate or could continue work for settlers at marginally better rates.[107] Although carrier recruitment was localized in the early parts of the war, "the early days of the Carrier Corps can already be seen as a constant struggle by the staff to establish and maintain standards, before the 1916 offensive sent numbers soaring almost out of control."[108]

Aside from settler political gains, the long-term strain of carrier recruitment could not be avoided. Citing the official tabulations, Geoffrey Hodges puts the number of carriers, porters, and casual labourers at 190,150.[109] Though conditions in the Carrier Corps improved over the course of the war, the death rate was officially recorded as 15 percent, with Hodges estimating it as high as 22 percent.[110] Settlers may have gained temporarily through favourable policy, but the long-standing labour issue continued into the post-war years. Based on Hodges' estimates, more than 41,000 Kenyans lost their lives in the Carrier Corps alone from 1914-1918. Edward Paice's revised estimate indicates that this number was unquestionably higher, with his 'butcher's bill' setting a floor of 45,000.[111] The progression of the war into German East Africa in 1917 and 1918, for which British East Africa shouldered the burden, brought on the highest death rates for carriers.

Adding to this harrowing context, rains failed in 1917, leading to widespread famine. These conditions compounded the drain of labour for war service.[112] By 1918, when the famine conditions receded, the Spanish influenza hit Kenya, with the pandemic spreading more quickly as carriers and soldiers returned to their villages.[113] In some areas of Gikuyuland officials

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[107] Paice, *World War I: The African Front*, Location 5948-5854.
[108] Ibid., 41.
[109] Ibid., 110.
[110] Ibid., 111.
[111] See note 135.
[112] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 107-108.
[113] Munro and Savage, "Carrier Corps Recruitment," 339.

estimated that the flu killed 20 percent of the adult population.[114] The official death toll for the entire colony was at least 200,000 people, constituting "almost a tenth of the total population."[115] African modes of production in the post-war period were thus at a distinct disadvantage when compared to settler production, leaving the colonial state and imperial directives as the primary means of curbing settler ascendency.

If we look at the First World War in Africa through local lenses, Kenyan communities experienced the effects of the war with great variability. The Nandi, for example, had long resisted colonial authority thus gaining the status of a 'martial race.'[116] Nandi men were recruited mostly for the King's African Rifles, rather than the Carrier Corps, meaning that death rates were lower.[117] The Taita, who had been granted exemptions from the Carrier Corps until 1917, worked closer to their homelands and sent fewer men to support the East African campaigns than the Luo in Nyanza province.[118] This was especially true in the first three years of the war, before the push into German East Africa required a greater dependence upon African labour – meaning those who had avoided the jurisdiction of the Military Labour Bureau to work on local projects were now sent into much worse conditions.[119] Across British East Africa, however, the First World War solidified settler control of the colony at the expense of the CO. Nonetheless, such advances were underwritten by policies that drove a massive demographic shift in Kenyan communities.

After the war, as suffering in Kenyan communities continued, the battle between the settler population and the CO intensified. Settlers weathered the storm brought on by wartime

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[114] Ibid.
[115] Paice, *World War I: The African Front*, Location 8207.
[116] Lewis J. Greenstein, "The Nandi Experience in the First World War," in *Africa and the First World War*, Melvin E. Page ed. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1978), 83.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Munro and Savage, "Carrier Corps Recruitment," 336; 338.
[119] Ibid., 326.

economic lags, but the threat of continued slow downs meant ensuring that labour market and land alienation programs continued unabated.[120] Carrier Corps service brought likely half of the 400,000 Kenyan adult males into wage labour during the war, killing upwards of an eighth of them while in service. Many more died from complications of service, and many more were left seriously disabled.[121] While those who survived the war entered the wage labour system with increased monetary wealth and some communities with developed cattle and grain industries made gains in the wartime market,[122] the Belfield-Bowring (1912-1919) and Northey (1919-1923) administrations remained focused on settler production.[123] In conjunction with the Native Registration and Followers Recruitment Ordinances of 1915, the Crown Lands Ordinance of that same year put Kenyan and Indian communities at further disadvantage. The decree made the 'White Highlands' – the most fertile area of the Colony – effectively segregated to the benefit of white settlement. Leases were extended to 999 years and sales of lands to Indians were subject to veto.[124] This completed the gradual seizure of land from the Masai and effected a massive influx of predominantly Gikuyu 'squatters' who worked white farms in exchange for subsistence agricultural rights. The combined effect was that the 'big men' who ruled Kenya continued to dominate the economy, while Kenyan producers' migrated away from the reserves, which continued to erode the authority of the colonial state and its appointed chiefs and headmen.[125]

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[120] Ian Spencer, "The First World War and the Origin of the Dual Policy of Development in Kenya, 1914-1922," *World Development* 9 (8): 738-739.

[121] Ibid., 737. Patching together an accurate picture of the Carrier Corps, whether referring to recruitment, deaths, or disablements, is extremely difficult. Official records were conservative and intentionally underreported the extent of the Carrier Corps.

[122] Ibid., 739.

[123] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 109.

[124] Bruce Berman, *Crisis & Control in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1990), 63.

[125] Ibid., 65-68.

The year 1915 had also produced another decision that bolstered settler confidence and drove their temporary dominance. With growing concerns over Kenyan and Indian grievances, alongside the need for an increased white presence should British East Africa remain a viable outpost of Empire, the War Council – following South Africa and New Zealand – proposed the framework for a Soldier Settlement Scheme.[126] The idea behind the scheme was to firmly settle the highlands and adjacent areas in Nyanza, bring in revenue to support the settler economy, and populate the Colony with white-skinned settlers of the officer class.[127] From a strategic standpoint (in which settlers had little interest), London saw soldier settlement as a counterweight to growing Kenyan political activity associated with Carrier Corps recruitment and King's African Rifles service, as well as Indian settlement and commerce.[128] In this latter respect, the Soldier Settlement Scheme once again bolstered settler interests through policies cloaked by the exigencies of the East African campaign. The Scheme began in earnest in 1919, re-configuring the demographics of the Colony and expanding the settler base to its extreme.[129] British East Africa became more British, with a distinct aristocratic "social flavour."[130] The settler population grew by 210 percent between 1911-1921, almost quadruple the rate of the following decade.[131]

It may have appeared in 1919 as if British East Africa was heading towards self-governing status. However, a series of crises and Imperial policies in the early-1920s stoked settler antagonism as the CO re-established its 'initiative.'[132] What settlers had gained during the

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[126] CJD Duder, "The Soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919 in Kenya" (PhD Diss., University of Aberdeen, 1978), 139.
[127] Ibid., 139; 151.
[128] Ibid.,
[129] Ibid., 660.
[130] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 56.
[131] Ibid., 58.
[132] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 190-246.

war – including representation on the Legislative Council – the CO sought to temper through the early-1920s. Settlers still wielded considerable influence, retaining their hopes of securing Kenya as a 'white man's country,'[133] but their demand for cheap labour, their attempt at the monopolization of production, and their ambivalent relationship with the colonial state prompted responses from London that put the brakes on their political ascendency. Although the colonial state was still pro-settler, it sought to control the contours of settler society.

In this political context, Kenyans, settlers, the colonial state, and the Empire as a whole began to grapple with human tragedy that was the First World War. The 1920s produced an outpouring of commemorative activities virtually unprecedented in the history of warfare. The British Empire collectively remembered the casualties of war through an organized program of memorialization administered by the Imperial War Graves Commission and, incrementally, through ritualized traditions of remembrance. The Empire's constituent parts, likewise, created their own networks of commemoration. Often going beyond the constraints of a universalizing organization like the IWGC, the colonial contexts within which Britons articulated their identity disrupted imperial designs. Thus, colonial societies are just as essential to understanding the legacy of the Great War as the context in Britain itself. What, how, and, who the colonies chose to remember went beyond grappling with the material and political implications of the First World War. It required defining what the war meant, reflecting and refracting social identities in the present but also projecting them into the future.

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[133] Jackson, "White man's country."

2 – Memorialization and Remembrance of the First World War in the British Empire: How the Settler Colony Forgets

Forgotten: the word often foregrounds studies of the First World War in Africa. Implied in the use of the word 'forgotten' is that not only is there something tangible to remember, but that it is *worth* remembering. Whether it is the strategic importance of the campaigns, the Africans who perished, or the short and long-term effects upon specific colonies, the remembering being done is in service of recovering the 'what' of the Great War in Africa. The process of providing greater clarity of what happened and who was involved fails to ask the question of why and how it was forgotten in the first place. The 'additive' approach to First World War studies,[1] wherein historians judge African experiences based on their relative importance to what happened in Europe, brings our focus back and forth between 1914-1918 (and its immediate aftermath) and the present-day, seldom looking at the spaces in between. Filling gaps in knowledge, important as this is to a fuller picture of the First World War in Africa, should not be the end point.[2]

To a certain extent, the Great War in Africa was not forgotten; that is if we choose to centre African experiences rather than placing emphasis on "the ostensible 'center' of the war, Europe,"[3] entirely new avenues for understanding the legacy of the conflict emerge. Contrarily, by seeking to reclaim a place for Africa in the general history of the First World War, Michelle Moyd argues that the "formulation centres European desires for mastery over Africa in the narrative."[4] Indeed, colony and community-specific histories of the conflict, often based in oral

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[1] Rothberg, "Between Memory and Memory," 7.
[2] I am taking cues here from P. Whitney Lackenbauer and R. Scott Sheffield, "Moving Beyond 'Forgotten': The Historiography on Canadian Native Peoples and the World Wars," in *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives*, eds. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Craig Leslie Mantle (Kingston: CDA Press, 2007), 209-232.
[3] Moyd, "Centring a Sideshow," 112.
[4] Ibid.

history, have done a great deal to re-centre African experiences on their own terms.[5] But it is my claim here that, by focusing on the act of centring Europe and Europeans in post-war commemorations in settler societies, we might better understand the ways that remembering the war was made meaningful – at the institutional level – for some members of colonial societies and decidedly not for others. Further, we might elucidate why Britain and independent Kenya have largely severed the African front from their own collective memories.

To clarify this line of argumentation, it is helpful to trace the development of the academic concept variously named 'collective,' 'collected,' or 'cultural' memory, with a particular focus on the memorialization of the First World War. Emanating from philosophical debates on the character of memory – from the personal to the societal – historians, among other practitioners across the academe, took a particular interest in memory from the 1970s onwards. Naturally, the study of collective memory has tended towards analyses of national identity-making, and in certain cases transnational and imperial identities as well. In either case, as with any social phenomenon, the politics of such endeavours come to bear on the practice of social remembrance. As governments struggle to monopolize the uses of memory, its constituents' diversity pushes back against homogenization. In colonial contexts, however, the drive to foreclose histories of violence inherent in conquest and subjugation is essential to the legitimation of the colonial project. Thus, the particularities of colonial memory are exceedingly important for understanding the uses and practices of remembrance in postwar Kenya. In this respect, this chapter charts the general zeitgeist in memory studies as it relates to the First World

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[5] See Page, *The Chiwaya War*; Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999); Michelle Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).

War while also the defining the limits of European analyses for studying settler colonial societies.

Memory: The Individual, Collective Memory, and Cultural Heritage

The concept of collective memory, in its modern iteration, owes a debt to Maurice Halbwachs' pioneering work. Working from the assumption that the individual can never be detached from "our fellows, and [from] the great frameworks of the memory of society"[6] (except in their dreams or in states of aphasia), Halbwachs moves beyond conceiving of memory as an personal and introspective phenomenon; we are always cognizant of social frameworks that animate our otherwise fragmentary recollections of the past.[7] Society pressures the individual 'rememberer' "not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them…so that we give them a prestige that reality did not possess."[8] Thus, in reconstructing our personal histories, we rely upon social and familial norms and values, linguistic conventions, and rituals to cover-up the flaws in psychological memory and give meaning to our experiences. Halbwachs fully theorized what historians now take for granted: that individual remembrance can be a powerful referent for understanding a given society at a given time or its change over time. Halbwachs' observations may prompt questions of how societies remember but he is still primarily concerned with how social frameworks shape individual memory.

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[6] Maurice Halbwachs, "Dreams and Memory Images," in *Maurice Halbwachs: On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser ed. trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 42.

[7] Maurice Halbwachs, "Language and Memory," in *Maurice Halbwachs: On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser ed. trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45.

[8] Ibid., 51.

Jan and Aleida Assmann extend Halbwachs' conceptualization of 'collective memory' by further dividing the concept into 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory.[9] For the Assmanns, Halbwachs focused on dispersed, non-institutional memory, rather than the physical representations of shared pasts.[10] The Assmanns trace the evolution of group memory from the building blocks of orality and quotidian interactions, referencing the recent past, to a longer-term institutional memory, "living in monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and other *mnemonic institutions*."[11] Drawing on the work of Jan Vansina in African oral history,[12] Jan Assmann stresses the formalization of memory as 'ours' in cultural memory, implying a great deal of forgetting, whereas communicative memory is about preserving connections to contemporaries.[13] All communities have both communicative and cultural memories, but the means of articulating each is different. What this division suggests is that collective memory's formal modes of memory transmission – for instance memory carried at the level of the nation-state – must be considered as a wholly different framework of memory, even if that framework is open to reinterpretation and inscription.

Pierre Nora attempted to delineate this process by studying the creation of a French national identity through representational reconstructions of their shared past. Nora coined the now ubiquitous term *lieux de memoire*, or sites of memory, in studies of memory, cultural

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[9] Jan Assman, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Astrid Eriil and Ansgar Nunning eds. (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 109-118. Although Jan Assmann authored this particular article, Aleida Assmann has contributed significantly to the theorization of the concepts 'cultural' and 'communicative' memory.

[10] Ibid., 110.

[11] Emphasis mine. Ibid., 112.

[12] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Jan Assmann elaborates specifically on the idea of the 'floating gap' wherein communicative memory, as the Assmanns' conceive of it, goes back only several generations into the recent past, after which collective memory draws upon origin myths, important dates or events, and symbols of shared identity. "In the context of cultural memory, the distinction between myth and history vanishes. Not the past as such, as it is investigated and reconstructed by archaeologists and historians, counts for the cultural memory, but only the past as it is remembered." Assman, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," 113.

[13] Ibid., 112-114.

heritage, and remembrance or commemoration. Sites of memory are those quotidian objects that

refer to aspects of a nation's history, acting as mnemonic devices for national identity.[14] Sites of

memory, however, were not the subject of Nora's appreciation; he lamented the disappearance of

"environments" of memory – what Nora called *milieux de memoire* – where 'authentic' memory

proliferated through oral transmission and daily interactions.[15] Environments of memory, for

Nora, drive "perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present," while sites

of memory are simply traces of memory, meagre signposts fighting back against historicism that

renders the past dead.[16] Memory is "collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other

hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority."[17] For Nora,

sites of memory are the productions of modern societies yearning for living memory, yet unable

to reclaim it from an acceleration of time in the modern world that relegates the present to

history.

       The implications of Nora's study are manifold, despite critiques of his binary distinctions

between history and memory,[18] the sacred and the secular, and, more relevant to this study, a

Gallocentrism that deemphasizes of provincial diversity, minority groups, or colonial histories.[19]

For the study of the First World War specifically, Nora's contention that the shift away from

environments of memory to sites of memory is a modern advent delimits the time-period within

which cultural memory is of the greatest importance. With the First World War often

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[14] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26 (Spring, 1989): 7-24.

[15] Ibid., 7. This is what Assmann defined as communicative memory.

[16] Ibid., 8-9.

[17] Ibid., 9.

[18] Paul Connerton, for example, delineates the myriad connections and mutual dependence between social memory and history. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 14-15.

[19] See, for example, Rothberg, "Between Memory and Memory"; Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6-17.

characterized as an accelerant of modernity, the stakes of Great War commemoration are necessarily entwined with the emergence of sites of memory.[20] The shift to understanding cultural memory through material sources spawned an entire field, expanding the source-base historians employ to understand collective memory. Further, the tendency of nation-states to favour elite, institutional, and historicist interpretations of the past makes explicit the link between cultural memory and the legitimation of the nation-state as an 'imagined community.' Nora may have exaggerated the ways that states dominate sites of memory and the rituals that take place at them, but the implications of the political uses of memory are essential to detailing its manifestations. Whether competing narratives disrupt, interrupt, and explicitly challenge dominant ones does not preclude memory's potential for exploitation.

The argument that sites of memory should be interpreted through the lens of state exigencies links with Benedict Anderson's pioneering work on the development of national identities. Modern nation-states deploy shared representations of unity because they are dispersed geographically so that "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."[21] Sites of memory are powerful referents in this process of identification (with the nation), and Anderson conjoins these two ideas by offering the example of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.[22] For Anderson, where emergent nations discarded religious explanations for death and suffering, they substituted the "ghostly *national* imaginings."[23] Anderson's choice

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[20] For characterizations of the First World War as a break with the past, or an accelerant of modernity, see, for example, Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

[21] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

[22] Ibid., 9.

[23] Ibid.

to focus upon the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier augurs at the intersection of the First World War and collective national imaginations. Fittingly, over the next two decades, historical analyses of the cultural legacy of the First World War proliferated at an astounding pace that, if they had slowed at all, only accelerated again at the Great War's centenary.

The memory of the First World War as a field traces its origins to Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*. A decidedly elitist analysis of British war memory, Fussell presents the war poets of the interwar period as the carriers of a 'modern' interpretation of war marked by irony. It was the last war to be conceived in terms of continuity, progress, and stasis.[24] The war interrupted a blissful Summer of 1914 with unexpected melancholy of the Autumn. The irony was laid bare in a Great War for Civilization that terrorized civil society. For Fussell, the great war poets – such as Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves – ushered in a new era of interpretation, only possible in the wake of cataclysmic violence. They established the baseline for the cultural memory of the Great War, highlighted by what Daniel Todman exposed as the myths of the First World War: the Lions led by Donkeys to the slaughter, their traces represented by the reds and browns of blood-tainted soil.[25] The limits of literary analysis for understanding cultural memory notwithstanding, Fussell laid the groundwork for interrogating the legacy of the Great War in Britain.

George Mosse, for example, saw national unity as the *modus operandi* in cemetery and monument design in the wake of the First World War. It was not the ironic, disjointed, modern memory of the war that dominated postwar Europe but the "attempt to direct human memory from the horrors to the meaningfulness and glory of the war."[26] This engaged the tension

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[24] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 21.
[25] Daniel Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2005).
[26] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 50.

between modern warfare and the need to maintain a sense of continuity with the nation. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Anderson's starting point, was a sacred place "dedicated to the civic religion of nationalism."[27] Here as well, Nora's influence shaped the research agenda, moving beyond the literary to the political symbols of postwar Europe.

The definitive blow against Fussell's characterization of a clear break with the modern, however, came from Jay Winter. Taking up Fussell's characterization[28] of the First World War as the birth of modern memory in Britain, Winter took the idea of sites of memory and applied it not only to Britain but a transnational assessment of Great War memory in Europe. Rather than representing a clean break with the past, Europeans used 'traditional' languages to mourn, grieve, and move on, given the tendency of the 'modern' languages to suspend those processes in a state of anger. 'Modern' language itself was less a departure from the 'traditional,' as much as it was a stretching of the boundaries of its usage.[29] Beyond Fussell's literary analysis or Mosse's political analysis, Winter's shift to sites of mourning and memory captures the diffuse, multivocal nature of commemoration. The memory of the First World War is democratic, "constructed through the action of groups and individuals in the light of day."[30] Though Winter acknowledges that the politics of the nation were a necessary part of the commemorative traditions of combatant nations, his greatest achievement is that he opened up the field of commemoration studies to innumerable interpretations from the individual, to the community, to the nation, to the Empire, and even entire continents.

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[27] Ibid., 101.
[28] Winter notes that although he is primarily dealing with Fussell's interpretation, the work of Samuel Hynes expanded upon *The Great War and Modern Memory*, although with similar appeals to 'modernist' language. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 230.
[29] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*,
[30] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10.

This brief overview of how collective memory became a standard theory in the toolkit of First World War historians is cursory by necessity. However, the advent of material history as an access point into collective memory hinges on the use of cultural heritage as a source for historical analysis. This study also uses aspects of settler cultural heritage – monuments, community service groups, and public rituals – as access points into the legacy and meaning of the Great War in Kenya's settler community. Nora's claim that sites of memory are powerful spaces of reference for the nation, alongside Winter's focus on continuity over a break from the past, form the theoretical basis for my analysis. Settlers ritualized traditional motifs of imperial association, racial superiority, and their distinctiveness as the frontiersman of colonialism to bring meaning to the Great War in their particular context. The colonial state used the language of imperial unity and the civilizing mission to different political ends. Following Alex King, my analysis focuses not just on the interpretation of commemorative sites but "the exercise of formal and informal political power,"[31] bringing the projects into being. That is, by analyzing the means by which memorials and rituals came into being, we better understand the contexts within which they were interpreted. Commemorative sites, as such, were arenas of political discourse, subject to manipulation, identification, and inscription.

Colonialism and Memory: Articulating National Identity in the British Empire

My theoretical approach to commemoration, rooted in sites of memory and the politics of memory, has drawn reference to work mostly conducted in European contexts. Importantly, the colonial context deserves elucidation as a distinct field of analysis, at once linked with the metropole but separated both geographically and socially. Can we transplant methodology and

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[31] Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1998), 14.

theory from Europe to its colonies? My answer to this question is yes, but only if done in a careful fashion. As I have detailed, the First World War looked much different on the African continent, employed a demographically different set of combatants, and responded to local politics to a greater extent than grand strategy; meaning that its remembrance and commemorative frameworks were, if derived from the metropolitan structure, inherently different in practice. The dominant questions of postwar commemoration – who was to be commemorated? for what communities was commemoration designed? what entities would fund and initiate commemorative projects? – were dictated by local circumstances.

Historians have recognized similar problems in Europe. Mark Connelly, for example, adopts a micro-history approach to analyzing commemoration, seeing individual communities as essential to the form and content of commemorations. By taking a 'fine toothcomb' to the subject, Connelly suggests that he was able to "'get under the skin' of particular communities to show that the nuances of the local atmosphere often influenced the form of the war memorial and the style of the Armistice Day commemorations."[32] I make no such claims to achieving such local specificity within Kenya, but Connelly's contention that the needs of a community, no matter the size, necessarily influence the manifestation of memory is essential. Looking for similarities across cultures is an important aspect of a comparative approach, but in comparing colonial societies with their metropoles, historians run the risk of reproducing metropolitan experiences in the periphery.

The manifest differences between colonial and metropolitan memory are set in relief against two material realities: first, that of physical distance from Europe, and second, that of depth of historicity. Distance from Europe might be measured in an objective measure, like

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[32] Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916-1939* (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer Ltd., 2002), 1-2.

kilometres, while time is measured by calendrical dating. However, beyond the material

measurements, when it comes to the memory of the First World War, both time and distance are

also subjective and variable.[33] In other words, the ways that settlers interpreted time and space

was just as important as the material reality. Distance from Europe might be overcome by a

powerful referent to 'home' or one's imperial identity. Time, on the other hand, might be just as

much a product of a community's or individual's aspirations or founding mythos as it was based

on rigid adherence to historical time. Commemoration in the colonies, thus, was related and, at

times, derivative of the metropole, but subject to reformulation through social discourse. The

British Dominions are particularly instructive in this regard.

In the Canadian example, Jonathan Vance argues that the myth of the First World War

was articulated through "a vision of the war as a nation-building experience of signal

importance. Canada's progress from colony to nation by way of Flanders…has become the

standard method of judging the impact of 1914-18."[34] This was not simply a post-hoc assessment

ascribed to the war in the interwar years, but a sentiment "deeply rooted in the Canadian

consciousness by the time of the Armistice, the idea that the war meant nothing less than the

birth of a nation flourished afterwards."[35] The aspirations of a collective re-birth in nationhood

disrupted historical time in favour of memory time; it was not an inching forward toward

nationhood, replete with colonial dispossessions and internal conflicts, but "the Great War had

given it life."[36] The myth of the First World War, however, also drew upon British connections,[37]

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[33] See for example Bill Schwarz, "'Already the Past': Memory and Historical Time," in *Regimes of Memory*, Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin eds. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 135-151.

[34] Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 10.

[35] Ibid., 228.

[36] Ibid., 229.

[37] Hanna Smyth, "The Material Culture of Remembrance and Identity: South Africa, India, Canada & Australia's Imperial War Graves Commission Sites on the First World War's Western Front," (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2019), 159.

harkening back to the importance of origins in collective memory. Ultimately, to the extent there

was a unified national identity in the colonial context it intersected with imperial identity, thus

hybridizing the memory of the Great War.

Historians of New Zealand and Australia have delineated similar complexities in

memory-making in those contexts. Stephen Garton draws our attention to the mobilization of

nationalist narratives in Australia as "both nationalist and Empire loyalist, a strange phenomenon

that might be best conceptualized as Empire nationalism."[38] Similar to Canada, Australia found

its so-called "national birth" in its First World War experience. Charles Bean, Australia's official

First World War historian, set the out the concrete differences for identity-making in the

colonies. Bean saw Australia as a superior field for defining 'Britishness,' Mark Sheftall

observes: "The Dominions were producing a superior specimen of manhood than that which was

being bred it the over-urbanized, class-ridden Motherland."[39] The comparison to Britain and the

other Dominions was natural but distinct, replete with the mythos of Anzac, which rather than

finding reference in objective historical fact-finding, instead projected back the timelessness of

the Australian character.[40] The knotted, at times conflicting, identification with imperial and

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[38] Stephen Garton, "Demobilization and Empire: Empire Nationalism and Soldier Citizenship in Australia After the First World War – in Dominion Context," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50 (1) (2015): 128-129.

[39] Mark David Sheftall, *Altered Memories of the Great War: Divergent Narratives of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada* (New York: IB Tauris, 2009), 36. For the New Zealand example see Scott Worthy, "'Light and Shade': The New Zealand Written Remembrance of the Great War, 1915-1939," *War & Society* 22 (1) (2004): 19-40.

[40] See Bart Ziino, "'We are talking about Gallipoli after all': contested narratives, contented ownership and the Gallipoli Peninsula," in *The Heritage of War*, Martin Gegner and Bart Ziino eds. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 142-143; Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Steve Marti, "'The Symbol of Our Nation': The Slouch Hat, the First World War, and Australian Identity," *Journal of Australian Studies* 42 (1) (2018): 3-18, on the symbols of heroism and frontier-forged manhood; Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), on the contested public sphere and myth-making; John Lack ed., *Anzac Remembered: Selected Writings of K.S. Inglis* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1998), on the shift towards the cultural significance of Anzac; Bart Ziino, "The First World War in Australian History," *Australian Historical Studies* 47 (1) (2016): 118-134, for an overview of the development of the field. This is not an inclusive list and particularly absent are works that challenge the Anzac narrative from a gender perspective.

national identities in New Zealand and Australia underlines the importance of seeing the Dominions as distinct fields of analysis.[41] This is perhaps a banal point, but in defining the particular experience of settler colonies in their relationship to the process of colonization, the importance of the birth of the nation mythos is essential.

Indigenous History and the First World War: What the Settler Colony Forgets

Paul Connerton's analysis of the ways that modern societies remember and forget collectively are particularly germane to the study of settler colonial societies. As he notes, the latter process is usually interpreted as some sort of failure of the latter, especially at the individual level.[42] Forgetting and forgetfulness "imply an obligation on my part to remember something and my failure to discharge that obligation."[43] Indeed, if we look at the duty to remember in the context of the First World War – 'lest we forget' – the civic responsibility entailed in commemoration and remembrance of war dead becomes a powerful device for national unity, with those who do not *actively participate* in remembrance a pariah. Nevertheless, the history of violence, assimilation, and erasure that characterizes settler-Indigenous relations in colonial societies implicates two of Connerton's seven types of forgetting: 'forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity' and 'repressive erasure.'

For Connerton, 'repressive erasure' is often associated with totalitarian regimes but notes that in both Roman society and during the French Revolution those persons deemed enemies of the state were not only killed but made invisible by disappearing their traces.[44] For Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, the state was party to severing Indigenous links to the past through

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[41] Kathryn Hunter, "National and Imperial Belonging in Wartime: The Tangled Knot of Australians and New Zealanders as British Subjects during the Great War," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63 (1) (2017): 31-44.
[42] Paul Connerton, "Seven types of forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1 (59) (2008): 59.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 60.

processes of assimilation. It was not complete disappearance, as such, but selective

remembering. Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Canada,

noted that Indigenous soldiers might be remembered for their "unselfish loyalty, gallantry,

intelligence, resourcefulness, and efficiency,"[45] but only insofar as it undergirded the state's

"objective…to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed

into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department."[46] The settler

colonial example was not a single coup immediately erasing Indigenous memory, but the gradual

repression of Indigenous identity in the service of a new era of Indigenous existence as

assimilated subjects.

The attendant of such 'repressive erasure' was that in each case the state also invested in

the constitution of a galvanized national identity. These national identities were long-gestating

but the First World War gave impetus to their 'birth.' While imperial identity remained knotted

with national identity, the history of colonialism needed to be discarded in favour of the myth of

Vimy or Gallipoli. Charlotte Macdonald argues that "where the First World War projected

remembrance into an eternal future – the promise to 'never forget' – colonial memory sealed

remembrance into a past that close of time, relegating the events and their protagonist to a place

distant and disconnected from the present."[47] Memory time once again superseded historical

time, as the past, present, and future were collapsed into commemorative sites and rituals. To

remember the nation properly meant erasing histories of violence and repression – of their

imperial origin – and substituting a future-oriented national memory of the First World War in its

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[45] Duncan Campbell Scott, "The Canadian Indians in the Great War," in *Canada and the Great War: Vol. III, Guardian the Channel Ports* (Toronto: United Publishing of Canada, 1919), 272.

[46] LAC, RG10, vol. 6810, file 470-2-3, "D.C. Scott Memorandum Regarding Mandated Schooling." For the best elucidation of the logic of settler colonialism see Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Politics of an Ethnographic Event* (New York: Cassell, 1999).

[47] Charlotte Macdonald, "The First World War and the Making of Colonial Memory," *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 33 (2) (2015): 16-17.

stead. This was not complete erasure but selective remembrance. In "the construction, articulation and deployment of national identity," Smits writes, "the state deploys Maori cultural practices in commemoration – as they were deployed when strategically useful by colonial New Zealand for nation-building during the War."[48] While there might be selective inclusion, nation-defining myths dominated and obscured "the uncomfortable memory of the dispossession of Indigenous peoples in the original invasion and colonization."[49] The history of colonization is forgotten at the moment the nation is born in Flanders or the Dardanelles.

While this discussion is selective, I draw several key conclusions with implications of First World War memory in the Dominion context. First, the intensity of forgetting that accompanies the birth of a nation differentiates the representation of the past in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Second, the history of colonization intrinsic to settler colonial societies creates another impetus to forget, offering only selective inclusion of Indigenous experiences of the Great War. Overall, the Dominions must be considered in their own right, even if comparison to Britain may yield some overlap. As a logical extension of this reasoning, it is essential to delineate whether the Dominion model applies to colonies in Africa, with special attention to the memory of the war in South Africa and Kenya.

First World War Memory in British Africa: Beyond the Dominion Model

For the British Dominions, the question of whether they were 'white men's countries' had been answered long before 1914. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had completed their

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[48] Katherine Smits, "Maori and Great War Commemoration in New Zealand: Biculturalism and the Politics of Forging a National Memory," in *Commemorating Race and Empire in the First World War Centenary*, Ben Wellings and Shanti Sumartojo eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 64.
[49] Ben Wellings and Shanti Sumartojo, "Anzac, Race and Empire: Memorialising Soldiers and Warriors in Australia," in *Commemorating Race and Empire in the First World War Centenary*, Ben Wellings and Shanti Sumartojo eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 170.

conquests by the end of 19th Century, with residual conflicts largely internal to white communities. As the South African example demonstrates, dynamics in African colonies were altogether different. South Africa's white population dominated but their labour sources and their ability to exploit the natural wealth of the territory depended upon the existence of large African communities rather than their assimilation and elimination. Further, South Africa's large Afrikaner population, the coexistence of Afrikaner Republics and the colonial state, and its recent history of conflict with Britain marked significant differences with the other white Dominions.[50] But if South Africa provides a general framework for delineating the unique features of commemoration in British Africa, it remains insufficient for colonies like Kenya. The balance of this chapter is dedicated to defining this methodological conundrum.

One of the key facets of South Africa's First World War was that the majority of its fighting was in Africa rather than in Europe.[51] Nonetheless, it was South African contributions to the latter that feature most often in South Africa's commemoration of the war[52] and in the historiography of South African commemoration more generally.[53] Over a third of South Africa's war-related combatant[54] deaths occurred in Europe, with the vast majority at the Battle of Delville Wood during the Somme Offensive from July to September 1916. Jan Smuts ensured

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[50] For a helpful overview of South Africa's colonial history see Robert Ross, "Settler Colonialism in South Africa, 1652-1899," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, Edward Vavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini eds. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 187-200.

[51] It is true, of course, that the Anzacs also fought in a theatre far removed from Western Europe, but the Gallipoli campaign is hardly considered a sideshow like East Africa.

[52] Samson, *Britain, South Africa, and the East Africa Campaign*, 179.

[53] Ibid.; Smyth, "The Material Culture of Remembrance and Identity,"; Jeremy Foster, "Creating a *temenos*, positing 'South Africanism': material memory, landscape practice and the circulation of identity at Delville Wood," *cultural geographies* 11 (2004): 259-290; Bill Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration," *English Historical Review* 480 (2004): 57-86; John Lambert, "'Tell England, Ye Who Pass this Monument': English-speaking South Africans, Memory and War Remembrance until the Eve of the Second World War," *South African Historical Journal* 66 (4) (2014): 677-698.

[54] The South African Native Labour Contingent is another matter altogether. Much like their counterparts in the Carrier Corps, the labourers who supported South African military actions in South West and East Africa saw death rates much higher than combatants. See B.P. Willan, "The South African Labour Contingent, 1916-1918," *The Journal of South African History* 19 (1) (1978): 61-86.

that South Africa immortalized those 'Springboks on the Somme,' steeped in South African mythos,[55] as the "spiky political commemoration of Dominion identity and achievement in war, a tracing in granite and marble of the colonial strengths of the South African character across French soil."[56] While Afrikaner nationalism was long established (one need not look further than the British-South African War a decade earlier), for English-speaking South Africans Delville Wood represented the moment of unity between the two communities, 'birthing' a contiguous South African nation along similar lines as the Empire nationalism elsewhere.[57] In other words, Delville Wood, its memorial, and Delville Day were symbols of "the new post-1910 Union of South Africa as a British Dominion based upon a unified white nationalism."[58] In many ways, the commemoration of the Great War for English-speaking and loyalist Afrikaners played out similarly to other British Dominions; indeed, it did so by design.

The Afrikaner memory of the war, however, was much more complicated. The majority of non-English speakers fought in the African campaigns rather than in Europe and drew their unity far more from memories of anti-British mobilization than the Great War.[59] As Nasson notes, the mainstream English press "[laid] it on a touch thicker than either blood or water. In reality, no more than about 12 per cent of the Springbok Brigade was of Afrikaner origin."[60] The fierce independence of South Africa's Afrikaner population tempered the Birth of the Nation narrative. While one might be tempted to draw a comparison to the conflicted memory of the First World War in French Canada, for example, French Canadians did not hold the type of power that Afrikaners held. Nationalists toppled Smuts' Union government in 1924, bringing to

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[55] Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration," 59.
[56] Ibid., 57.
[57] Lambert, "Tell England, Ye Who Pass this Monument," 689.
[58] Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration," 62.
[59] Samson, *Britain, South Africa, and the East Africa Campaign, 1914-1918,*" 179-181.
[60] Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration," 63.

power a contingent of South African society that was vehemently against involvement in the

Great War. The demographic and political make-up of South Africa therefore define its

exceptionalism.

Aspects of its exceptionality notwithstanding, South Africa is not an altogether different

case from Southern Rhodesia or Kenya.[61] The 'triad,' in Chris Youé's terms, shared "the

structural realties of everyday life – access to land, racial policy and racial etiquette – [that were]

built on the same foundations."[62] Each colony was exceptional – "South Africa a dominion with

a big D, Southern Rhodesia a dominion with a small d, and Kenya an ordinary colony"[63] – but

they shared modes of production that depended upon the exploitation of Indigenous land and

labour. This differed from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where the dispossession of land

dictated policy. What South Africa shares with the other Dominions – relative independence

from Britain, long histories of settlement and control of Indigenous populations, and defined, if

contested, national identities – also produces an inadequate framework for understanding the

context of commemoration in Kenya. South Africa's exceptionality is particularly relevant when

it comes to commemoration of the First World War, even if it might not be so exceptional in its

structural processes.

In sum, the white men's countries outlined herein may define the kind of commemoration

in British colonies (albeit simplified), especially the Dominions, but the example of South Africa

sets out a different type of commemoration there. Meanwhile, the specific settler-Indigenous and

settler-administrative arrangements in Africa suggest a different kind of commemoration in the

colonies not yet defined as white men's countries. The idea of Kenya as a nation still gestating

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[61] Chris Youé, "Settler Colonies or Colonies with Settlers?," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 52 (1) 2018: 69-85.
[62] Ibid., 76-77.
[63] Ibid., 76.

created a tension within that colony that manifested in commemorative culture. Even if the

nation as child (to continue the metaphor) never matured, the anticipation of its arrival pervaded

Kenya's commemoration of the First World War, signalling what was important to remember.

Conclusion: the British Empire, the First World War, and Collective Forgetting

Since Kenya's Independence, British rituals of remembrance have had little purchase,

and the history of the First World War itself remains largely hidden. The memory of the wars

supporting Empire, it would seem, no longer held as *nationally* significant. Perhaps, as Geoffrey

Hodges suggests, this was because many of the men who led Kenya's anticolonial movement

were more likely to serve in clerical and home positions than in the KAR or the Carrier Corps.[64]

More likely, it had little to do with experience and more to do with the type of forgetting that

Connerton outlined as useful in the creation of a new identity.[65] In Jan Assmann's framework,

only the 'ancient' origins of Kenyan history and the more recent struggles against colonial rule

animated Kenya's secular history of Independence; it was in the living memories of the

participants and their communities that First World War memory persisted. Sites of memory,

particularly monuments, remained as the 'imperial debris.'[66] Absent of rituals to stimulate

remembering, the monuments were tasked with doing the remembering.

That the Great War has had little purchase in the historiography of Kenya, and less so its

legacy, highlights the centrality of the nation and the state in the production of commemorative

cultures and cultural heritage. What memory lives on beyond the first order of memory[67] –

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[64] Hodges, *The Carrier Corps*, 191-192.
[65] Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting."
[66] Ann Laura Stoler, "'The Rot Remains': From Ruins to Ruination," in *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, Ann Laura Stole ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1-38.
[67] Jay Winter, "Sites of Memory," in *Memory: History, Theories, Debates*, Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz eds. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 313.

generated through direct experiences – depends heavily on what the state and historians choose to preserve (and discard). In the postcolonial context, details of the bitter years of colonial rule were best forgotten, with the aggregate injustice serving as a ballast for national unity. It is perhaps no surprise that when historians investigate the legacy of the Great War for Kenya they have come from beyond its borders; the emancipatory framework of Kenya's historiography focuses on events that directly influenced decolonization. Historians detail the intricacies and specificities of colonial rule, but the looming shadow of the nation-state creates a teleology. The overriding question of how the nation came to be, or how it was suppressed, guides the analysis.

This creates a second level of forgetting that exacerbates conceptualizations of the First World War in Africa as a sideshow. Because the Great War failed to bring about an independent settler colony, there was little impetus to bring Kenyans into the story upon Independence. There was no narrative of national birth to refashion as meaningful in the postcolonial context. That is, while the Great War tells us little about Kenya's gradual 'progress' towards Independence, it reveals much about the failed trajectory of settler colonialism. Due to that failure, there remains a barrier to investigating the role of the First World War in that process. Consequently, the traces of Kenyan suffering and sacrifice persist mainly in sites of memory, living largely in perpetual silence.

This is made all the more important in a time that Anne Whitehead observes as "[witnessing] an accelerated fashion for scenes of public repentance, forgiveness, apology, and confession."[68] As countries come to grips with often horrifying silences in their national histories, it is essential to reflect upon how those silences were authored. Furthermore, we must consider whether remembering is simply another way of forgetting, either through amnesty or

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[68] Anne Whitehead, *Memory: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 153.

amnesia.[69] Unlike Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and (for different reasons) South Africa, Kenya has never reached the point of confronting collective forgetting of the First World War. The proliferation of new meanings of the First World War for Indigenous communities of the former Dominions now struggle against established national myths, even if in vain.[70] Even for India, one of the most enduring legacies of the centenary will be the reclamation of India's role in defending Empire in the British consciousness.[71] In Kenya there has been no reclamation project because there is no collective memory to disentangle.

From this foundation, I investigate the ways in which the settler community in Kenya remembered and forgot the First World War. By piercing through the barrier that cordons off this aspect of settler history, I probe the surface of the legacy of the Great War in Kenya. I suggest that the Dominion model – the Birth of the Nation – explains much of the reason that the exponential growth in studying the commemoration of the First World War has not extended to British African colonies other than South Africa, and I hope that finding that history in one colony might stimulate study in other non-Dominion colonies as well. Overall, this study of collective memory helps to identify places that historians might look to recover a Kenyan memory of the First World War, reversing their erasure in the broader assessment of the global First World War. In order to do so, however, there must be a baseline against which we might

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[69] Ibid., 156.

[70] This is particularly true in the Canadian and Australian examples, although New Zealand has reclaimed a much more meaningful space for Indigenous experiences in the world wars in its commemorative culture. South Africa, emerging as it has from Apartheid, belies comparison.

[71] See Lucy Buckerfield and Stever Ballinger, *The People's Centenary: Tracking Public Attitudes to the First World War Centenary 2013-2018* (London: British Future, 2019), 16. "Our pre-centenary baseline survey in 2012 found that only a minority (44%) were aware of the contribution of Indian soldiers in the First World War. By 2018 that had risen to 71% - the same proportion of the public who know the beginning and end dates of the war. Awareness of the service of Australian, Canadian and Kenyan soldiers also increased, but by 2018 this had been eclipsed by awareness of Indian soldiers."

fight alternatives. Thus we progress from the topic of 'how the settler colony remembers' to 'how Kenya colony remembered.'

Part II: Threads of Memory: The Knotted Legacy of the First World War in Kenya

The Logic of Colonialism: Commemoration, Control, and Colonial Metaphysics

Figure 1. Kenyan Carrier as depicted on the African Monument, Nairobi.
Courtesy of David McDonald, Technical Manager (Works), Africa and Asia Pacific, CWGC.

In 1931, over a decade since the Armistice, the *Mombasa Times* and *East African Standard* ran a peculiar story that spoke to the logic of colonialism in Kenya. A bereaved Kenyan woman, the correspondent reported, "was seen hanging round the vicinity of the statue crying copiously and beating her breast."[72] According to the report, the woman "was under the firm belief that one of the images of the Memorial was a faithful reproduction of the features of a son she lost in the war…[transforming] her son into an iron man who could neither talk to her nor see her!"[73] The conclusion lamented that this was a "sad commentary upon the deep superstition and suspicion in which the African down here is still steeped, despite his many years of contact with Western civilisation."[74] The monument, which the IWGC designed to speak to perceived African sensibilities that favoured the visual, represented the need for British presence in Kenya and the inhabitants' inferiority in the face of Western Civilization.

Achille Mbembe argues that this was the product of colonial discourse. For him, "the African human experience appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a *negative interpretation*…. It is this elementariness and primitiveness that makes Africa the world par excellence of all that is incomplete, mutilated, and unfinished, its history reduced to a series of setbacks of nature in its quest for humankind."[75] The correspondent's assessment aligned with what Edward Said powerfully introduced as the process of 'othering' that "puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships…without ever losing him the relative upper hand."[76] It was a narrative that both affirmed the identity of the speaker – and prospective reader – by fixating on the essential features of the African. Said

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[72] Commonwealth War Graves Commission (henceforth CWGC) 1/1/9/D/34, "A Curious Story," *Mombasa Times*, 1931.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1.
[76] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 1977 [2003]), 7.

observed the irony that, in denying the 'other' the possibility of ever achieving parity with the 'self,' colonialism was in a state of perpetual failure; it never achieved its own goals of civilizing, as it were. In another ironic turn, the correspondent spoke of a site of memory meant to prompt remembrance in a way that denied the legitimacy of the bereaved woman's memory. Fred Myers' conceptualization that colonizers use material culture "to construct social identities and communicate cultural differences between individuals and groups,"[77] manifested itself in this episode of cultural contact.

As Surakanthie Chetty and Ruth Ginio argue in their excellent summary of the Cult of the Fallen in Africa, "commemoration is basically a western notion. Commemoration as we know it – official ceremonies, graveyard headstones festooned with wreaths, and engraved stone memorials – was not part of African pre-colonial culture."[78] Europeans' 'invented traditions'[79] had little cultural purchase in African communities with long traditions of oral forms of cultural transmission and culturally specific traditions for interpreting and dealing with death. When, for instance, the Kenyan woman made "a sad reproach to the Sirikali [government] for having been so cruel as to transform her lost [son] into an iron man,"[80] she was making a strong political statement against the colonial government, drawing on the memory of violence and death not only in the First World War but in the colonial endeavour more generally.[81] (We also need to

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[77] Fred R. Myers, "Introduction: The Empire of Things," in *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*, Fred R. Myers ed. (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2001), 3.

[78] Suryakanthie Chetty and Ruth Ginio, "Commemoration, Cult of the Fallen (Africa)," in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2015-06-17.

[79] Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa, in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992),

[80] Ibid.

[81] I am drawing upon Ranajit Guha's critical re-reading of colonial protest as more than "the mobilization of the peasantry altogether contingent on the intervention of charismatic leaders, advanced political organizations or upper classes." Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 4. For how the memory of how nationalists re-invent non-elite rebellion see Shahid Amin, *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura, 1922-1992* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

take into account here whether the writer translated the woman's words, either through knowledge of Swahili or through an interpreter. The possibility of omission, addition, and translation deficiencies is high. However, I would argue, this only augments the source as a means of understanding the ways settlers interpreted Kenyans).

Luise White, for example, traces the role of rumour and myth in African communities in communicating knowledge about colonial practices. The correspondent for the *Mombasa Times* – and by natural extension many of its readers[82] - could not understand the ways that Kenyans dealt with death and understood the world around them. However, this story was not just a representation of anxieties about colonialism;[83] it was a memory of warfare, of the state's role in stealing away the young men from Kenyan communities. By leaving them to die in nature, detaching the dead from their communities and relatives forever, the invented tradition of memorializing the dead in iron and stone interrupted Kenyan modes of being-in-the-world.[84] That is, the bereaved woman expected that in death she would still be able to interact with her son, to have him as part of her worldly experiences. By etching his likeness in metal, making his presence static in the world, the colonial authorities who she held responsible stripped away her ability to mourn and grieve. It is a powerful example of the ways that colonial rule attempted to

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[82] Michele Barrett, citing the same story, attributes this to the dehumanization of Africans in the colonial project and, by extension, postwar commemoration. Her source, however, is from the *Tanganyika Times*, which indicates that this story was of interest beyond Nairobi and Mombasa. The debates over closer union, and the significant overlap between Kenya Colony and Tanganyika, partially explains this. But it is notable that such a story was relatable for settlers in both colonies. See Michele Barrett, "Dehumanization and the War in East Africa," *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 10 (3) (2017): 238-252; 238-239. For an overview of the debate over closer union between the East African colonies see Dan Gorman, "Organic Union or Aggressive Altruism: Imperial Internationalism in East Africa in the 1920s," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2) (2014): 258-285.

[83] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 2.

[84] Katherine Luongo, *Witchcraft and Colonial Rule in Kenya, 1900-1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 71. Luongo is clearly borrowing from Heidegger here. Being-in-the-world, for Heidegger, is the state of always being attuned to the world around *Dasein*. This gives us an intentionality when we 'meet' objects in the world, giving us a purpose with which to live.

substitute Western metaphysics for the Kenyan 'cosmologies' that animated daily life. The process was always incomplete and subject to challenge through "quotidian…adherence to beliefs, practices, and institutions,"[85] fundamental to Kenyan ways of life.

We might find some irony again when we look to Britons' own ways of dealing with death in the wake of the First World War. Mourning families turned to spiritualism as a way to access the afterlife and maintain connection with the dead who had paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War (although there was considerable opposition to the practice as well).[86] Crucially, Edwardian Britain tied spiritualism with the scientific zeitgeist where the supernatural and the physical world were reconcilable.[87] The mutability of Western worldviews in the colonial context highlights the importance of viewing colonies as distinct fields of analysis (without divorcing them from the metropole altogether), especially when considering the specificity of maintaining social order, civilizational superiority, and racial difference in situ. Colonizers mobilized ideas of white superiority, grounded in metaphysics, to undermine unsanctioned cultural authority.

This episode in Kenyan history suggests several guiding questions for the following chapters. First and foremost, I address the question for whom was commemoration? I argue that *state-sanctioned* commemoration was relevant to three particular communities in Kenya: elite settlers, broadly speaking, the colonial state, and, by extension of the latter, state imposed Kenyan elites. This is not to say that memories of the First World War did not continue *living* in the quotidian interactions of settler soldiers, Kenyan veterans, and Kenyan communities, but that

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[85] Ibid., 72.
[86] Kyle Falcon, "The Ghost Story of the Great War: Spiritualism, Psychical Research and the British War Experience, 1914-1939," (PhD diss., Wilfred Laurier University, 2019), 15; 16. Falcon's dissertation offers an in depth historiography of psychical research an spiritualism, focusing on the perceived break between the 'modern' and 'traditional' as discussed in the previous chapter with regards to collective memory research.
[87] Ibid.

their peripheral role in designing, implementing, and unveiling monuments to the dead limited their involvement in commemorative practices. Further, even if settlers and the colonial administration decentred Kenyan experiences, the IWGC designed the monuments that I analyze to be meaningful for Kenyans.[88] The biographies of these sites of memory tell a powerful story of colonial transformation. From an instrumentalist perspective, the evidence – including the story of the Mombasa woman – suggests that, despite intentions, the monuments failed to speak to Kenyans. Indeed, commemoration provided a framework for building upon the advancement of colonial control that the First World War accelerated. It was not just the years 1914-1918 that "advanced rather than retarded the cause of colonialism,"[89] but its memorialization as well.

Following this instrumentalist approach, the question of what particular political developments contextualized commemoration in the interwar years is pressing. The colonial state's confrontations with settlers, Kenyans, and the Indian community of Kenya constitute the crises of colonial control that weighed upon critical choices in the location of monuments, their design and representative qualities, as well as the language that officials used to signify their importance. With few exceptions, there are no 'smoking guns' to be found in the evidence I have gathered. Instead, this is a possible and plausible interpretation of the uses of commemorative sites as referents in the prominent political debates in interwar Kenya. From this top-down perspective I argue that the colonial state attempted to monopolize the narrative around commemoration, characterized by Empire loyalism and the responsibility to co-develop the colony for both Kenyans and settlers. All the while the colonial administration spoke to its role

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[88] I remain wary of attributing to the IWGC a *deus ex machina*- like role in Kenya's postwar commemoration. The IWGC operated through local men-on-the-spot, collaborated with the colonial state, and remained steadfast in designing 'appropriate' monuments for the East African context. In this respect, the organization occupies its own chapter, detailing the importance of seeing the IWGC as much more than an imperial imposition upon colonial states.
[89] Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*, 184.

as the seat of power in Kenya. I track the continuation of what Maxon called the 'struggle for

Kenya' through commemoration and memorialization by interrogating settler sites of memory

and remembrance practices, the colonial state's curation of sites of memory, and the *East African

Standard*'s reporting on commemorative activities and projects.

Finally, one must ask how commemoration affected how settlers identified themselves as

such through commemoration and memorialization, and how the state attempted to shift that

identification. My main target is the salient question of how Imperial identification, settler

identification, and identification within the colonial state intersected, entangled, and competed

for ascendency. I use the term identification in line with Frederick Cooper's critique of the word

identity, which signifies a static, uniform state, or yet, one so multifarious as to sap its analytical

power.[90] Identification, as the verb form of identity, "invites us to specify the agents that do the

identifying. And it does not presuppose that such identifying (even by powerful agents, such as

the state) will necessarily result in the internal sameness, the distinctiveness, the bounded

groupness that political entrepreneurs may seek to achieve."[91] I do not fully answer how settlers

identified themselves through the lens of commemoration in this section of the dissertation.

However, I argue that the political context during the different phases of commemoration and

memorialization affected the form, intent, and meaning Kenya's sites of memory, which

correlated with political exigencies of the colonial state.

The significance of this analysis for answering our overall question – why and how has

the Great War been forgotten in Kenya? – is that the IWGC, the settler community, and the

colonial state all made choices that centred white, and mainly European, experiences of the First

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[90] See Fredrick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, "Identity," in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), especially 67-68 on 'hard' and 'soft' usages of 'identity' in analysis.
[91] Ibid., 71.

World War, but with distinct differences. As a result, the tenor of commemorations either centred upon the grander narrative of Imperial cooperation, or, when it did centre the African experience in East Africa, the goal was to solidify the project of colonialism in Kenya, although whether that project was settler-driven or state-driven stimulated competing interpretations. Thus, in creating and interpreting sites of memory or by implementing commemorative traditions, the white community of Kenya – settlers, administrators, and the media – characterized the war in ways that did not find meaningful reference in the postcolonial context. Ultimately, by defining the foundations of their commemorative culture in exclusive and Eurocentric terms, settlers and the colonial state set the stage for collective forgetting.

3 – Imperial Fibre: the IWGC, Race, and Memorialization in Kenya

> It is in the hope that the scheme here put forward will secure for all time the permanence of this tribute and its embodiment in a memorial worthy of the Empire and of the sons (and daughters also) who have given their lives for it…[1]
> - Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Fredrick Kenyon, *The Kenyon Report*, 1918

Sir Fabian Ware, the main protagonist in the founding of the IWGC, had an affinity for rebuilding and reconciling in the face of war and death. At the turn of the century, as the British-South African War (1899-1902) reached its end, Ware travelled to South Africa in 1901 to serve as the Assistant Director of Education in Transvaal, following which he quickly climbed the ladder amongst Lord Alfred Milner's 'kindergarten.'[2] The Conservative-driven movement sought "social engineering on a grand scale, a process in which social relations both in the countryside and the city were transformed to serve the long-term interests of capital development."[3] First and foremost, they concerned themselves with how the "United Kingdom was to continue to play a leading role in world affairs."[4] The 'kindergarten,' which developed into the Round Table movement after 1909, argued "that it strengthen its position both in Europe and internationally by forming closer ties, perhaps an imperial union, with the white settlement colonies…. [U]ntil the dominions were treated as equals in these crucial matters they would never achieve full nationhood."[5] Fittingly, Ware, one of the most prominent names in postwar Britain, found his origins in imperial politics and warfare in Africa.

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[11] Frederick Kenyon, *Report to the Imperial War Graves Commission*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1918), 19.

[2] See Walter B. Nimocks, "Lord Milner's 'Kindergarten' and the Origins of the Round Table Movement," (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1965).

[3] Saul Dubow, "Colonial Nationalism, The Milner Kindergarten, and the Rise of 'South Africanism', 1902-1910," *History Workshop Journal* 45 (Spring 1997): 53-85.

[4] John Kendle, *Federal Britain: A History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 80.

[5] Ibid.

It was in South Africa that Ware crossed paths with Herbert Baker and Rudyard Kipling, his main architect and poet respectively at the IWGC.[6] As Jeremy Foster argues with respect to the 'kindergarten' movement, "a loose association of educated, upper-middle-class activists promoted a number of ostensibly apolitical initiatives designed to help a broad assortment of citizens imagine themselves as a unified group, situated in the historical time and geographic space of the new nation."[7] Ware was an ardent imperialist, invested in facilitating the dominions and white settler colonies forging deeper ties to Britain through their independent will. This formulation of an "ostensibly apolitical" organization uniting the Empire in one cause and allowing the dominions freedom to determine their affairs culminated in the IWGC and its mandate.

As the founding myth of the IWGC recounts, in 1914 Ware was too old to enlist and fight for the Empire he so admired. Instead, he joined the British Red Cross as a commander, tasking himself with the establishment and care of the war dead on the Western Front. On biographer David Crane's account, it was in witnessing the battlefield burials and unattended graves in the Crimean War that drove Ware's pursuit of a systemized account of each life lost from 1914-1918.[8] By 1915, the War Office gave Ware permission to formalize his work in the Graves Registration Commission, later renaming it the Imperial War Graves Commission by Royal Charter in 1917. The Prince of Wales headed the IWGC as President, and the Secretary of State served as chairman, with Ware as its vice-chairmen. Alfred Milner sat at the IWGC as Secretary of State for War, presiding over its earliest meetings. Soon after, the IWGC tasked Sir Fredrick

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[6] Foster, *Washed with Sun*, 38.
[7] Ibid.
[8] David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How One Man's Vision Led to the Creation of WWI's War Graves* (London: Williams Collins Publishing, 2013), 123. Indeed, the IWGC would assume responsibility for some of the established graves from the Crimean War.

Kenyon, the director of the British Museum, with drafting its guiding document: The Kenyon Report. Through interviews, battlefield visits in France and Belgium, and participation in the IWGC's meetings, Kenyon set out the founding principles and philosophy for the commission's work.

As quoted above, Kenyon's report outlined a clear imperial framework for commemoration. The IWGC committed itself to the entire purview of the British Empire and all the soldiers who came to its defence. One principle, however, stood out amongst them all: Equality of Treatment. Historian Michael Heffernan observes that Ware considered Equality of Treatment a necessary element, reflecting his "strict nonconformist upbringing. His anger on discovering that influential families had circumvented the ban on repatriation was genuine and intense."[9] Ware's insistence on Equality may have come just as much from his conviction that all the nations that made up the Empire were of equal value, and all of its – presumably white – constituents worthy of the Empire's honour. The IWGC strove not only to strengthen the extant bounds of Empire but, in historian Andrew Prescott Keating's analysis, to generate "an idealized vision of British imperial unity."[10] The fledgling nations within the Empire *found themselves* within the imperial framework. More precisely, Hannah Smyth has shown that "the interwar battlefield created a world stage for the interplay of identity in performance. With their mutual membership of the IWGC, [the dominions] jostled to define themselves not only in relation to the metropole but also to each other."[11] In at least one of his missions, Ware succeeded in

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[9] Michael Heffernan, "For Ever England: The Western Front and the Politics of Remembrance in Britain," *Ecumene* 1995 2 (3): 298.

[10] Andrew Prescott Keating, "The Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity," (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 2011), 101. See also John Lack and Bart Ziino, "Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission," in *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict*, Andrew T. Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty eds. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 351-375.

[11] Smyth, "The Material Culture of Identity and Remembrance," 298.

creating strong bonds between independent nodes of Empire, albeit without the same commitment to 'closer union' he might have wanted.

The IWGC, however, was much more than one man. This reality is especially pertinent in its work beyond the Western Front. Kenya was one of those fibres with which the IWGC stitched together the Empire's war dead into one memorial fabric, but the IWGC's structural framework, expecting a great deal of input and contributions from dominions and white colonies, leant itself to decentralized control of its works and subsequent incongruity. In Kenya, as Michele Barrett argues convincingly, the IWGC failed to extend its principle of Equality of Treatment as it did on the Western Front (and continues to cover-up this reality). For the most part, carriers and *askari* were not recorded by name, let alone having their names etched into headstones, monuments, or even nominal rolls.[12] While Barrett attributes the denigration of African soldiers and carriers as the product of an inherently racist organization – especially under Lord Arthur Browne, who controlled the East African file – I take a different tact herein.

Rather than foregrounding race in the IWGC's projects in Kenya, I suggest instead that it was but one (albeit particularly powerful) of several considerations to which the Committee appealed in East Africa. Equality of Treatment, I argue, was not conceived through a racial lens but through classist one. The meaning and implementation of Equality of Treatment must be viewed from the perspective of the Western Front and the elites who comprised the official mind[13] of the IWGC. If, as Barrett readily admits, the organization defined Equality as much

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[12] Michele Barrett, "Dehumanization and the War in East Africa," *War & Culture Studies* 10 (3) (2017): 238-252; Michele Barrett, "Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission," *Interventions* 9 (3) (2007): 451-474; Michele Barrett, "Afterword: Death and the Afterlife: Britain's Colonies and Dominions," in *Race, Empire, and First World War Writing*, Santanu Das ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 301-320.

[13] See Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (New York: MacMillan, 1989).

through practice as it did through principle, its incompleteness and slipperiness must be fully accounted for.

Furthermore, the political context of consistent opposition to its mandate – and particularly the endeavour's cost and uniformity – raises questions about how much relatively small theatres of war with significant logistical difficulties factored into decision-making. A hierarchy of race certainly helped tip the scales against the IWGC fulfilling its mandate, but it is important, if speculative, to ask the counterfactual question of what the Commission might have done without opposition to its work. The importance of such questions is set into relief against the political leanings of its founding members; Ware and Kipling would have expected the Dominions and colonies to do their fair share and contribute local knowledge to aid in fulfilling the Commission's mandate (even if general policy flowed from London).[14] This was not the case, or at least not to the same degree, in Kenya. Indeed, its projects flowed through the Colonial Office, and the IWGC's men-on-the-spot were significant impediments to its early work in East Africa.

Above all, the IWGC's commitment spoke to the desire for strong and self-governing colonies, guided by white men. But this ethos did not predetermine the exclusion of Kenyans from their commemorative plans. It was a combination of inputs into decision-making that produced differential treatment; applying a racial teleology to the IWGC's projects in Kenya oversimplifies the historical causation. Importantly, much of the IWGC's failure can be explained through the military structures in East Africa during the war and the explicit racism and callous treatment of Africans from 1914-1918. Accordingly, this chapter clarifies the IWGC's role in the erasure of Kenyan contributions to the First World War, rather than reading

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[14] See Karine Landry, "Fall in Line: Canada's Role in the Imperial War Graves Commission After the First World War," (Master's Thesis, University of Ottawa, 2018).

the failure to uphold Equality of Treatment backwards into the process that created it. Indeed, the IWGC was the only party in the early years of commemoration that directed their efforts *for Africans*, and their imprint was much more than 'imperial debris' as we have seen with the discussion of the Dedan Kimathi statue at the outset of this study.

Finally, in bringing the analysis back to the collective memory of the First World War in Kenya, the IWGC's projects constitute one of the strands of the colony's knotted memory of the Great War. It emerged concurrently with settler-driven projects, albeit with a different purpose and content. The Commission's work solidified the imperial foundations of the colony's collective remembrance practices through an Empire-wide commemorative enterprise. Nevertheless, the IWGC's intended meanings were open to signification. As the organization handed over greater responsibility for its monuments and cemeteries, settlers and administrators appropriated them for their socio-political uses, putting the monuments into conversation with their memorial landscape (Chapters 4 and 5). The presence of African iconography in Mombasa and Nairobi offered vivid images against which settlers identified their distinct character and administrators attempted to define the colony's governance.

Principled Beginnings: The Equality Principle and the Western Front

On 21 May 1917, the IWGC signed its Charter of Incorporation. It proclaimed proudly that it

> would, by honouring and perpetuating the memory of their [the Empire's fallen] sacrifice, tend to keep alive the ideals for the maintenance and defence of which they have laid down their lives, to strengthen the bond of union between all classes and races in Our dominions, and to promote a feeling of common citizenship and of loyalty and devotion to Us and to the Empire which they are subjects.[15]

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[15] Commonwealth War Graves Commission, "The Original IWGC Royal Charter," The IWGC and its key figures, https://shapingoursorrow.cwgc.org/denial/key-figures/, 2.

Notably, the Commission's structure also laid out the participatory roles for Dominions, each of which was granted a member to vouch for its affairs – although they were outnumbered by the five representatives from the British government (Secretary of State for War, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Secretary of State for India, and Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings).[16] This arrangement gave the Dominions equitable partnership in the care of the Empire's war dead, although in reality the representatives contributed little more than the content and form of their nation's war graves.[17] In addition, with concerns over the monetary burden of the IWGC, the Dominions contributed the funds proportional to their war dead and offered specified knowledge for identifying, cataloguing, and registering the dead as well.[18] In essence, the Commission redistributed the burden from wartime operations to the Dominions, deferring the costs of commemorating the million dead soldiers of the Empire.

In November 1918 the IWGC clarified its mandate, stressing an equally important aspect of its mission: Equality of Treatment. Kenyon's report acknowledged the principle as its highest priority, indicating from the outset

> that the provision of monuments could not be left to individual initiative. In a few cases, where money and good taste were not wanting, a satisfactory result would be obtained, in the sense that a fine individual monument would be erected. In the large majority of cases either no monument would be erected, or it would be poor in quality; and the total result would be one of inequality, haphazard and disorder.[19]

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[16] Ibid., 4.

[17] See Landry, "Fall in Line." Landry's analysis, while useful, reads Canada's burgeoning nationalism into its lack of influence in defining, or attempting to define, IWGC policy. However, as I demonstrate, this underestimates the considerable contributions of the IWGC's previous iterations during wartime to its policies in its aftermath.

[18] See, for example, Jeremy P. Garrett, "Tribute to the Fallen: The Evolution of Canadian Battlefield Burials during the First World War," (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2018), especially Chapter 5: Exhumation, Consolidation and Repatriation: The Body After Death and Burial, 236-282. On the Australian Graves Registration Unit see William M. Taylor, "War remains: contributions of the Imperial War Graves Commission and the Australian War Records Section to material and national cultures of conflict and commemoration," *National Identities* 17 (2) (2015): 217-240; Romain Fathi, "'We refused to work until we had better means for handling the bodies': Discipline at the Australian Graves Detachment," *First World War Studies* 9 (1) (2018): 35-56.

[19] Kenyon, *Report to the IWGC*, 7.

The idea of equality correlated to three mutually reinforcing policies: non-repatriation of bodies, the non-differentiation of the dead based on rank, and uniformity in burial and naming practice. The Commission's members acknowledged non-repatriation universally, although the French Law of 1915 forbade the practice prior to the IWGC's mandate, removing much choice with respect to many of the dead.[20] Similarly, acknowledging universal sacrifices, rather than singling out officers and high-ranking military members, garnered little opposition.[21] When it came to uniformity in burial practice, however, the Commission met considerable opposition, both by individual initiative throughout the Empire and official protest from the Dominions.

Lord Derby, the Secretary of War, warned against the publication of Equality of Treatment in the national presses. While "there was no intention of receding from the carefully considered decision that equal honour should be paid to the memory of all officers and men who had fallen and that the erection of memorials should not be left to public initiative," he opined, "it was not desirable to press this view upon the public in a rigid and uncompromising way."[22] Opposition materialized within the Commission when Dominion representatives insisted that their war dead should be honoured with symbols that represented their heritage.[23] Commission officials ultimately determined what those symbols would be but the Dominion representatives argued for the differentiation.[24] Families of the deceased, however, often wanted to personalize headstones and repatriate their loved ones. Ultimately, the IWGC ceded to the request that families could pay for an additional inscription, but they answered requests for repatriation with

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[20] Garrett, "Tribute to the Fallen," 236. Garrett also notes that many of the bodies those who perished in Britain were in fact repatriated to Canada.

[21] Hanna Smyth, "'There is Absolutely Nothing like the Carving of Names': Imperial War Graves Commission Sites and World War I Memory," in *Monumental Conflicts: Twentieth-Century Wars and the Evolution of Public Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 15. Particularly, Smyth underscores that Prime Minister Asquith's son was buried in the same plot as working-class soldiers.

[22] CWGC 2/2/1/2, "Commission Meeting No. 02 – Feb 1918," 2.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Landry, "Fall in Line," 87-90.

a formulaic response citing legal barriers.[25] Clearly, moving from principal to practice was much more difficult than the Commission envisioned.

The IWGC defined its vision within the confines of the Western Front. Equality of Treatment, in particular, responded to the class dynamic of imperial Britain; war dead, the IWGC surmised, should not be subject to differential treatment based on their economic status, or familial lineage. On the Western Front, race and creed did not affect the individualization of commemoration either.[26] While the IWGC certainly aspired to commemorate every individual who came to the defence of Empire, it was only through practice that it confronted far different circumstances in non-European theatres. Whereas graves registration in Europe was a known reality, oversight abroad was a different matter altogether.

The entirety of the IWGC's mandate remains beyond the purview of this study, but the unstable concept of Equality of Treatment is essential to my analysis. As a statement of fact, regardless of particular national collective memories,[27] most British and Dominion deaths during the war occurred on the Western Front. Thus, the Commission and its constituent parts, all of them white men, negotiated the concept of equality primarily in that context. Further, the greatest number of combatant deaths resulted from fighting in France and Belgium. Thus the project of commemoration in the wake of the First World War hinged upon the registration, identification, and burial of bodies on those battlefields.[28] Nonetheless, the Commission's broader agenda to

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[25] See Dominiek Dendooven, "'Bringing the Dead Home': Repatriation, illegal repatriation and expatriation of British bodies during and after the First World War," in *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality, and Transformation*, Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 66-79.

[26] Michele Barrett, "Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission," *interventions* 9 (3) (2007): 451.

[27] New Zealand and Australia emphasize the Anzac tradition, forged at Gallipoli, as their defining experience in the First World War. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the vast majority of New Zealand and Australia's war dead rest on the Western Front.

[28] Discussions of the Equality principle focus intently upon fallen soldiers in Europe. See CWGC/2/2/1/1, "Commission Meeting No.01 – Nov 1917," 4-6.

commemorate each and every military death in the Empire meant it quickly refocused its energy towards projects beyond the Western Front. Before it could do so, the thorny issue of non-white burials in Europe presented challenges to the organization.

From the outset of IWGC's operations, the issue of non-Christian graves confounded its planners. India contributed over one million troops to the Empire's defence, with close to 75,000 deaths in the field. India's ethno-religious make-up presented particularly difficult questions. Muslim burial rites forbade exhumation, the method by which the IWGC concentrated dispersed graves, while Hindu practices required cremation.[29] The size and importance of the Indian community across the Empire brought public opinion to bear upon the Commission's decisions. By its second meeting, the Commission decided that there should be a special committee on Indian graves, ensuring "that there should be nothing in the nature of disparity between cemeteries of Indians and those of Christians."[30] The breadth and cultural difference within the Empire challenged the IWGC's lofty goals, setting into relief the myriad considerations intrinsic to the IWGC's projects.

Indian War Dead and Equality of Treatment: Memorials to the Missing at Basra and Neuve Chapelle

Santanu Das, the leading figure in the rejuvenation of Indian war memory,[31] argued poignantly in 2014 that "it is essential to challenge the colour of war memory."[32] Das readily

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[29] CWGC 2/2/1/2, "Commission Meeting No. 02 – Feb 1918," 3.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See Santanu Das, ed., *Race, Empire, and First World War Writing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writing, Images, and Songs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), Kindle. David Omissi has also contributed to our understanding of the role of the Sepoy in the British Army, and Indian written testimony of the First World War. See, for example, David Omissi ed., *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914-1918* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

[32] Santanu Das, "The first world war and the colour of memory," *The Guardian*, July 22nd, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/22/first-world-war-whitewashed-eurocentric. It is necessary

admits that he grew up with the mythos of the Great War – trenches, poetry, resilient Tommies –

only discovering much later that Indians, Africans, and Asians suffered significant losses in

1914-1918. The recovery and exposure of Indian memories of the First World War treats their

absence in the collective memory of the conflict as a given, however, rather than a process.

Historians have written little that compares how Indians *have been* commemorated, primarily

under the auspices of the IWGC, and why this has not resulted in a more inclusive memory of

the First World War.

The stakes of this research are high, as India has often driven colonial and postcolonial

scholarship as the site of Britain's longest encounter with subject peoples that has generated a

preponderance of documentary evidence. Similarly, the Indian version of indirect rule (in stark

contrast to settler colonial outposts of Empire) provides a structural framework for understanding

its later deployment in Africa. In the context of the IWGC, the committee had one representative

for India, whereas one representative advocated for the rest of Britain's non-settler colonies.

Thus, India provides useful guidance in trying to understand the IWGC's work in East Africa.

(As I elaborate in subsequent chapters, any history of Kenya and East Africa must be understood

through entanglement with India.)

Michele Barrett has published widely on the implications of the IWGC's "aspiration…

[of] equal treatment in terms of 'race' and 'creed', which the War Graves Commission and its

historians persistently claim alongside equality irrespective of social class and military rank."[33]

Her work is indispensable to this project, representing the only in-depth academic studies of East

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to reproduce a fuller version of Das' analysis to avoid misrepresenting his words. "There is an understandable
impulse to retrospectively turn these men into heroes and martyrs…While it is essential to challenge the colour of
war memory, it is also important to keep a watch on the way it is being done."

[33] Michele Barrett, "Subalterns at War: First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial
War Graves Commission," *interventions* 9 (3) (2007): 451.

African commemoration. Barrett's foregrounding of race as a determinant of IWGC policy, however, obscures the longer-term impediments to Equality of Treatment beyond the Western Front (itself haphazard and subject to change).[34] While her analysis exposes the deep-seated racism and civilizational arrogance of key IWGC members, the evidence suggests that racism was a convenient and expedient justification for the inequalities rather than a principle considered thoroughly *prior to the practice* of its work.

The crux of Barrett's argument rests in unequal treatment within the context of Memorials to the Missing. Whereas the IWGC inscribed the names of every Indian soldier on the memorial at Neuve Chappelle, the Indian Memorial at Basra – a far more costly Indian engagement – named only officers amongst the Indian war dead.[35] However, by focusing on how "the policy was explained,"[36] she dismisses evidence that she presents in the same article indicating that a much more complex process led to the lack of naming. Specifically, Barrett acknowledges that "the subalternity at play was that of the Indian Army hierarchy, with its long tradition of a restricted cadre of white British officers."[37] Citing the briefing notes for the Basra unveiling, she argues that the Commission discarded its principles – including distinctions based on rank – in the Middle East based on racial hierarchies, which were confirmed by its practice in Africa. While the comparison between the two theatres is valid, Barrett fails to ask crucial questions about what differentiated the Indian experience on the Western Front and the Middle East, or what war looked like in East Africa.

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[34] Garrett, "Tribute to the Fallen," Chapter 2, especially 88-113.
[35] Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 464.
[36] Ibid., 464.
[37] Ibid., 465.

Ultimately, Barrett makes a compelling (albeit limited) case that the IWGC "[enacted] the erasures and silencings…of the colonial subaltern,"[38] rightly concluding the CWGC must do its part in acknowledging and rectifying its role in extending colonial logic to the realm of commemoration. Otherwise Barrett's account tells us little about what the IWGC's role – what share of responsibility it holds – is in authoring that silence. She reads that silence back into the IWGC's work, rather than interrogating the historical processes and particular decisions that defined the scope of its projects beyond Europe. The analysis identifies only justifications and explanations for the silences, rather than identifying their genealogy.[39] As I will show, Barrett commits the same type of limited historical reading when discussing the role of race and religion in the East African context. That Barrett moves from India to Africa without deep analysis of the process behind the Basra memorial is rather confounding.

Roger Sims tackles this process by looking at the machinations of the IWGC and the different contexts within which Indians participated in the Great War. With respect to Indian graves, he argues that "the Indian Army in Mesopotamia was constantly on the move and forced to hastily record casualties and burials with no serious Graves Registration units devoted to the effort."[40] While it might be morbid to suggest that the Western Front was ideal by any standard, the relatively static lines in France and Belgium, alongside the concentration of British and Dominion forces in Western Europe, created a context wherein the precursors to the IWGC devised systematic practices for recording the dead, undergirded by meticulous record-keeping. As Sims observes, "the realities of war…created a marked divergence between commemoration

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Without beleaguering the point, this is ironic considering Barrett's dependence upon postcolonial and poststructuralist theory, itself heavily dependent upon genealogical analysis.

[40] Roger Sims, "To The Memory of Brave Men: The Imperial War Graves Commission and the India's Missing Soldiers of the First World War," (Master's Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2018), 39.

[in the Middle East] and in Europe."[41] This relates only to established graves (and not the missing), but Sims makes the explicit connection between record-keeping and Memorials to the Missing as well.

While Sims does not engage with Barrett's work specifically, the documentary basis of his analysis lends itself to an analysis of process. In discussions about the Basra Memorial, Sims finds that the Commission had complete lists of British casualties by 1924 but Indian records were in a "fractured state."[42] The IWGC identified what it estimated to be sixty to seventy per cent of the total Indian missing, with the balance representing around 7500 names at minimum.[43] What Sims implies, but does not state explicitly, is that the IWGC intended to carry out the nominal memorialization of Indian troops at Basra; it was only in 1924 that the Commission decided to "forgo memorializing most of the Indian missing by name."[44] Furthermore, this represented a collective decision, taken in consultation with the India Office and the Indian Army, rather than a unilateral IWGC policy. If record-keeping was the fundamental issue at hand, the IWGC certainly dismissed the problem with ease. The Commission explained and justified the decision by appealing to a hierarchy of racial importance, but race did not predetermine the trajectory of commemoration at Basra. It was a decision borne of a process which could have produced any number of outcomes.

This discussion seeks to redefine the analytical framework through which historians might better understand the white-washed memory of the First World War – and the IWGC's role in authoring it. Barrett's theoretical reading lends itself to the over-determination of race as

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41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 93.
43 Ibid. The Commission estimated that there were between 25,000 and 40,000 Indian missing. The range itself provides evidence that the record-keeping practices of the Indian Army were far from adequate.
44 Ibid., 94.

an explanation for the IWGC's failures; key decision-makers upheld vile indignities in the

commemoration of non-White war dead, but evidence does not support the conclusion that race

exclusively drove its policy outside of Europe. As Sims suggests, the machinations of IWGC

decision-making, entwined with that of other bureaucracies, offers a clearer picture of how and

why the IWGC's projects often failed to live up to their lofty principles. I am interested in both

the processes through which East African commemoration took shape (Sims) and how the IWGC

justified its failure to uphold specific principles (Barrett). In moving beyond these limited

characterizations of the IWGC, I propose that we must ask different questions.

The IWGC in Kenya: Responsibility, Deference, and Indifference

> This is to the memory of the Native African Troops who fought; to the carriers who
> were the feet and hands of the army; and to all other men who served and died for their
> King and Country in Eastern Africa in the Great War, 1914-1918. If you fight for your
> country, even if you die, your sons will remember your name.
> – Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling's poetic inscription for the Nairobi and Mombasa[45] African Monuments

remains as the sole written trace of the commemoration of carriers and porters in Kenya. The

carriers, *askari*, and scouts who supported the war in East Africa remain unnamed, with the

figures of the monument there to prompt their memory, but their progeny responsible for

preserving their names. J.A. Stevenson designed the sculptures, which the IWGC installed in

1924 and 1925 respectively, using photos and equipment procured from Kenya and the War

Office.[46] The two monuments represent the most visible reminders of the IWGC's work in

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[45] The Mombasa Arab and African Monument bears a slightly different inscription, noting the contributions of Arab soldiers to the war in East Africa, whereas Nairobi mentions only Africans.

[46] CWGC, WG219/12 Pt. 1, "Memorials to Native Troops, East Africa," January 14th, 1925.

Kenya. A third monument in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, completes the triad of memorials to the missing Africans in East Africa.

The Commission also planned cemeteries, similar to those in other theatres of war, to bury predominantly white but also some Indian combatants who died in East Africa. IWGC operations in Kenya were minimal compared to those on the Western Front, Gallipoli, and the Middle East, with sixteen cemeteries, none of which contain more than 300 known graves.[47] There are several reasons why Kenya has a relative lack of cemeteries, paramount amongst them is that the East African campaign took place mostly in German and Portuguese territory. That tens of thousands of Kenyans lost their lives in the Great War through combat and support meant that the IWGC still faced the daunting question of how it would recognize their sacrifices.

Barrett locates East African policy in the persona of Arthur Browne, whose record in the CWGC archives reflects the worst aspects of British arrogance and racism. Browne presided over the Commission's decision in 1923 that "it will not be practicable to inscribe names on these [African] memorials as is done elsewhere."[48] He explained the decision unceremoniously, echoing his man-on-the-spot Major George Evans, who deemed it "a waste of public money."[49] This statement, however damning as it is of Browne and Evans, does not represent incontrovertible evidence that race drove the policy. Instead, it indicates that financial considerations predominated.[50]

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[47] CWGC, "Kenya," Find Cemeteries, cwgc.org/find-cemeteries-and-memorials/results?country=Kenya&firstwar=true.
[48] CWGC, "Annual Report, 1922-1923," 12.
[49] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 2.
[50] Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 470.

Barrett rightly observes that Major Evans "came back with many problems"[51] in registering graves and amassing reliable information, but she does not specify those problems. Instead, her narrative skips quickly to defining ways that the IWGC, and specifically Evans, *described* Africans, rather than interrogating the processes through which the IWGC made its final decisions. The resultant analysis merely asserts that the IWGC considered race a reasonable basis through which to differentiate graves. Considering the bounty of evidence that racial ideology penetrated into nearly every aspect of British imperialism, this is hardly a surprising finding. Although it is disappointing that the CWGC continues to use Equality of Treatment in its literature without fully contextualizing its haphazard application of the principle, as Barrett rightly opines, the IWGC's role in commemorating Africans demands a fuller accounting.

An integral aspect of the IWGC's operations is that in January 1920 Major Evans was not in the employ of the IWGC. He was the Officer Commanding the Graves Registration Unit (GRU) in East Africa. As his report implies, the GRU depended upon the individual units' efforts to record and mark burials as a means of identifying the dead. "In the case of European burials, the units concerned have always endeavoured to place some mark over each grave, so that the majority of these have been located" the report read, but in the case of Indians and Africans "[the] methods adopted have proved unsatisfactory."[52] Clearly, inequality with regards to Africans and Indians in East Africa was a practice that the IWGC inherited from the military in East Africa, a reality Barrett acknowledges at the level of discourse rather than logistics.[53]

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[51] Michele Barrett, "'White Graves' and Natives: The Imperial War Graves Commission in East and West Africa, 1918-1939," *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality, and Transformation*, Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 82.

[52] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 2.

[53] Barrett, "Dehumanization and the War in East Africa."

Even if graves were non-existent or unmarked, however, those deaths should have been recorded by name on one of the general memorials to the missing, as had come to pass in Europe. The Commission detailed its difficulties in obtaining any complete lists of those Africans in non-military roles, making the establishment of readily available registers practically impossible. Up to 1927, the Director of Records wrote to Browne that "as to the casualties, the position is that we have no record (i.e. names) of any of the casualties except European casualties. We do not think that nominal rolls of native casualties are available at all even in East Africa." [54] Colonial Office documents indicate that this was an intentional policy of the East African Protectorate, concealing the extent of Carrier Corps recruitment. Precisely, "the number of enlisted as Carriers, to the 5th March, 1917, was *approximately* 100,000."[55] However,

> it is not considered desirable to give precise figures for the number of native troops actually enlisted. Allowing for the number of natives engaged in various capacities on services indirectly connected with the military operations, it is safe to say that the available male population has been drawn upon for war purposes to the utmost extent.[56]

As Munro and Savage detail, "up to 31 March 1922, 13,748 men were still untraced."[57] Given the concerted effort to conceal the actual number of Carriers, the number was undoubtedly much higher. To imply that the IWGC might have poured more resources into East Africa to commemorate each individual[58] belies the evidence that the East Africa Protectorate made this pursuit exceedingly difficult. The record-keeping that would have made this possible needed to be maintained from 1914-1918. The IWGC could not produce accurate records after the fact.

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[54] CWGC, WG219/12 Pt. 1, "Director of Works to Arthur Browne," July 12th, 1927, 1.
[55] CO533/201, "Lord Hindlip's Question – April 10th – Further Notes," April 10th, 1918, 372. Emphasis mine.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Munro and Savage, "Carrier Corps Recruitment in British East Africa," 341.
[58] Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 466.

Further, its expenditure in tracing white war dead was far more than a genuine act of racial solidarity. The IWGC identified that approximately sixteen per cent of the total deaths for which they were responsible were those of white soldiers, meaning the rest were porters and local African forces, although predominantly the former category.[59] Again, this percentage was likely on the higher end, considering the underreporting of African Carriers. Thus the relative cost of tracking down white war graves – of which 95% were easily identified – was exponentially lower than pursuing a similar policy with regards to African graves.[60] Even in the case of white war graves, the IWGC's work "was a very difficult question owing to the enormous area involved, the absence of communications and the sparse European population…. Many of the routes were no longer maintained and had probably revered to jungle."[61] For some white graves that "cannot be accepted as maintainable," the Commission decided to "erect memorials in the larger cemeteries recording the names."[62] Thus even white graves were subject to loose interpretations of the IWGC's standards, emphasizing the unstable and slippery meaning of Equality of Treatment. The cost of the project was an overriding concern as unlike the Dominion and Indian war dead, it was the British government that shouldered the majority of the cost of commemoration in the colonies. Finances dogged the Commission across all of its projects in East Africa.

For what it could control, the IWGC did little to bring the treatment of African war dead into line with practice on the Western Front. When it came to carriers, however, evidence from East Africa suggests that the IWGC could not do much, even if it had so desired. As Browne

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[59] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 2.
[60] Ibid.
[61] CWGC, "Minutes of Proceedings, 41st Meeting," Tuesday, January 17th, 1922, 9.
[62] Ibid., 10.

summarized with regards to Ware's perspective "it has always been the view of the Vice-Chairman that identical treatment should be accorded to British and native troops so far as circumstances permit."[63] Policy decisions for East Africa did not flow from London, however, but from East Africa itself. Browne's dependence upon Major Evans consistently substituted local knowledge for IWGC principles. As early as February 1920, Evans "[pointed] out…that the Native has no sentiment as regards [to] burials at all…. Certainly, Major Evans proposal that some monuments should be put up to these dead is quite right, and would give the satisfaction the Native would look for."[64] Constrained between the views of its men-on-the-spot and the spotty record-keeping of the East Africa Protectorate, the IWGC may have perpetuated racial disparity, but it hardly devised it.

The practical dependence upon Evans had correlates in the IWGC's structural design as well. The IWGC's ability to fulfil its responsibility depended upon the concept of imperial cooperation, expressed through deference to decision-makers in its Dominions and colonies. When Evans suggested that "the erection of headstones [to African Natives who were not soldiers] would constitute a waste of public money," the Director of Works scribbled in the margins that the East African Government should answer, stating "we cannot decide this on our own."[65] That colonial authorities did not object to Evans' determination is both predictable and surprising. On the one hand, control over burial rites and the Christianization of African tribal life was one of the key tenets of colonial control.[66] However, considering the cost of the project, the expenditure would have exceeded the impact, especially given the political climate in the

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[63] Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 466.
[64] CWGC, WG122 Pt. 1, "Major Evans' Report," February 19th, 1920.
[65] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 2. See also CWGC, WG122 Pt. 1, "Fabian Ware to Controller of Administration, Re: British East Africa," February 22nd, 1920.
[66] See Rebekah Lee and Megan Vaughn, "Death and Dying in the History of Africa Since 1800," *Journal of African History* 49 (2008): 341-359.

early-1920s.[67] Nonetheless, it is clear that policy did not originate in the IWGC, even if it acceded and shared racist views rooted in civilizational superiority.

Meanwhile, just after Evans report defined the parameters of the IWGC's work in East Africa, he was accused of mismanaging the East African file. Having been given a great deal of autonomy in executing their plans, an internal investigation identified "transactions of a most questionable nature. Irregularity proving Evans entirely unsuitable for position of Deputy Director."[68] Evans' mismanagement and apparent lack of progress in East Africa created anxiety at the IWGC, with Ware tentative to pay out salaries and budgets to carry out the work.[69] Doctors recommended that Evans return to England for three months to recover from "malaria and alcoholism."[70] But all points were made moot when news reached London that Evans died of health complications on September 10th, 1921.[71] Despite his failed tenure, Evans' original report continued to inform IWGC practice in East Africa.

In light of Evans mismanagement and eventual passing, the Commission embarked on its search for a Deputy Directory of Works who could get its operation back on track. But in that search for a man with the required local knowledge, the Colonial Office's nominees did not meet the Commission's criteria. Ware deemed one of the first candidates, Captain Longdon, unqualified given "the position of the Commission's work in that area [which required] greater technical qualifications."[72] Captain Rapley, the next Deputy Director of Works, apparently fell prey to the infamous Happy Valley lifestyle in Kenya, using Commission funds to employ a woman with whom he was engaging in an inappropriate relationship. The IWGC worried that in

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[67] See Chapter 5.
[68] CWGC, 442 ADD 1/3/5, "Notley to Secretary of State for the Colonies," July 27th, 1921.
[69] CWGC, 442 ADD 1/3/5, "Ware to Captain Rapley," January 17th, 1922.
[70] CWGC, 442 ADD 1/3/5, "Medical Report on a Disabled Officer," June 16th, 1921.
[71] Ibid.
[72] CWGC, WG442 ADD1/3/5, "Ware to the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies," January 11th, 1922.

light of Rapley's "former privilege of joy riding with her in the Commission's cars…the public

of Nairobi had formed an erroneous impression of our great operations in E. Africa."[73] Ware

decided to "[deal] firmly" with Rapley, owing not only to the embarrassing incidents but also

due to his drawing a high rate of pay without permission from the London office.[74] The IWGC,

by reacting to its operatives' work in East Africa instead of imposing policy from abroad,

exposed its organizational limitations. Fulfilling its responsibility through deference to the

Dominions and colonies created a mess that, in turn, fostered indifference and frustration.

Analyzing the processes through which the IWGC defined its practice in Kenya prompts

several important conclusions. The IWGC inherited deficiencies in record-keeping and graves

registration that predetermined differential treatment of war dead prior to receiving its mandate.

Relatedly, the East African landscape and infrastructure impeded its work, much like the

prosecution of war in East Africa. Further, the Commission's structure, including its dependence

upon the financial contributions of its members, presupposed decentralized authority, the

importance of local knowledge, and frugality, affected the trajectory of its work in East Africa.

These practical considerations in the East African context underscore that practice and process

are essential features of the IWGC's work in Kenya. We cannot dismiss Barrett's important

conclusions concerning Browne's role in perpetuating inequality as compared to the Western

Front, especially in the case of graves; however, it is only part of a much more complex,

multidirectional decision-making process.

Tony Ballantyne argues that "if nation-focused histories efface the porous nature of

national boundaries and erase the complex global and regional currents that shape national

development, older traditions of metropolitan-focused imperial history…identifies Britain…as

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[73] CWGC, 442 ADD 1/3/5, "WC Bottomley to Colonel Oswald," August 17th, 1922, 3.
[74] CWGC, 442 ADD 1/3/5, "Controller and Finance Advisor to Ware," September 28th, 1922, 1-3.

the nexus of empire where capital, power, and ideas flowed out to the colonies."[75] Information

flowed to and from London to the colonies, and realistically, more to it than from it in the case of

Africa. The IWGC's pre-cursor organizations may have been contiguous with the military

establishment in Europe, but beyond the Western Front the connection was tenuous at best.

Trying to locate the IWGC solely from within the organization without considering the

interconnectedness of the colony and the metropole leads to comparative study between its work

in Europe and Africa, rather than contextualized investigation of commemoration in Kenya.

Equality Through Difference?: Colonialism, Anthropology, and Colonial Discourse

Nonetheless, even if practical considerations help historicize Barrett's argument, it is

worth enquiring if that really mattered due to conceptions of racial difference that outweighed

founding principles. In order to challenge or confirm Barrett's thesis, we must answer the

counterfactual question of whether the IWGC would have done differently under ideal

circumstances. The answer to this question is that, while it may have published official registers

of African names in some cases, it would not have granted equality in the same way it did on the

Western Front. Indeed, Barrett's findings on such a situation in Sierra Leone, where Browne had

the records but did not publish nominal rolls, confirms this interpretation.[76] From the perspective

of First World War memory, however, I want to suggest that this poses the wrong question. If we

accept that the Western Front model would have never applied in Africa in the first place,[77] we

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[75] Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism and the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 2.

[76] Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 470.

[77] Once again, Barrett asks this question and begins to answer it but does not fully elaborate. See Barrett, "'White Graves' and Natives," 89.

need to ask whether the IWGC's Kenyan model actually contravened its founding principle of Equality.

The difference between these two questions is methodological. Specifically, reading backwards and comparatively, analyzing the IWGC's failure to apply the same standards in Africa as it did on the Western Front, defines Kenya's sites of memory through comparative lack and inadequacy. In other words, especially with regards to the memorials to the missing, Barrett defines sites of memory through what they are not, rather than what they are. In doing so, it is much easier to disregard the historicity of the sites, instead treating them as lifeless and meaningless impositions. As a result, historians risk avoiding the processes through which they were conceived, constructed, and presented in an effort to vilify their foundations in imperial ideology. But by defining equality differently, IWGC sites were intentional, meaningful, and geared for Kenyan consumption. Sites of memory did not only inscribe an extant colonial discourse of civilizational superiority; in fact, monuments became part of that discourse.

Analyzing IWGC sites in this way implicates several theoretical and empirical considerations. Primarily, I am concerned with the concepts of 'otherness,' 'difference,' and 'exclusion' as products of colonial discourse.[78] Useful as the concepts can be, their implementation often tend towards an essentialism that glosses over historical context. (European/African, Civilized/Uncivilized, Included/Excluded). Part of this context relates to how the IWGC intended its sites to be places of mourning and healing, alongside sites of recognition and celebration. Naming and uniform burial were aspects of Equality of Treatment conceived through British sensitivities to mourning and healing ('otherness').[79] To expect that the IWGC

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[78] For the 'familial' nature of these terms see Etienne Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion," *Parallax* 11 (1) (2005): 19-34.

[79] For the idea of sites of memory as sites of mourning see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*; Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing,

would implement this version of equality elsewhere in the Empire mischaracterizes the aim of Equality of Treatment. The Commission genuinely believed that it could help the healing process, and there was no exception to this principle at Kenya's memorials to the missing ('exclusion'). It determined best practices in this regard by appealing to semi-factual observations about certain Kenyan communities, couched in pseudo-scientific civilizational arguments and essentialized conceptions of Kenyans (and Africans more generally) ('otherness'). If the overriding question is 'for whom was commemoration,' the answer is for Empire *and for Africans*.

The Kenyon Report outlined the basis for the Commission's interpretation and implementation of its mandate abroad. Specifically, "it is essential that the Commission should be guided by the advice of those who are most conversant with our Indian and African Empires."[80] The IWGC's considerations in East Africa followed Evans' original report, with the Colonial Office in support. Evans advised that

> most of the Natives who have died are of a semi-savage nature, and do not attach any sentiment to marking the graves of their dead – some tribes do not even bury their dead – In cases with the more intelligent Natives, especially those converted to either Christianity or Mohammedanism, burials are observed and graves marked with some form of emblem or tomb.[81]

How was the IWGC to interpret such information? Thomas Laqueur's guiding question "how do we imagine our own or other's people's deaths and dead bodies doing something in our world?"[82] is informative here. IWGC cemeteries and monuments were powerful statements about what work the dead could do in bringing about a stronger Empire, in reaffirming British cultural

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1999); Thomas Laquer, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Moral Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

[80] Kenyon, *Report to the IWGC*, 12.

[81] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 2-3.

[82] Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, 82.

superiority and the necessity of its advance, but also in facilitating mourning, healing, and meaning for those who lived with loss.[83] The IWGC was, as an evolving entity, a rumination on this very question. The dead, it presumed, died for something and families could take solace by seeing the permanent place of the dead in the world. The war dead of the British Empire were not resigned to the past, however, as Kipling conveyed in his inscription "their name liveth evermore." The ways this would be done for white and Christian soldiers was fairly straightforward in principle, but for colonized peoples fulfilling the Commission's mission required trying to understand the lifeways of Indigenous peoples in the colonies.

Barrett (correctly) describes the IWGC's interpretation as dehumanizing, indicating (incorrectly) that the IWGC decided which lives were worthy of commemoration based on racial hierarchy.[84] In reality, the general memorials at Nairobi and Mombasa *did* commemorate Kenyan war dead, if at greatly reduced cost.[85] An understanding of Kenyan racial 'difference,' qualified by their civilizational 'otherness,' dictated the terms of their inclusion, differentiating who was worthy of commemoration *by burial*.[86] The IWGC's dependence upon local knowledge meant that anthropological 'facts' guided the content and form of commemoration in Kenya. If, as I argue, the IWGC defined Equality of Treatment in terms of its audience, the anthropological basis through which the Commission assessed Kenyan civilizational 'otherness' verified the suitability[87] of general, iconographic memorials. It is the context of colonial contact, and the practice of colonial science specifically, that explains much of the decision-making in London.

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[83] See, for example, Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*; Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, war graves and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007); Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

[84] Barrett, "Dehumanization and the War in East Africa,"; Barrett, "Subalterns at War," 452.

[85] CWGC, WG219 Pt. 2 ; See also Barrett, "Dehumanization and the War in East Africa."

[86] Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion," 19

[87] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 3.

By assessing the IWGC's work in the colony through relative inadequacy, the finer details of its thinking are lost in an essentialized binary of exclusion/inclusion. The binary comparison between Africa and Europe is thus more important for understanding the ways that colonial knowledge shaped how Britons' understood themselves through their Empire.[88]

The type of evidence Evans relied upon accorded with colonial understandings of 'tribes' and their burial practices. As historians of Africa have noted, however, the notion of static 'tribes' flattens Kenya's socio-political landscape by melding linguistically linked social groups with one another. The desired effect was to bring Africans into a social structure that mimicked Britain's.[89] The Gikuyu, for example, were not a unified socio-political unit in the pre-colonial era, foreshadowing the considerable divides within Gikuyu society under colonial rule.[90] In reality, very few of Kenya's 'tribes' existed as such before colonial contact, only becoming legally defined groups when the colonial authorities imposed centralized control through appointed chiefs and headmen. The process made Kenyans legible through two powerful discourses: biologically-determined racial *difference*, and, broken down further on the basis of tribal culture, civilizational *otherness*.

The distinction was crucial for colonial legal regimes that needed to differentiate on the basis of race in defining which of its laws applied to whom, and with what desired outcome.[91]

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[88] The approach of seeing the metropole and the colonies in one field of analysis is extensive. For a recent historiographical discussion of the impact of these works see Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), especially Chapter 3,

[89] See for example Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); On the lack of legible structures of command in Africa see Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," 211-212; As a means through which this facilitated labour exploitation see Anthony Clayton and Donald Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963* (London: Frank Cass, 1975).

[90] John Lonsdale, "The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty, and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought," in *Unhappy Valley: Book II*, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1992), especially 326-350.

[91] Brett Shadle, "White settlers and the law in early colonial Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 4 (3) (2010): 510-524. For the negotiation of 'native' and 'non-native' status as a matter of biological origin see Christopher J. Lee, "Jus Soli and Jus Sanguinis in the Colonies: the Interwar Politics of Race, Culture, and Multiracial Legal Status in British Africa," *Law and History Review* 29 (2) (2011): 497-522.

While biological difference was primarily a legal distinction – treating all Africans in a similar manner – civilizational otherness was much more fluid and subject to scientific discourse.[92] Biological difference was relatively straightforward; a subject was either African, European, or Asian.[93] Civilizational otherness, however, was much more slippery. In the context of commemoration, the IWGC made both distinctions. As Barrett rightly argues, there was a distinction between "white graves and natives," defining who was worthy of burial based on a racial distinction (inherited from the military, to a degree). They also made civilizational distinctions when determining the content of commemoration through other means, which is equally important to interrogate.

Though Evans and the IWGC never mention specific 'tribes' by name, Evans does note that it was the 'uncivilized tribes' that enlisted in the Carrier Corps at the highest rates.[94] The Gikuyu, who suffered heavily from Carrier Corps enlistment, did bury their dead in specific cases. In others there was a strict aversion to contact with dead bodies and, for particular age-sets, the Gikuyu commonly left bodies to nature.[95] Colonizers observed this practice and applied it more generally to the 'uncivilized tribes' in colonial Kenya, often speaking in the graphic imagery of 'leaving the dead to the hyenas.'[96] Importantly, the Gikuyu and the Maasai are the

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[92] Ibid. See also Benoit de L'Estoile, Federico Neiburg, and Lygia Maria Sigaud eds., *Empires, Nations, and Natives: Anthropology and State-Making* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[93] Lee highlights that the case of 'mixed-blood' subjects was subject to legal distinction as well, a topic to which I will return.

[94] CWGC, WG122 Pt.1, "Major George Evans: Summary of Remarks Under Various Headings Called for by the Director of Works, Imperial War Graves Commission," January 31st, 1920, 3.

[95] Historians and anthropologists have noted that the practice of leaving the dead to nature was common to many of Kenya's pre-colonial social groups. Mark Lamont lays out the extant historiography on the issue of corpse exposure in Kenya with great detail. See Mark Lamont, "Decomposing Pollution? Corpses, Burials, and Affliction among the Meru of Central Kenya," in *Funerals in Africa: Explorations of Social Phenomenon*, Michael Jindra and Joel Noret eds. (New York: Bergahn, 2011), 88-108. See also Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows Family, and Community in Kenya*

[96] Yvon Droz, "Transformations of Death among the Kikuyu of Kenya: From Hyenas to Tombs," in *Funerals in Africa: Explorations of Social Phenomenon*, Michael Jindra and Joel Noret eds. (New York: Begahn, 2011), 69-87.

most commonly studied 'tribes' in Kenya, both contemporarily and historically, as they lived in closest proximity to settlers, especially as the Gikuyu moved into the highlands and Rift Valley to 'squat' on settler land during and after the First World War.[97] Thus anthropological study of the Gikuyu provided a compelling example of how 'uncivilized' Kenyans treated their dead.

The fact remains, however, that none of Kenya's war dead – combatant or Carrier – were recognized by name in public sites of memory, ostensibly indicating that the IWGC did differentiate based on biological/racial difference rather than civilizational/tribal otherness. But Arthur Browne, trying to determine the state of records in East Africa, observed that "we are bound to record casualties of native African soldiers in registers [but…we] should make an attempt to obtain the Nominal Rolls, see what the result is, and then bring the matter up again."[98] At least in the case of *askari*, Browne acknowledged that racial difference did not supersede the IWGC's principles, where it was possible to uphold them. Those records did not exist, however, bringing Barrett's conclusions about racially determined policy into question. Once the state of records absolved the Commission of its responsibility to provide Nominal Rolls, it needed to determine what form commemoration would take. To answer this question, the Commission appealed to civilizational otherness – predominantly religion – rather than racial difference.

Indeed, the Commission was careful to ensure at least some form of written acknowledgement. Regarding published letters of appreciation for some of the more 'civilized' tribes', the IWGC indicates that it believed that letters had been circulated already. The letter proposed that every effort should be made to ensure that the headmen and chiefs would receive such messages, although they considered funding for the proposal outside the purview of the

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[97] Bruce Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 63.
[98] CWGC, WG219 Pt.1, "Arthur Browne to the Director of Records," May 20th, 1924.

IWGC's budgetary constraints.[99] As such, perceived gradations of civilization determined forms of alternative commemoration. While the archives do not provide a clear answer on whether the IWGC or the colonial administration actually compiled and distributed written messages, that it factored into their practice in Kenya is a compelling example of why racial difference and civilizational otherness must be considered in concert. This reality does not lessen the IWGC's culpability in differential practice with regards to burial practice, but it does bring their overall practice into greater focus.

The treatment of South African 'half-bloods' and Christianized Africans also suggests that otherness is a more useful analytical category than race. At the most general level, the IWGC considered that mixed race South Africans and Christianized Africans should have individualized headstones and be treated according to the same standards as their white and Indian counterparts.[100] While in practice grave marking and registering inconsistencies presented considerable hurdles, the understanding that these categories were different and required a separate ruling reiterates the importance of its civilizational assessments. Christianized Africans could cross the biological divide. The binary of African/European, or White/Native, breaks down upon deeper analysis. This was a colonial discourse on death[101] framed in civilizational (religious) terms rather than exclusively through essentialized notions of race.

Returning to IWGC-designed Indian monuments, the religious element in the Commission's decision-making and design was a consistent topic of discussion. Herbert Baker

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[99] CWGC, WG122 Pt. 1, "Arthur Browne to Fabian Ware," March 16th, 1920, 2.
[100] CWGC, WG219/12 Pt. 1.
[101] See Julie Rugg, "'Taken as Read': Locating death in the rhetoric of cemetery conservation in England," in *Heritage of Death: Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice*, Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman eds. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 50-62; On Western relationships with the dead see Robert P. Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*; On the 'deep history' of death and society see Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Moral Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); For a Kenyan example see Droz, "Transformations of Death among the Kikuyu of Kenya."

and Edwin Lutyens, two of the principle architects at the IWGC, alongside Kipling, the author of

its inscriptions, framed commemoration of war dead in explicitly Christian terms.[102] When it

came to non-Christian graves, a great deal of discussion and debate led to changes in their

designs. At Basra, Sims has detailed the disagreements amongst the architects as to how Hindu

and Islamic faiths should be accounted for in the design of the memorial.[103] His analysis

underscores not only the cultural (as opposed to racial) determinations of what type of

monuments and memorials were suitable when dealing with non-White war dead, but also that

the IWGC's forged its modus operandi in response to Christian sensibilities. Surely this

responded to discourses on race, but it was entangled with other discourses as well. To properly

commemorate Empire, meant confronting its hybridity, albeit from an explicitly British, and

inherently racist, perspective.[104] Guided by science, anthropology, and religion, the IWGC

defined equality through otherness. In the words of James Heartfield, "The road to Empire was

paved with good intentions."[105] In the organization's estimation, they were fulfilling their

mandate.

The IWGC and the African Memorials to the Missing: Making Monuments Meaningful

      Moving beyond the binary of exclusion/inclusion to contextualized equality allows for

examination of the content and form of IWGC monuments in Kenya. Far from excluding Kenyan

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[102] For the Indian case at Basra see Sims, "To the Memory of Brave Men"; For the All-India Memorial in Delhi see For the Christian underpinnings of IWGC commemoration see David Crane, *Empire of the Dead*; John Lack and Bart Ziino, "Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission," in Andrew Jarboe and Richard Fogarty (eds.), *Empire in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 366.

[103] Sims, "To the Memory of Great Men," especially Chapter 4.

[104] John Lack and Bart Ziino, "Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission," in Andrew Jarboe and Richard Fogarty (eds.), *Empire in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

[105] James Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 303.

carriers, *askari*, and scouts from its Empire-wide commemorative vision, the IWGC

commissioned two imposing monuments in Kenya that featured prominently in the urban

landscapes of Mombasa and Nairobi. In both cases, the IWGC determined – in concert with local

town councils – the location of the monuments based on their maximum exposure to Kenyan

eyes. Realist visual representation, it determined, best suited a Kenyan population that was

largely illiterate and non-Christian. For subjects of Empire who could not preserve nominal

roles, or visit cemeteries, the IWGC believed the monuments achieved its goal of giving each

part of the Empire a feeling of shared purpose in sacrifice *on their terms*. Thus, by conceiving of

the Empire as greater than the sum of its parts, the IWGC stood alone in weaving Kenyan

iconography into the fabric of First World War commemoration.

Figures 2 and 3. Pictures of Carrier and King's African Rifles Rifleman used by JA
Stevenson to design the African Memorial, Nairobi.
Courtesy of David McDonald, Technical Manager (Works), Africa and Asia
Pacific, CWGC.

The sculptor in charge of the project, J.A. Stevenson (aka Myrander), was a minor figure in Britain's sculpting community. Much like the IWGC's work more generally, the more well-known sculptors plied their trade on the Western Front. Stevenson completed the figures for Nairobi and Mombasa over the course of 1924 and early 1925, completing the Nairobi monument by December 1924.[106] The bronze figures depict a King's African Rifles rifleman, an *askari*, and a carrier, with the addition of an Arab rifleman in Mombasa. Stevenson reproduced the figures from images he received from Kenya, as well as equipment he procured in Britain.[107] The decision to use sculpture emanated from Kenyon's discussions with the Colonial Office, where they indicated that "a statue of an askari and/or carrier would be intelligible to the average East African native, whereas any other form of memorial would not."[108] The form of the monuments was thus an intentional decision borne of colonial discourse figuring an intellectually inferior African other. The IWGC did not exclude Kenyans from commemoration, it inserted itself into the colonial discourse by dictating their inclusion in civilizational terms. The monuments were conceived with equality in mind, but alternatively defined.

The difference between a binary of exclusion/inclusion and gradations of inclusion is essential when considering the IWGC's choice, in consultation with the municipal councils, of location for the two sculptures. In Nairobi, the Commission opted for a site "South of Sixth Avenue…at present mainly devoted to playing fields for the African Native population."[109] The Commission clearly considered that the African Memorial should be a fitting representation of the Empire directed for Kenyan consumption. This was a vision that had deeper consequences as

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[106] CWGC, WG 1687/5 "Cabinet Advisory Committee, 5th Meeting," December 1924, 10.
[107] CWGC, WG122 Pt. 1, "War Memorial to African Natives," November 15th, 1923.
[108] CWGC, WGF19 Pt.1, "Memorials to Native African Troops and Carriers," April 6th, 1922.
[109] CWGC, WGF19 Pt. 1, "African Native War Memorial, Nairobi," March 26th, 1923, 1-2.

Kenya Colony defined its commemorative rituals over the course of the 1920s, and, as the

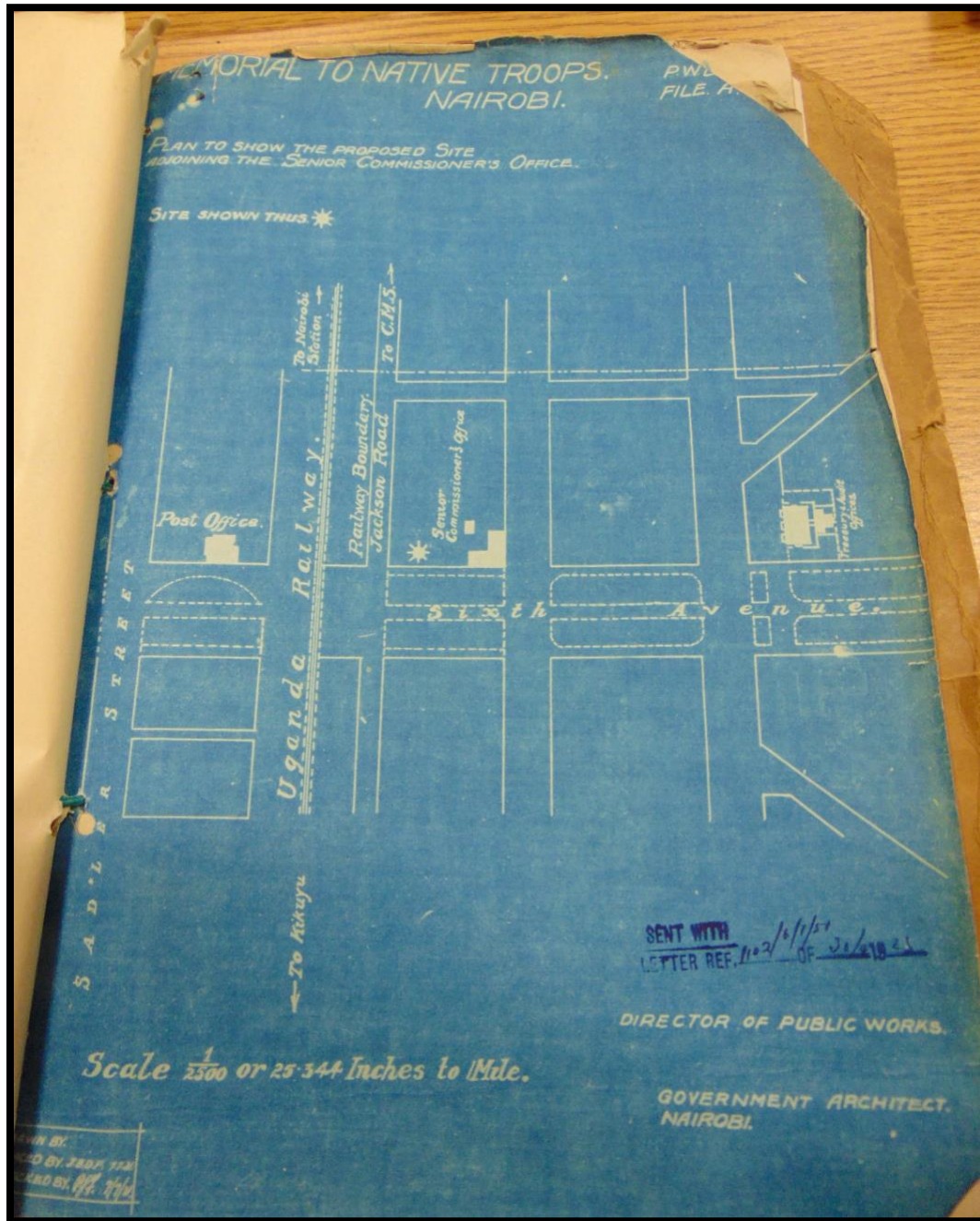Commission feared,[110] the pace of development in Nairobi accelerated.

Figure 4. Blueprint of Nairobi Monument Location.[111]

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[110] Ibid., 2.
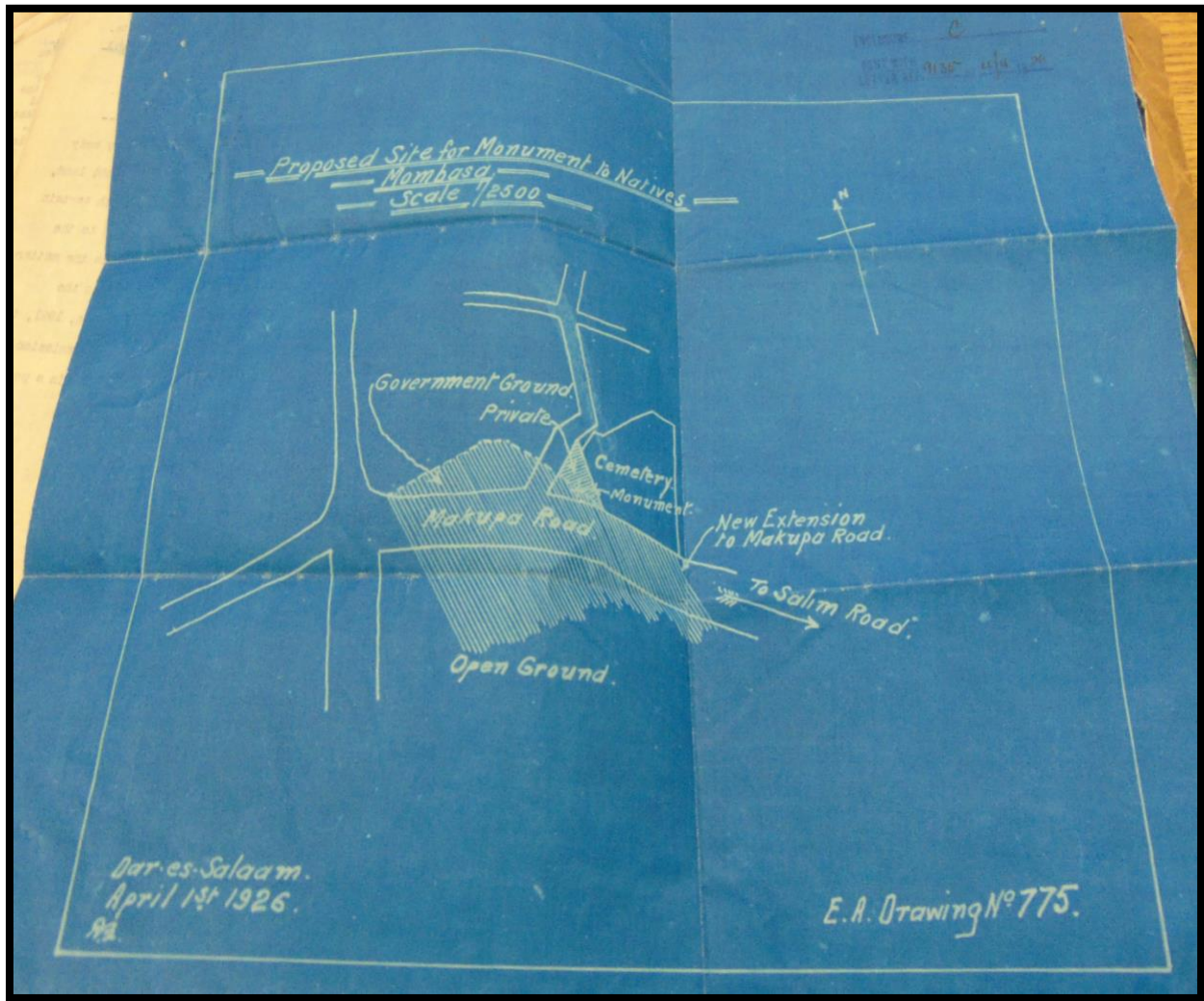[111] CWGC, F19 Pt.1, "Memorial to Native Troops, Nairobi," April 30th 1923.

Figure 5. Blueprint of Mombasa Monument Location.[112]

Similarly, in Mombasa the IWGC opted for a site just outside of Mwembe Tayari, a location that remains a busy market. Indeed, the unveiling of the monument was delayed because of a road extension that made the site even more accessible.[113] The IWGC may have depended upon local knowledge to determine which sites were most appropriate, but it defined the type of

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[112] CWGC, WGF19 Pt. 1, "Proposed Site for Monument to Natives, Mombasa," April 1st 1926.
[113] Ibid.

location it desired based on its intended goal of reaching Kenyan observers. Mombasa presented particular issues because the bulk of imperial monuments were located by the sea, close to Fort Jesus. Again, the implications of the IWGC's choices responded to colonial dynamics as Kenya's commemorative rituals took shape.

The point here is that we must understand the IWGC's monuments for what they were, rather than what they failed to mimic. The Commission's overriding mission of providing a tribute to all of the Empire, varying as it was in practice, necessitated the inclusion of Kenyan sacrifices in its commemorative fabric. In its view this furthered its mission of being an integral part of "the apotheosis of empire in the post-war world."[114] This meant acknowledging "the fibre of the races who have together built up the British Commonwealth of Nations, ideals which are shared by them in common, and in defence of which a million men laid down their lives."[115] From a modern standard of equality, the IWGC failed on most accounts; reading that back into an analysis of its thread of memory, however, fails to penetrate deeper into the commemorative cultures that developed in Kenya (and beyond the Western Front more generally) as a result of its actions.[116]

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[114] Lack and Ziino, "Requiem for Empire," 365.

[115] Ware as quoted in Ibid.

[116] That being said, it is important to recognize that Barrett's goal is demanding a more honest contemporary presentation of the IWGC's works, relying on historical analysis. I want to emphasize that this chapter is about redefining the research agenda on Kenyan/East African commemoration, rather than extolling the quality and usefulness of Barrett's work. Undoubtedly, this project would have been impossible without Barrett's pioneering exploration of commemoration in Africa. In other words, though Barrett's historical research is of exceptional quality, the questions she asks predetermine a closed-off analysis of the IWGC, rather than First World War commemoration more generally.

Beyond Exclusion: Finding First World War Commemoration in Africa

To re-state what is now a widespread characterization, if not universally accepted, in studies of the British empire "after the imperial turn"[117] the colonies and the metropole were mutually constitutive.[118] In the context of the IWGC, this is what drives my interrogation of the ways that the Commission did commemorate Kenyans, inserting itself in colonial discourse. Equally important, however, is that local knowledge – experiencing Empire firsthand – was indispensable to the forms that IWGC commemoration took. It might be too much to claim that these were circulating ideas; in reality, local knowledge went one way to London, while IWGC commemorative work went the other, over a relatively brief period of time (1919-1922). The IWGC's work in Kenya was simply too small an endeavour to allow for such circulation. If, as I argue in subsequent chapters, colonial discourses and practices of commemoration evolved over the inter-war period, it was largely at the "sharp end,"[119] rather than in the IWGC's headquarters. The IWGC weaved an Empire-wide fabric of commemoration that cast a shadow on practices across its domain, but the backside of that fabric exposed threads that could be tugged in different directions.

By looking at the ways that the prosecution of the war in East Africa laid the groundwork for its work, it is clear that the IWGC could not translate principle into practice with great ease. Further, colonial knowledge production in science, anthropology, and politics consistently informed IWGC practice, even if that knowledge excused expedient and cost-efficient solutions to difficult questions of principle beyond the Western Front. As I show in the next chapter, the

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[117] Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: On the Inadequacy and Indispensability of the Nation," in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, Antoinette Burton ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-23.

[118] Ibid. On the widespread usage of the term see Richard Price, "One Big Thing: Britain, Its Empire, and Their Imperial Culture," *Journal of British Studies* 45 (3) (2006): 602-603.

[119] Price, "One Big Thing," 606.

colonial administration, on behalf of settlers, produced this knowledge, and correlating policy advice, in response to specific political and economic debates within the colony. That the IWGC retained Kenyans as its primary audience, bringing colonial subjects into the celebration of Empire, confirms its status as exceptionally liberal for its time. Above that more limited assessment of the IWGC itself, the Commission became part of a colonial discourse that outlasted its stay in Kenya. The Commissions constitutive role in producing colonial discourses of commemoration – in fact seeing a discourse of commemoration at all – demands moving beyond restrictive frameworks of inclusion/exclusion.

Antoinette Burton has argued that histories of empire "rarely write as if trouble, rather than extension and hegemony, was the characteristic feature of imperial power on the ground."[120] The story of commemoration in the wake of the First World War is one of contestation and difference in the face of the "troubled ground of Empire" in Kenya. Burton commits the error of seeing the legacy of the First World War in the mythos that emerged throughout the inter-war period,[121] claiming that "the combination of unprecedented carnage and prolonged combat in the European trenches made a mockery of nineteenth-century western imperial claims to difference, let alone tutelage over, those indigenous peoples they sought to rule."[122] But was not the IWGC's mission partially to restore this myth of British superiority and unity in the imperial cause? As much as Burton sees a history of fitful and halting imperial victory on the battlefield, we might also see the IWGC's attempt to stitch the Empire back together in the wake of war as a striking continuity of discourses of civilizational superiority negotiated through war. To redeploy Robinson and Gallagher's characterization of mid-18th Century imperialism, the IWGC was a

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[120] Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.
[121] See Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, and Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory*.
[122] Ibid., 25.

grain of "yeast meant to leaven the lump."[123] The presence of colonial soldiers in that effort, however, disrupted the narrative, auguring towards a history of contestation and knotted-ness. By restricting itself by the principle of equality, contextually defined, the IWGC ensured that the memory of the First World War entangled with Empire.

As I elucidate in the following chapters, the IWGC's monuments intersected with settler memorial landscapes, creating a unique colonial form of commemoration. The colonial administration spoke about the IWGC's monuments in their efforts to represent a distinct trajectory for Kenya colony. Thus, the biographies of the monuments are essential features of this analysis. The intersections and refraction of IWGC iconography, however, represented a departure from the Commission's purpose in erecting them. The IWGC sought monuments that could be both testaments to Empire and meaningful for Kenyans. The colonial threads of First World War memory pulled at and tangled with the imperial threads, becoming knotted in a distinct, yet not detached, culture of commemoration in Kenya Colony.

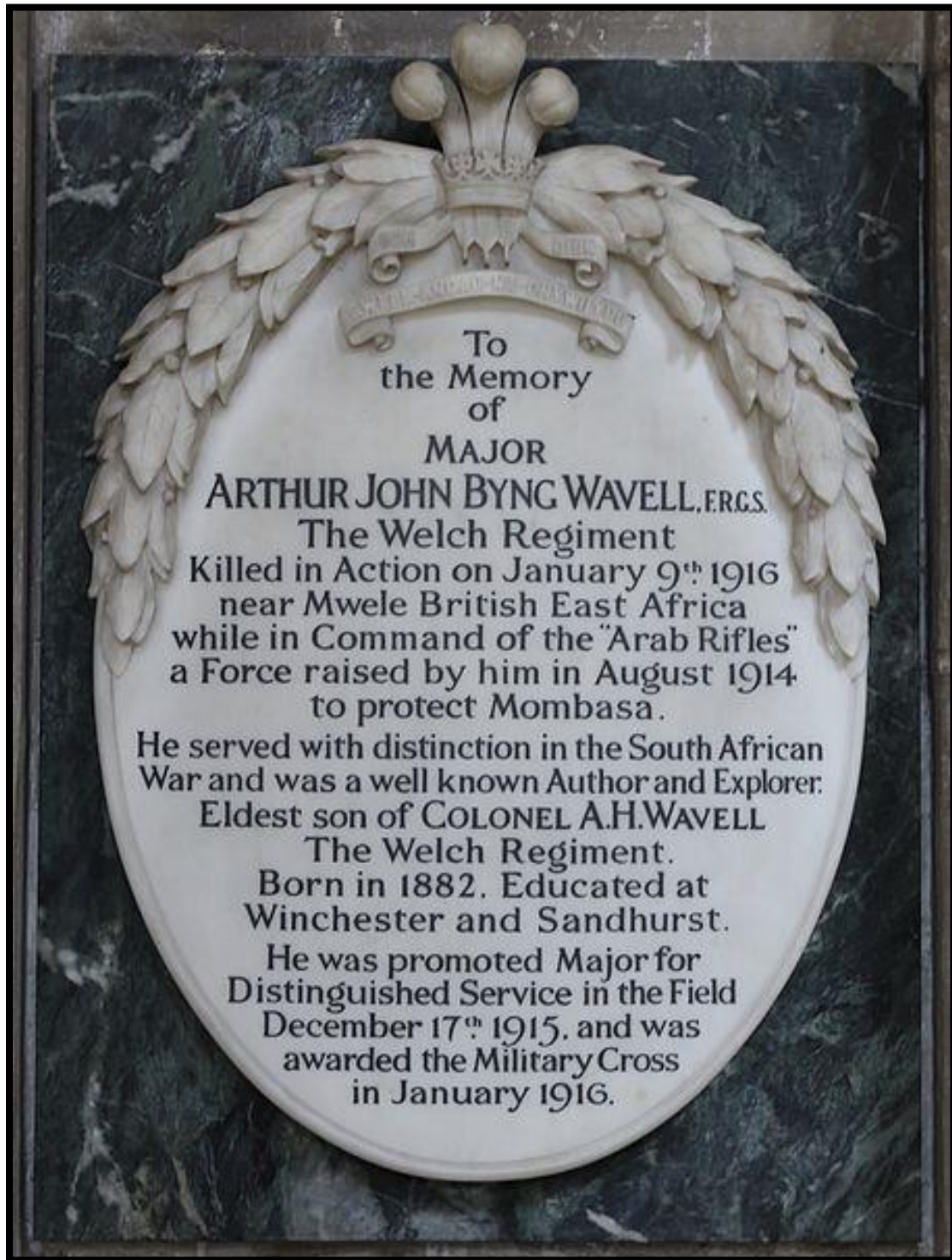[123] Robinson and Gallagher, *African and the Victorians*, 3.

Figure 6. Memorial to Major Arthur John Byng Wavell, Winchester Cathedral.
Wikimedia Commons.

Major Arthur John Byng Wavell settled on the Kenyan Coast after fighting in the South African war. He was well-known in the settler community and owned a local sisal farm. The son of a Crimean War veteran, and cousin to the Second World War General Archibald Wavell, a friend described Wavell as a man of "fighting stock."[1] Wavell made a pilgrimage to Mecca in disguise, acquiring fluent Arabic and a knowledge of Arabic customs, which came in use on the East Coast of Africa, ever-connected to Arab business and trade.[2] Wavell converted to Islam and in 1914 raised a local force in Mombasa called the Arab Rifles.[3] As a devoted student of foreign cultures and the Empire, a warrior, and a settler-farmer, Wavell's legacy lived on in Kenya's First World War lore.

Unable to return to England to join his Welch Regiment, Wavell recruited the Arab Rifles to defend the Coast as one of several privately-developed units in East Africa. Stationed just south of Mombasa, near the border with German East Africa, Wavell and his soldiers defended the coast from von Lettow-Vorbeck's raids into Kenya, the hub of its connection with railroads to the interior and the Indian Ocean economy. Wavell was injured in action twice, once with a debilitating arm injury, and later losing vision in one of his eyes.[4] In January 1916, German *askari* and their white officers ambushed the Arab Rifles, killing Wavell.[5]

Wavell's memory stands at the intersection of IWGC commemoration and settler-driven memorialization of the First World War. The IWGC commemorated Wavell and the Arab Rifles at Mwele Ndogo cemetery, where, in accordance with the Commission's practice, Wavell and

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[11] Leonard Darwin, "Introduction," in *A Modern Pilgrim in Mecca*, A.J.B. Wavell (London: Constable Amp Co., 1918), vi.
[2] A.J.B. Wavell, *A Modern Pilgrim in Mecca* (London: Constable Amp Co., 1918).
[3] Christine S. Nicholls, *Red Strangers: The White Tribe of Kenya* (London: Timewell Press Ltd, 2005), 123.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

his soldiers lay closest to where they fell.[6] The Commission commemorated Wavell and Lieutenant John Lachlan Mackintosh with a small cenotaph to mark their grave, while it recognized the rest of the Arab Rifles with a small memorial and plaque.[7] But the iconological footprint of Wavell's memory stands out not at Mwele Ndogo, but in Mombasa at the foot of Fort Jesus, within the Wavell Memorial Garden. There sits an impressive cenotaph and engraved memorial to Wavell, "the officers and men of the Arab Rifles who laid down their lives in defence of Mombasa and this coast during the Great War."[8]

The IWGC's work seemed inadequate for some. The Commission responded to a query about how Wavell was to be remembered "[that the Commission] fully sympathises with the natural desire for private and personal memorials to the dead, but it holds that the most fitting place for these is at home, where they would be remembrances for all time to the descendants of the fallen and visible witness to the great cause for which this generation was content to die."[9] Why, then, did the settlers of Mombasa finance the Wavell monument at Fort Jesus? What made Wavell an individual worthy of exceptional commemoration?

Wavell's memorial is but one of several settler monuments and memorials that still occupy public spaces. Settler memorials and monuments, and the rituals of remembrance that took place at them, were as much political statements as they were lasting testimonies to Kenya's war dead. Three interlocking crises – the Northey Forced Labour Crisis, the so-called Indian Question, and the prospect of African rebellion as formulated by Harry Thuku – help

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[6] "Mwele Ndogo Military Grave," Find War Dead & Cemeteries, www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000031/MWELE%NDOGO%MILITARY%GRAVE. See also, Harry Fecitt, "Wavell's Memoiral – Mwele Ndogo," War Memorials – Photos, https://gweaa.com/photos/war-memorials/#Wavell's%20Memorial.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Harry Fecitt, "Wavell's Arab Rifles Memorial," War Memorials – Photos, https://gweaa.com/photos/war-memorials/#Wavell's%20Arab%20Rifles.
[9] KNA, PC/Coast/1/3/176, 3.

contextualize the stakes of memorialization in public spaces between 1920 and 1924. It would be too much to claim that the settlers thought commemoration a powerful tool in advocating for responsible self-government, but those political considerations were consistently in mind. Striving to be a white man's country, settlers identified with both the motherland and with the colony; a distinct brand of Empire nationalism emerged in post-war Kenya wherein the settler thread of memory entangled with the imperial thread, weaving a colonial culture of commemoration unique to Kenya Colony. The memory of the First World War, at the collective level, mimicked the post-war battles for control between settlers and the Colonial Office, arbitrated by/within the colonial state.

At least three elements of Kenyan politics manifested in monuments, memorials, and rituals. In response to growing Indian demands for official representation and increased influence within the colony, the Indian community in East Africa were peripheral to settler memorialization and ritual, subject to disciplinary observation in the latter. Duder, in his pioneering study of the Soldier Settlement Scheme, deemed it "a pledge" often to the "denigration of the Indian par in World War I."[10] This extended beyond the Scheme into the commemoration of the War as well. Further, Kenyans were either commemorated in separate spaces with a utilitarian purpose or displayed with high visibility to enforce the difference between the loyal 'native' and the traitorous. Finally, settlers also commemorated their own in ways that singled out the distinctiveness of the settler in Kenya, uniquely capable of carrying out the imperial mission on the continent. In all cases, the memorialization of the Great War was a reflection of the prevailing political dynamics of the colony.

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[10] Duder, "The Soldier Settlement Scheme," 660.

As the Colonial Office reasserted itself in the politics of Kenya Colony by 1923,[11] the tenor of commemorative rituals and, in some cases, the biographies of monuments, changed accordingly. Throughout, however, what Brett Shadle terms "a single chain mail of [white] prestige"[12] prevailed. Indians and Kenyans were included in ritualistic remembrance and memorialization like in the case of the IWGC, but to specific socio-political ends. Nonetheless, in the first years post-Armistice, settler ascendency directed the commemorative culture in Kenya Colony, even if, like their aspirations of responsible self-government, it was fleeting.

Settler Paramountcy through Three Crises: The Context of Commemoration

The political row over settler self-government boiled down to a decision over whether the colonial administration would develop policies facilitating settler production to extreme ends, or whether Kenya Colony should abide by the principles of trusteeship. In either case, Kenyan labour needed to be directed towards the open market but the debate over what type of state support would undergird 'peasant' production threatened to restrict the flow of Kenyan labour to settler farms. The strongly pro-settler wartime ordinances[13]came under increased scrutiny during the early 1920s,[14] and yet for settlers they did not go far enough in ensuring the ongoing success of the settler economy. The First World War and the subsequent Soldier Settlement Scheme proffered, in James Belich's terms, "settler booms,"[15] but the prolongation of the Kenya Colony boom depended upon the degree to which London was willing to prop it up. A politically

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[11] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, especially Chapter 7: "The CO Takes Control."

[12] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk: White Settlers in Kenya, 1900s-1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 59.

[13] See Chapter 1.

[14] See, for example, Daniel Gorman, "Liberal internationalism, The League of Nations Union, and the mandates system," *Canadian Journal of History* 40 (3) (2005): 449-477.

[15] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld, 1783—1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 551-553.

powerful group of settlers with Hugh Cholmondeley, better known as Lord Delamere, their presumptive leader,[16] brought tensions with the Colonial Office to a head by 1923.

As we have seen, the settlers' political and economic influence actually grew from 1914-1918 owing to "cheap and available labour, insatiable markets and a pre-occupied colonial state."[17] Belfield's wartime governorship may have suggested a move to settler primacy but, following Robert Maxon, "the arrival of Sir Edward Northey to take the governorship of the EAP began a rapid push towards settler primacy."[18] Northey quickly moved to address the "shortage of labor occasioned by forced labor recruitment for the Carrier Corps during the war and increased demands for labor from European settlers coinciding with famine and disease."[19] Facing the challenge of Soldier Settlement, which nearly doubled the settler population in Kenya Colony, the flow of labour off of reserves and the success of both old and new settler farms was Northey's primary preoccupation.

On 23 October 1919, Northey issued his now notorious circular on labour in Kenya, stating that "all government officials in charge of native areas must exercise every possible lawful influence to induce able-bodied male natives to go into the labour field."[20] Northey apparently issued the circular without consulting the Colonial Office, although the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Milner, turned a blind eye to the extension of what was tantamount to labour compulsion beyond wartime exigencies.[21] Driven by the view that Africans "will never catch up the European either in intellect or in strength of character [...and that] as a race, the

[16] Robert G. Gregory, *Sidney Webb and East Africa: Labour's Experiment with the Doctrine of Native Paramountcy* (Berekley: University of California Press, 1962), 20-22.

[17] John Overton, "War and Economic Development: Settlers in Kenya, 1914-1918," *The Journal of African History* 27 (1) (1986), 103.

[18] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 128.

[19] Okia, *Communal Labor in Colonial Kenya*, 63.

[20] As quoted in Ibid.

[21] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 128-130.

white race has received a superior intellectual and mental endowment,"[22] Milner saw settler dominance as crucial to his idea of stronger imperial union.[23] The Northey Circular, with the Colonial Office tacitly in support, gestured towards the development of Kenya Colony as a nation, destined to develop along the same lines as the Union of South Africa or Southern Rhodesia.

Protests from abroad, especially from the International Labour Organization, the Aborigines' Protection Society, the Anti-Slavery Society, and the British Labour Party,[24] threatened Northey's policies. With the ever watchful eyes of the 'conscience of colonialism' Norman Leys and William McGregor Ross,[25] alongside many of the missions in Kenya Colony, the political establishment in Britain debated Northey's strongly pro-settler policies and support for compulsion, largely to the Governor's, and the colony's, embarrassment.[26] Milner, Northey's staunchest defender, left the cabinet in 1921, replaced by Winston Churchill, and later the Duke of Devonshire, who first removed Northey in 1922 and then issued the fatal blow to settler paramountcy in the inter-war years.[27]

The Devonshire Declaration of 1923, in tandem with the Dual Policy of Development, followed from the post-war discussions of the role of Empire in the world, and specifically in Africa. Tutelage and trusteeship were the watchwords, with an increased regard for the responsibilities Empires had to engage subject peoples in an increasingly interconnected modern

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[22] As quoted in Margery Perham, "The Round Table and sub-Saharan Africa," *The Round Table* 60 (240) (1970): 546.
[23] See Chapter 3.
[24] Anthony Clayton and Donald Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya. 1895-1963* (London: Frank Cass, 1974), 114-115.
[25] Diana Wylie, "Norman Leys and McGregor Ross: A case study in the conscience of African empire, 1900-39," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 5 (3) (1977): 294-309.
[26] Clayton and Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya*, 115-116.
[27] Ibid., 117.

world.[28] Britons, perhaps, had not listened to W.E.B. Du Bois when he launched his scathing critique of imperialism's role in the First World War, arguing that "the Balkans are convenient for occasions, but the ownership of materials and me in the darker world is the real prize that is setting the nations of Europe at each other's throats to-day."[29] The Paris Peace Conference made clear the influence of Wilsonian overtures, however, and that the stability of Empire in Africa required an ostensibly kinder version, more beholden to the development of Africans.

The Devonshire Declaration represented the culmination of what Robert Maxon deemed the reassertion of Colonial Office control.[30] With a new governor, Sir Robert Coryndon, at the helm, Devonshire declared that "in the administration of Kenya His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population, and they are unable to delegate or share this trust, the object of which may be defined as the protection and advancement of the native races."[31] Although beneficial to Kenyans in some respects, the Declaration had far deeper roots which had much more to do with tempering settler aspirations than it did the welfare of Kenyans. Indeed, settler's demands for labour was only one facet of the Devonshire Declaration.

The connections between India and Africa are now well understood, even if territorially-bound historiographies fail to engage the Indian Ocean as an analytical tool.[32] An increasingly strident Indian political lobby in Kenya Colony, buttressed by the India Office's advocacy, challenged settler restrictions on Indian immigration, ownership of land in the White Highlands, the usage of the Indian Rupee as the dominant currency in Kenya Colony, and political

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[28] Spencer, "The First World War and the Origins of the Dual Policy of Development in Kenya 1914-1922," *World Development* 9 (8) (1981): 735.

[29] W.E.B. Du Bois, "The African Roots of the War" *Atlantic Monthly* 115 (May 1915): 711.

[30] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, Chapters 5-7.

[31] As quoted in Ibid., 276.

[32] See Sana Aiyar, "Empire, Race and the Indians in Colonial Kenya's Contested Public Political Sphere, 1919-1923," *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute* 81 (1) (2011): 132-154.

representation on the Legislative Council. Indian settlers outnumbered white settlers at a 2:1 ratio, but political power did not follow. Attempts at reproach, culminating in a roundtable in 1921, produced little of substance for either community.[33] It was clear that the Colonial Office needed to step in, both to satiate the demands of the Indian community, and to temper settler antagonism.[34] The same changes at the Colonial Office that produced action on labour also brought an ostensible end to the Indian Question.

This was the real motivation for the Devonshire Declaration. Indeed, settler responses to the prospect of Indian representation on the Legislative Council, let alone equal representation, threatened to turn violent. Specifically, "the settlers had organized a Vigilance Committee and made little effort to hid their preparations for an armed uprising to take over the colony if the resulting settlement was not to their liking."[35] This itself was an appeal to First World War service, calling on the British government to make good on its 'pledge' to ex-servicemen trying to make their homes and livelihoods abroad.[36] Ultimately, the Devonshire Declaration was a compromise that sided with settlers, as "it was not the charter for racial equality that Indian leaders had hoped for and although the White Paper had pronounced against white self-government in Kenya the European settlers in the colony retained existing political rights."[37] Though the Declaration was the death knell for settler self-government, on issues that threatened the white community as a whole settlers were largely united.

One final angle to the Devonshire Declaration speaks to the stakes of First World War commemoration in inter-war Kenya. In 1922, Harry Thuku mounted a protest against the

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[33] C.J.D. Duder, "The settler response to the Indian Crisis of 1923 in Kenya: Brigadier general Philip Wheatley and 'direct action'," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 17 (3) (1989): 349-373.
[34] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 140-142.
[35] Ibid., 140.
[36] Duder, "The settler response to the Indian Crisis of 1923 in Kenya," 354.
[37] Christopher P. Youé, "The Threat of Settler Rebellion and the Imperial Predicament: The Denial of Indian Rights in Kenya, 1923," *Canadian Journal of History* 12 (3) (1978): 347.

colonial government for "increased taxes, failing wages, and the *kipande* [registration discs]."[38] Thuku's organized demonstrations resulted in his arrest, alongside the deaths of 25 African protestors. The connection between Indian demands and Kenyan protests was essential; settlers couched their rejection of requests from the Indian community in the language of protecting Kenyan rights, thus Indians moved to a general race equality rather than equality for Indians alone.[39] Galvanized by Gandhi's protests across the Indian Ocean, Thuku and his Young Kikuyu Organization allied themselves with Kenya's Indian community in their calls for equality and respect.[40] In this context, the colonial administration was able to fashion Thuku's movement as a cooption of Kenyan politics by the Indian community, buttressed by some anti-Thuku African voices as well.[41] Having hemmed itself into a colonial predicament, the Colonial Office needed to respond in a way that both foregrounded trusteeship and allowed conciliatory policy-making for the white settlers.

Thuku's protests launched a decade of political organizing, not only amongst young Gikuyu but in Kenyan communities throughout the territory. The Devonshire Declaration intervened by allowing for some representation in the legislative council for Indians and Kenyans (and Arabs), while allowing settlers to maintain control of the colony's politics. It was a policy framework that was more about appearances than it was substantive. In the early 1920s, the settler community effectively governed the colony, albeit subject to Colonial Office oversight, through what Bruce Berman terms 'Government by Agreement.'[42] This "informal cooption of 'Government by Agreement' enabled the state authorities to concede to the settlers a

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[38] Spencer, "The First World War and the Origin of a Dual Policy," 743.
[39] Ayar, "Kenya's Contested Public Sphere," 141.
[40] Ibid., 143-144.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 141.

real influence on policy without openly giving them greater formal access to the state."[43] Nonetheless, the need to keep up appearances in the Colonial Office, maintaining the state as the seat of power in Kenya Colony, tempered the extreme elements of the settler community by invoking African paramountcy.

The outcome of these three crises is of little significance to the settler thread of First World War memory in Kenya, especially in terms of monuments and memorials. Nonetheless, the longer-term history of settler paramountcy in question highlights the process through which settler identification as a distinct community within the Empire coalesced in the early-1920s. Settlers had internal reference points for their distinctness, among which were its tributes to their war dead. Empire was an essential element of their commemorations, but settler monuments and memorials stood out from IWGC sites of memory. Whether in public spaces, or in exclusive country clubs, monuments and memorials were generative sites of memory, reflecting the increased sense of settler identity in post-war Kenya. Forged in a context of consistent threats from Kenyans and Indians within Kenya Colony, as well as advocates from the metropole, settlers weaved their own commemorative tapestry, pulling at the threads of Empire-wide commemoration in the process.

Through this process settlers participated in the colonial discourse on death, singling out exceptional settlers as a model for an understanding of what the Kenyan settler was made. Further, public spaces within the main locales of settler settlement – Nairobi and Mombasa – were confirmed as white spaces through the installation of First World War monuments and memorials. These were celebrations of their role as the bastion of Empire in Africa. This served to exclude Indians from Kenya Colony's commemorative landscape, while cordoning off

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[43] Ibid.

Kenyan memorialization in 'native areas' of those cities. As I show in a later chapter, this had direct effects upon the rituals of remembrance that emerged in the 1920s. Above all, these were counter-monuments to the IWGC's cemeteries and monuments, which, while still respected as sites of memory, were inadequate in speaking to settler collective identification. Thus, was borne a colonial, as opposed to an imperial, thread of memory in post-war Kenya, however entwined they might have been.

I trace the emergence of a settler thread of memory through several important sites of memory, predominantly in Nairobi and Mombasa. In each case, I situate the monuments and memorials within the broader landscape of those cities, and the implications for the exclusion, or selective inclusion, of Kenyan and Indian communities. As an extension of their actual location, I explore the implications of centring white memory, keeping in mind the correlating political battles of the early 1920s. At times, this included the invocation of Kenyan memorial sites. However, in those cases memorialization responded to the political exigencies of Kenyan Paramountcy or, alternatively, the demographic changes to Nairobi and Mombasa wrought by transient Kenyan labour as a result of land alienation and labour policy. Settlers erected their monuments and memorials mostly between 1920-1924, setting the stage for an evolving culture of commemoration from the middle to the end of the decade.

Remembering Settlers: The Wavell Memorial and the Selous Memorial

When the Duke of York, the future King George VI, and the Duchess of York visited East Africa in 1924, their tour included many visits to sites of memory in Kenya.[44] One of those stops, immediately upon their arrival at the Port of Mombasa, was at the Wavell Memorial on 23

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[44] See CWGC, WG122/22/1, File on East Africa – Visits – HRH The Duke of York.

Figure 7. The Wavell and Arab Rifles Memorial, Mombasa.[45]

December 1924. The couple spent only one day in Mombasa, taking the time to unveil the memorial officially, two years after the town erected it inside the Wavell Memorial Gardens.[46] Notably, the Wavell Memorial is the only settler monument in memory of the First World War in Mombasa, although the IWGC Mbaraki Cemetery is also located on the island. According to James Willson, the townspeople of Mombasa funded the Gardens and the Memorial through individual subscription.[47]

Very little evidence remains at the Kenyan National Archives of the Wavell Memorial, but a great deal can be gleaned about its importance by its location in the city of Mombasa. Fort Jesus, a 16th Century Portuguese military fort, is the backdrop for the memorial, adjacent to historic Old Town, an area where the Arab community in Mombasa resides.[48] The Memorial thus responded to both the long-term historicity of the city of Mombasa, as well as being well positioned to be accessible to the Arab communities from which Wavell drew his recruits. It was a distinct British imposition on a seaside landscape that underwent significant change, from its earliest settlements, through Portuguese and Arab rule.

As Denis Linehan and Joao Sarmento remind us, however, colonists imprint their self-images upon the landscapes they encounter, often reshaping the telling of history itself.[49] The Wavell Memorial placed a settler at the centre of attention, reinforcing the civilizing force that was British colonial rule. In the process, the Arab role in protecting the city during the First

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[46] Norman Parsons Jewell, *On Call in Africa in War and Peace, 1910-1932* (Hove: Gillyflower Publishing, 2016), Location 3147-3154; 3218.

[47] James G. Willson, *Guerrillas of Tsavo: An Illustrated Diary of a Forgotten Campaign in East Africa, 1914-1916* (Self-Published, 2014). See also James G. Willson, "Historical Notes on Mwele Mdogo Hill," Coastweek, December 2002, http://www.coastweek.com/s0212.htm.

[48] Harm de Blij, *Mombasa: An African City* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 30.

[49] Denis Linehan and Joao Sarmento, "Spacing Forgetting: The Birth of the Museum at Fort Jesus, Mombasa, and the Legacies of the Colonization of Memory in Kenya," in *Cultural Memories: The Geographical Point of View*, Peter Muesburger, Michael Heffernan, and Edgar Wunder eds. (New York: Springer, 2011), 305-325.

World War was only accessible through the work of a settler. Further, the role of Indians in coastal warfare was all but forgotten in the settler memorial landscape. Settlers resigned the role of carriers, *askari*, and other Africans, to their own parts of town, contributing little to the IWGC's work. Unlike the War Graves Commission then, bound by its constitution to commemorate all who fought in some form or another, settler memory of the First World War in Mombasa focused upon settler contributions, strategically placing the site of that memory in a space associated with external rule. Ali Mazrui argues, for example, that selective memory often leads to the elimination of other memories, or a historical amnesia that long outlives imperial rule.[50]

Within footsteps of Fort Jesus and the Wavell Memorial is the Mombasa Club, the hub of elite settler activity in the city from the last decade of the 19th Century.[51] Though a direct connection between the Club and the Memorial cannot be made with certainty, it is clear that the "colonial set" who frequented the Club had considerable pull in redefining the Fort Jesus area as a place worthy of renewal along settler lines.[52] It is not surprising that when the colonial state issued its findings on the "Ancient Monuments Preservation Bill" that the Wavell Memorial fell under its purview.[53] Wavell was one of those "celebrated individuals," that the state should ensure remained in the memory of Kenya Colony.[54]

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[50] Ali A. Mazrui, "Cultural Amnesia, Cultural Nostalgia and False Memory: Africa's Identity Crisis Revisited," *African and Asian Studies* 12 (1-2) (2000): 13-29.

[51] Linehan and Sarmento, "Spacing Forgetting," 311. See also P.J.L Frankl, "The Early Years of the Mombasa Club: A Home Away from Home for European-Christians," *History in Africa* 28 (2001): 71-81.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Kenya Gazette, "Memorandum upon the Ancient Monuments Preservation Bill, 1927," Volume 29, No. 1144, June 7th, 1927, 686-687, https://books.google.ca/books?id=kmR4SKekw-0C&pg=PA686&dq=wavell+memorial&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjswqbF-67pAhXLhXIEHbKMCkUQ6AEIJzAA#v=onepage&q=wavell%20memorial&f=false.

[54] Ibid.

It was not just the celebration of Wavell that singled out the appropriation of Mombasa's landscape, but in the form of the Memorial as well. The familiar cenotaph, a revival of ancient commemorative form, created a direct link to British memorialization throughout the Empire.[55] Further, despite being a memorial to both Wavell and the Arab Rifles, the inscription on the Memorial is entirely in English, highlighting that it was primarily for settler consumption. The settler imaginary[56] formed not only through relational reference to Kenyans, Arabs, and Indians, but through a projection of the self as such. Settlers affirmed their ascendency through a relation to place and time,[57] setting themselves as the current iteration in a long line of external rulers through the environs of Fort Jesus. Unlike the IWGC and the colonial state, the settler community was not obliged to recognize the memory of any other community. As such, settlers commemorated their war dead in ways that resemble Connerton's conceptualization of forgetting to assert a new identity. There was not an explicit colonial discourse identifying an inferior other, but only tacit othering through exclusion and self-reference.

More speculatively, the connection might also be made to the Indian Question and the growing malcontent and threat of rebellion in the settler community. Wavell raised his force to defend Mombasa by personal initiative just as the settler community organized its Vigilance Committee to ensure, in the words of Governor Coryndon, that "safeguards [remain]…against eventual Indian domination of a country which is (and Churchill promised it would remain) a characteristically and distinctively English colony."[58] Mombasa, however, was far more tolerant of Indian influence than the rest of the colony, and the Wavell Memorial's conceptualization

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[55] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 4.

[56] See Avril Bell, *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities: Beyond Domination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), especially 11-12 and 26-30.

[57] Ibid., 27.

[58] Coryndon to Masterson Smith, January 18th 1923. As quoted in Christopher Youé, *Robert Throne Coryndon: Proconsular Imperialism in Southern and Eastern Africa 1897-1925* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1986), 170.

must have occurred far before 1922, when the Indian Crisis was reaching its apex. Nonetheless, the Wavell Memorial was a powerful iconographic referent for the intrepid spirit of the settler community, with a distinctly British texture.

Wavell's Memorial was not the only personalized settler monument in Kenya Colony. The Muthaiga Club in the outskirts of Nairobi, which Caroline Elkins depicts as a space where settlers "drank champagne and pink gin for breakfast, played cards, danced through the night, and generally woke up with someone else's spouse in the morning,"[59] features a memorial to settler war dead, while at the Nairobi Club another commemorates the fallen Frederick Selous. By the nature of their locales, each memorial is exclusive, insular, and reflective of a particular subset of the settler demographic in Kenya Colony. Dominated by predominantly Conservative, estate-owning "founders" of the Kenya settler community, the Muthaiga Club and Nairobi Club are ideal settings for understanding the thickness of the settler thread of First World War memory.

Like Wavell, though nearly double his age, infamous colonial adventurer and game hunter Frederick Selous was one of the founding figures of the settler regiment known as The Frontiersman.[60] At the age of 63, Selous was shot in the head by a sniper in 1916, prompting a friend to say: "to think too a man of his value has been out of the world by a dirty n*****."[61] Respecting his formidable claim as one of the greatest game hunters in East Africa, the Nairobi Club erected a memorial in the design of a buffalo, which would eventually become the insignia of the Kenya Regiment.[62] Selous represented a particular self-image of Kenyan settlers as

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[59] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2005), 47. iBooks.
[60] Nicholls, *Red Strangers*, 123.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Malcolm Page, *King's African Rifles: A History* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011), 240.

uniquely able to create a white man's country in an inhospitable and hostile African

environment. While some heroic imperialists might appear as the "pathfinders propagating the

ideals of Christian service and sacrifice, progress, Republican Universalism, [and] patriotism,"

Selous represented "its more acute forms, jingoism or chauvinism."[63] Selous was an essentialized

representation of what the settler in Kenya Colony needed to be in order to maintain and build

upon the Colony as a white man's country (even if he was not a settler in Kenya himself).[64]

Selous' standing as one of the greatest big game hunters cannot be overlooked.[65] The

image of Kenya as a space of adventure and an untamed wilderness primed for European

consumption is an essential element of Kenya's history and present.[66] Selous lived and died

performing colonial masculinity to its extreme,[67] which could be defined against the idle and

childish Kenyan, or the effeminate and traitorous Indian.[68] The freedom of private space

provided settlers the opportunity to define themselves through war commemoration, embracing a

different form of memorial with the explicit purpose of celebration and projection into the

Colony's future. In order to project into the future, however, the Selous memorial drew upon

[63] Berny Sebe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa: The promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 2.

[64] Ibid., 205.

[65] See Norman Etherington, *Big Game Hunter: A Biography of Frederick Courtney Selous* (Ramsbury: Robert Hale, 2016). Several biographies of Selous, from immediately after the First World War, have documented his international celebrity and acclaim as a hunter. See J.G. Millais, *Life of Frederick Coutenay, D.S.O. Capt. 25th Royal Fusileiers, Selous* (London: Longman, 1919) and Stephen Taylor, *The Mighty Nimrod: A Life of Frederick Courteney Selous, African Hunter and Adventurer, 1851-1917* (London: Collins, 1989).

[66] Will Jackson, "White Man's Country: Kenya Colony and the making of a myth," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5 (2) (2011): 344-368.

[67] See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal* (Pretoria: UNISA, 2001); Philippa Levine, *Gender and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

[68] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 35-36. For use of the 'babu' trope to describe Indians, see 54.

tropes of settler exceptionality – the environment and manliness – as a means of telling a history that centred on the rugged, white male.[69]

The opposing images of Selous and Wavell exemplify the differences between commemoration in public and private spaces. Wavell's Memorial was reflective and thankful, while Selous' was celebratory and future-oriented. Wavell exemplified the timelessness of external rule, and the sacrifice and endurance of British settlers in the continuance of Mombasa's status as an important outpost of British power. Selous, meanwhile, was the epitome of what the settler ought to be; the memorial was a physical reminder of what was yet to be achieved. One man protected colonialism, while the other extended it. Selous' memorial was more reflective of an Empire nationalism, whereas the connections to Britain – through form and spatial orientation – were predominant in remembering Wavell. The importance of public and private space in defining the form and meaning of settler memorials is essential to analyzing the other known memorials in Kenya, but throughout the exclusion of Indian and Kenyan iconography is striking. Whether jingoistic and nationalist, or reflective and reminiscent of commemoration in Britain, settler memorials and monuments were decidedly exclusive and insular, even if they projected an image of the settler that depended upon the other.

Both of the monuments, as well as other settler conceived projects, were what Duncan Bell describes as "counter-hegemonic site[s] of resistance, [spaces] of political opposition."[70] Commemoration of particular settlers lay outside the state because London ostensibly governed the territory; the nation, comprised of settlers seeking self-government, needed more than the

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[69] Ibid. See also Robert Morrell and Iahoucine Ouzgane, "African Masculinities: An Introduction," in *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1-20.

[70] Duncan S.A. Bell, "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54 (1) (2003): 66.

IWGC sites that constituted state-level remembrance. IWGC sites may have done some of the work of memory in Kenya Colony, but lacking a spatial dimension "rooted in particular constructions of an often-idealized bounded territory,"[71] the settler thread of memory, entangled as it was with imperial memory, was heavier and anchored in colonial spaces. But the settler thread of memory was itself made of different filaments, responding to the needs of particular communities. As Mark Connelly explains in the case of East London – itself more populous than the settler community of Kenya – public memorials were often quite conservative, echoing state memorialization. Yet in private facilities – workplaces, schools, and clubs – there was a different type of identification at work.[72] It was not the work of grief and mourning, but "the definition of the values an institution held dear."[73]

Hanna Smyth's conception of colonial and imperial identities as "nested layers" is helpful here. Specifically, "'National' and 'imperial' identities were not mutually exclusive…they co-existed."[74] In Kenya, settler sites of memory might mimic forms of commemoration throughout the Empire, yet they were tied specifically to place and responded to the needs of a community in question. Settler sites of memory established remembrance within the context of the political dynamics of the colony, which did not disavow imperial forms of memory, but refashioned the narrative to fit their needs in particular political contexts. Yet beyond the tenuous 'imperial'-'settler' divide, inward-facing extreme representations of settler identity coexisted with outward-facing conservative elements. This was a discourse on Great War memory, negotiated in a particular colonial context.

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[71] Ibid., 76.
[72] Connelly, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual*, Chapter 4.
[73] Ibid., 96.
[74] Smyth, "The Material Culture of Remembrance and Identity," 29.

Competing Memorials in Nairobi: The Muthaiga Club and Memorial Hall

Defining the colonial discourse as essential to a framework for analyzing war memorials in Kenya suggests a deeper conversation between two monuments in Nairobi's commemorative landscape. The combined memorial/monument at the heart of Nairobi's city centre – the Memorial Hall and the First World War Obelisk – align with the public space framework of Mombasa. The Muthaiga Country Club memorial, however, evokes a similar Empire nationalism to that of Selous' Memorial at the Nairobi Club. The memorials suggest a hybrid settler identification, with the tangled threads of a burgeoning proto-nationalist identity and an imperial identity defined by shared British heritage.

Figure 8. Memorial Hall and the Memorial Obelisk, Nairobi.[75]

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[75] "Before World War II," Old East Africa Postcards, https://www.oldeastafricapostcards.com/wp-content/gallery/nairobi-buildings-admin/na05a2.jpg

In 1923, after seven years of lobbying and fundraising by the East African War Memorial Fund,[76] Nairobi's War Memorial Committee decided upon the eventual location of the War Memorial Obelisk. The memorial drew its inspiration from the memorial in Kampala, Uganda that J.A. Stevenson had designed and constructed.[77] Ultimately, the Committee determined that the Obelisk was more appropriate than the Uganda-style cenotaph,[78] perhaps because it sits on a median between two lanes of Delamere Avenue. A tall and thin structure was all that could fit.[79] Nonetheless, it is clear that Governor Coryndon wished the monument to emulate the aura of Whitehall in London,[80] which dictated the final location of memorial and thus the obelisk form.

The War Memorial complemented the new Memorial Hall, which would serve as the chamber for meetings of the Legislative Council, Local Committees, and local settler groups throughout the 1920s.[81] While this was ostensibly a seat of power to be shared by settlers and the colonial state, the land upon which the Memorial Hall was built was called the Colonists' Plot, a space marked out for the exclusive use of the settler community.[82] Further, settlers had increasing control over not only the Legislative Council, but in the Municipal Council, and other official committees,[83] indicating that their influence was as, if not more, important than the Governor's views. When Nairobi completed the Memorial Hall, a portrait of Lord Delamere became an essential element of the tribute to the settler community and their war dead.[84] But the

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[76] Hodges, *Carrier Corps*, 112; 132. See also KNA, AP/1/1106, "East African War Memorial Fund," April 13th 1920, 12.

[77] KNA, AZG1/4/28, "Letter to Captain Schartze," December 15th, 1923, 9.

[78] KNA, AZG1/4/28, "Notes with Regard to the Memorial Hall," November 29th, 1923, 10.

[79] Ibid. This file only indicates that the space involved more suited an obelisk than a Cenotaph.

[80] KNA, AZG1/4/28, "Notes with Regard to the Memorial Hall," December 28th, 1923, 11. The reason I have noted these files differently is that Governor Coryndon inserted his notes on the original document on December 28th, while the meeting took place in November.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Laragh Larsen, "Shaping the Symbolic Landscape: Public Monuments in Nairobi, 1899-1992," (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2007), 87-88.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 92.

original plan called for a portrait to Sir Charles Eliot, Commissioner of British East Africa from 1900-1904,[85] not Lord Delamere.

Laragh Larsen's study of Nairobi's memorial landscape indicates that the Memorial and Memorial Hall's "unveiling as part of the triple ceremony…underline how the obelisk was ultimately a monument to the European colonists of Kenya."[86] Larsen's work remains exceptional and I was unable to unearth documents that shed any further light on the Nairobi Memorial. Larsen, however, argues that the obelisk suggests "its form, its function as a cenotaph…highlight the connection to Britain."[87] While the connection is essential, putting the Nairobi Memorial into the context of Empire-wide commemoration propounds a different interpretation. Like Wavell's Memorial, elements of the Nairobi Memorial remained tethered to British commemorative form, but its spatial orientation in the city of Nairobi took on a distinct colonial texture. As Larsen argues, this was an attempt to highlight settler ascendency and white supremacy, however, as I argue in the next chapters, the colonial state was obliged to maintain a different public-facing image, pressured from inside and outside the colony. As a project that required Governor Coryndon's assent, the Nairobi Memorial needed to maintain an air of ambiguity and remain conservative, maintaining the Empire – as the state – as the object that made the war dead worthy of commemoration, rather than the emerging settler community. The Memorial was a gathering place for grief and mourning, rather than the celebration of Kenya Colony itself.

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[85] KNA, AZG1/4/28, "Notes with Regard to the Memorial Hall," November 29th, 1923, 12. If both were commemorated in Memorial Hall, this would not be surprising. As Dane Kennedy observes, Eliot was an extreme social Darwinist who believed that "men of means" were the only way forward for Kenya Colony, as Kenyans were destined to falter. It is indicative, however, that the settler community of Nairobi chose Delamere to be the centre of attention at the ceremony, honouring a settler rather than a government official. See Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 23.
[86] Larsen, "Shaping the Symbolic Landscape," 91.
[87] Ibid., 129.

Figure 9. Muthaiga Club First World War Memorial.[88]

[88]Bob Barnes, "Cemetery: Muthaiga Club War Memorial," photographed in 2011, http://www.eamemorials.co.uk/EAMemorials/KENYA/Muthaiga%20Club%20War%20Memorial/MuthaigaWarMemorial-Muthaiga-Club-War-Memorial.htm.

There was no such ambiguity or conservativeness at the Muthaiga Club's Memorial. The Memorial maintains the obelisk form, with the addition of a bench on either side of it. It lists the fallen from the Country Club by name, inscribed on the front of the Memorial. Unlike the Nairobi Memorial, which simply states "to the Memory of our Glorious Dead," the Muthaiga Club Obelisk includes both a reverential passage – "Let those who come after see to it that their names be not forgotten" – and the phrase "Pro Patria," indicating that the Memorial was likely erected before the publishing of Wilfred Owen's 1920 poem "Dulce et Decorum Est," which singled out the Horace phrase as "the old lie." [89] Unlike the Nairobi Memorial, which does not even reference King and Country, the Muthaiga Obelisk conveys an extreme patriotism through the phrase. But to what country did the memorial reference?

Here, the location and a brief history of the Muthaiga Club is essential to understanding the symbolism of the monument. The Club's founder, Reginald Berkeley Cole, was one of the first settlers elected to the Legislative Council in 1920, alongside his brother-in-law Lord Delamere.[90] The connections to the political elite, and some of the most vociferous pro-settler voices in Kenya Colony, undergirded the popularity of the Muthaiga Club. It was thus the home-base for the Conservative elite of the colony who disdained the Colonial Office, felt threatened by the colonial state, and drove the aspiration for responsible self-government. The Club was the epitome of Kenya Colony's Empire Nationalism, at once virulent imperialists, but also aspiring nationalists. It was this entangled settler identification that produced a memorial that is at once explicitly tied to colonial space, but reminiscent of British forms of commemoration. As Deirdre Gilfedder reminds us, however, terms like 'pro patria' and 'for King and Country,' are confused

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[89] Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum est," in *The Complete Poems and Fragments:Volume I*, Jon Stallworthy ed. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983), 140.

[90] Judith Thurman, *Isak Dineson: The Life of a Storyteller* (London: Picador, 1995), 153-155.

by "the looseness of the terms Country, Nation and even Empire in the early 20th Century."[91] The vagaries of belonging to a grander British 'nation,' while being identified with a particular space within the Anglo-Empire, created multiple forms of identification.

For this reason and within the context of settler paramountcy in question, the Muthaiga Memorial's statement of *Pro Patria* should be interpreted within the framework of 'nested layers' of identification. The Muthaiga Club's founding members, many of whom had fought in the South African War, were clearly adherents to a form of Britishness that asserted its superiority and unique ability to spread civilization to the African continent. Like Selous, however, these were men who could afford and were encouraged to pursue the manly adventurism so representative of the settler spirt. Giving their lives in the course of warfare was the ultimate sacrifice to Empire, but also an example to those who followed of what the ideal settler should be. By no means was the Muthaiga Club's membership representative of the entire settler community, but their political influence and providence as the 'founders' of Kenya Colony afforded them the opportunity to remember the war dead in ways that reflected their self-image.

Without needing the approval of the colonial state, the Muthaiga Club Memorial commemorated the most vigilant proto-nationalist sentiment in the colony. The private nature of the memorial allowed for complete authority to design and commemorate in ways that responded to the aspirations of the Club's membership and the interpretation of sacrifice that best served those desires. If the Nairobi Memorial Obelisk can only be interpreted as exclusive to the settler community due to its spatial orientation – owing to its ambiguity – the Muthaiga Obelisk is explicitly insular. Far removed from any Kenyans or Indians, and middle-class settlers for that

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[91] Deirdre Gilfedder, "The Imperial Nature of the Australian national War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux," *Histoires de L'Oubli* 10 (1) (2012): 12.

matter,[92] save the domestic workers at the Club, it was one of the filaments that made up the settler thread of memory that conveyed the self-image of the settlers who have come to represent its colonial history in the popular retelling of the territory. The ambiguity of the Nairobi Memorial exemplifies the entanglement of imperial and colonial Great War memory and settler identification through its relation to the Nairobi landscape, but the Muthaiga Memorial itself is the embodiment of that entanglement.

Empire Nationalism, Kenyan Settlers, and the Colonial State: An Empire-wide Assessment

Thus far, we have seen how analyzing Empire-wide commemorative practices without attending to the political context of the places where they were deployed risks oversimplifying the motivations for, and creation of, particular sites of memory. Likewise, I have argued in this chapter that understanding colonial sites of memory without attending to the complexity of settler identification elides the considerations of the groups who conceived, designed, and erected those sites. Colonial sites of memory were not just impositions of Britishness and imperial power, but assertions of a particular kind of Britishness and imperial power unique to, in this case, Kenya Colony and particular subsets of it. In other words, "the social institutions and political circumstances of different societies could affect the making and interpretation of symbols."[93] This played out differently in privately funded and publicly funded memorials. Whereas in public, the political leanings of the most influential cadre of settler society needed to temper their image in the face of the colonial state, in private their views were on full display. Admittedly, this only tells us about one subset of settlers in Kenya, but it is indicative of the

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[92] For the demographic make-up of Kenya Colony after the Soldier Settlement Scheme see Duder, "Men of the Officer Class," especially 78-79.

[93] King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 12.

ways that those sites of memory, as opposed to IWGC memorials, have failed to sustain their meaning in the post-colonial era. Specifically, settler memorials were not open to inscription by Kenyans, whereas certain IWGC site were.

Though on a much smaller scale in Kenya, the examples of commemoration in South Africa and Australia provide instructive, if inadequate, analogs. Stephen Garton argues that, in the Australian case, the assertion of a strong national identity stemmed from its ability to "[turn] towards strengthening rather than undermining an emerging national ethos and political consensus," because it did not collapse under the pressure of war.[94] In Kenya Colony, as we have seen, the settler community was actually strengthened during the war, achieving ostensible paramountcy until at least 1923. The context of the Kenya settler communities' status, struggling to assert its control over Kenya, Indian, and other non-white populations, however, added a level of duress to post-war commemoration. As such, the stakes of memorialization were in solidifying the gains of the settler community in the First World War. IWGC sites in Kenya did the work of commemorating the soldiers of Empire uniformly, yet curiously local memorials turned back to the past, singling out elite members of the settler community for commemoration.[95] Unlike in Australia, where the state was also invested in ANZAC mythology,[96] it was up to settlers in Kenya to make the connection locally, giving colonial texture to an otherwise imperial endeavour.

The context in Australia was much different. As I detailed in a previous discussion, the focus upon the elimination of Indigenous peoples in the absence of trusteeship assured settler ascendency, especially as it moved towards Dominion status. Likewise, its population was in the

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[94] Garton, "Demobilization and Empire,"
[95] Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*, 154.
[96] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorial in the Australian landscape* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 2005).

majority, rather than being a minority amongst minorities as was the case in Kenya Colony. What sets Kenya's settler thread of memory apart from Australia's is that the added political context of duress in the face of outside control and internal protest meant that the stakes of memorialization were much higher, even if on a smaller scale. Jeremy Foster's conceptualization of national identity as framed by "how the national community is linked to the land" and ""how the national community is delimited in relation to other groups" is essential here.[97] In both Australia and Kenya, "national identity could not be understood separately from the larger-scale British imperial identity,"[98] yet specific internal relationships with the land ownership and the populations who inhabited those lands, meant that identification was responsive to local sociopolitical dynamics, which were in stark contrast in the two colonies.

South Africa, on the face of it, provides a much better comparison for Kenya. Yet there as well the particularity of political dynamics overshadows the similarities in demographic make-up. John Lambert describes how English-speaking South Africans were forced to define themselves against not only non-white subjects, but other whites as well.[99] In the process, they "kept alive the memories of only a segment of a nation, in the process making it difficult for English-speakers to assimilate their identity into a wider South African identity."[100] In Kenya, however, the Soldier Settlement Scheme transformed the Colony from a patchwork of South African, Canadian, British, and other European settlers, into a distinctly British and aristocratic society.[101] Similarly, the settlers who gained control of the territory's politics were predominantly British or Anglo-Irish in origin, meaning the internal competition for memory

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[97] Foster, *Washed with Sun*, 16-17.
[98] Ibid., 17.
[99] Lambert, "Tell England Ye Who Pass this Monument," 680.
[100] Ibid.
[101] See, for example, Kennedy, *Islands of White*; CJD Duder, "Men of the Officer Class."

creation was comparatively muted in Kenya Colony. This is not to paint with too broad brush-strokes,[102] but to acknowledge that settler power came from the predominantly British upper-class inhabitants.[103] While South African identification within the confines of the land and the peoples who inhabited it may have been similar to Kenya Colony, the connections to the rest of the Empire were contested at different levels. Whereas in South Africa it was Afrikaner Republicanism that challenged English-speaking national identity,[104] in Kenya it was the Colonial Office and the colonial state contesting settler nationalism from the outside.

The location of pressure upon settler identification affected their associations within the 'British World' and in relation to the Empire in crucial ways. In South Africa, Empire was a supportive element of a burgeoning national identity in the English-speaking community. South Africans who fought in the First World War were the loyal subjects who had come to the Empire's defence. This was equally true in Kenya, as the Colony sacrificed proportionally more men than any other British territory, but the explicit support for their independence was actually stymied by their imperial connection. For the "two great 'Ascendencies' of Anglo-Ireland and Anglo-India,"[105] this was a familiar feeling, having settled in Kenya as "a refuge from the rising tide of nationalism."[106] Being set aside under the auspices of African paramountcy would have been a double blow. Thus, memorials and monuments in Kenya needed to redefine the colonial landscape not just as the site of imperial power and Britishness, but of settlers more specifically. The work of erecting monuments was as much about defining settler political power in the face of imperial oversight as it was a vindication of the British Empire as a whole. This was a vision

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[102] For the diversity within the Kenya settler community, see Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 130; Duder, "Men of the Officer Class,"; Duder and Youé, "Paice's Place."

[103] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 140.

[104] Nasson, "Delville Wood and the South African Memory of the Great War," 64-65.

[105] Duder, "Men of the Officer Class," 78.

[106] Ibid., 79.

of Kenya that the Colonial Office and the seat of the Governor needed to temper, even if its policies continued to benefit settlers.

5 – Settler Filaments II: Community Service and Missionary Trusteeship as Great War Memory

> The East African Women's League was founded in 1917…[when] the first World War was at its height and some of the first problems confronting the newly formed League were the provision of cloth for wounded soldiers in hospital in Nairobi, and, later, the threat of famine in some of the native areas through drought.
>
>   - A Short History of the East Africa Women's League[1]

> Carrier Corps Camp: Colonel Ainsworth [is] asking [that] the Municipal Committee should take over the Carrier Corps site and erections thereon and run them as a Native Location.
>
>   - Works Committee, April 15th, 1919[2]

As the East African campaign reached its height in 1917, settler society mobilized to aid the effort. While settler men joined military ranks, tended to farms, and took on greater responsibility for Kenya Colony's politics, groups at the margins of settler society, specifically women and missionaries, also attempted to do their part. The East African Women's League (EAWL) formed the backbone of Red Cross work in East Africa, while missionaries advocated for Kenyan interests, especially through direct relief from the effects of the fighting. Just as in Britain and the Dominions, Kenya's First World War was total, even if its mobilization was on a smaller scale. By 1918, it was clear that the post-war recovery would follow along similar lines, with settler men addressing economic recovery, political responses, and colonial defence, while women and missionaries tended to society through education, family care, and healing the wounds of war, both physically and psychologically. The commemorative work of the EAWL and missionaries exemplifies the diverse interpretations of the meaning of the First World War in Kenya Colony. Women and missionaries envisioned the First World War as meaningful for the trajectory of their organizations, but continued to exclude, or selectively include, the Kenyan role

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[11] KNA, MSS/26/12, "A Short History of the East African Women's League," 1. Alternatively, KNA, AZG1/7/24, 216-219.

[2] KNA, RN/4/55, "Works Committee Minutes," April 15th, 1919, 58.

in the First World War. In the process, the First World War was fashioned in white terms, rather than embracing the sacrifices of its black inhabitants.

Though the outcome of the EAWL and missionary-driven commemoration was similar to that of the IWGC, the settler political elite, and colonial officials, the means through which their commemorative programs came into being was altogether different. Two individuals who had ambivalent relationships with the settler elite, John Ainsworth and Isabel McGregor Ross, created two of the dominant organizations responsible for missionary and settler women's work in Kenya Colony: the EAWL and the War Relief Fund for Africans. Each organization continued their wartime work of caring for Kenya Colony's society. The EAWL predominantly served Indian and Kenyan families, while the War Relief Fund for Africans administered funds raised from 1914-1918 to memorialize the Kenyan sacrifice for the British cause. In the process, both the EAWL and the War Relief Fund for Africans provided pillars of support for settler society; the EAWL, after 1922, did so explicitly through political support for their male compatriots, just as missionaries supported the general thrust of European influence in East Africa even if they questioned the settlers' tact.

John Ainsworth was not a missionary. He was "the most pro-African of all senior administrators,"[3] according to historian Robert Maxon. Ainsworth, on retirement leave from his post in Kenya, remained active in politics during the Northey years, with his advice remaining instrumental to curbing settler paramountcy.[4] Ainsworth framed his vision for the War Relief Fund for Africans within the context of his first-hand observations of the effects of the First World War on Kenyan communities.[5] Upon his retirement, however, the Municipal Council

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[3] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya*, 195.
[4] Maxon, *Struggle for Kenya,* chapters 6 and 7.
[5] KNA, RN/4/55, "Works Committee Minutes," April 15th, 1919, 58.

assigned relief and memorial duties to Canon Burns and Father Macnamara, who had been active

lobbyists for a Memorial Hall for Africans in the new 'Native Location' of Pumwani in Nairobi

since the early 1920s.[6] Thus it was not settlers but the ecclesiastical pillar of what Robert Tignor

calls the 'three societies' in Kenya Colony[7] who the Municipal Council tasked with

memorializing the Kenyan role in the Great War in Nairobi's landscape (complimenting the

IWGC's work).

While I have downplayed the significance of missionaries in Kenya Colony's postwar

history thus far, their role is integral to understanding the dynamic political atmosphere in the

1920s. The white men of means who have been the focus of this study were responsive to

religious organizations and humanitarian lobbies who were essential to the socio-cultural "single

chain mail"[8] of whiteness, but also issued clear challenges to labour and land-focused policy

friendly to settler interests.[9] Missionaries played the roles of educators, what we might call

human rights advocates today, and, from the settler perspective, spread "the germ of

discontent"[10] through educational programs (although this was laid firmly at the feet of Catholic

rather than Protestant missions [11]). Missionaries made early attempts to work with settlers and

administrators in their 'civilizing mission,' but settlers remained wary of the missions "not

producing faithful servants, and for lobbying British public opinion in defence of native

interests." [12] Despite settlers' concerns, "missionaries consider[ed] their work as beneficial to the

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[6] See KNA, RN/4/55, "Report of Native Affairs Committee," August 30th, 1926, 175; KNA, AP/1/1106.
[7] Robert Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 355.
[8] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 59.
[9] See for example Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya*, especially chapters 6 and 9; Maxon, *The Struggle for Kenya*.
[10] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 162.
[11] Ibid., note 59, 239.
[12] Renison M. Githige, "The Mission State Relationship in Colonial Kenya: A Summary," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 13 (2) (1982): 112. See also John E. Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The Interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government and Nationalist Enterprise in the Development of Formal Education in Kenya* (London: Longman, 1970).

settlers in that missions trained their labourers."[13] Ultimately, missionaries remained part of the dominant racial order in Kenya, but their role must be considered separate from that of settlers, particularly those on large estates and in exclusive social groups. Missionaries, for their part, worked in the Kenyan areas where settlers rarely ventured.

The leading figure within the missionary cadres in Nairobi was Canon Burns, the appointed advocate of Kenyan interests in the colony after the Devonshire White Paper.[14] Burns' work tried to interpret the effects of colonial policy on Kenyans and the efficacy of settler policy in achieving the 'civilizing mission.' Missionaries spoke for Kenyans on most issues, even after the creation of Local Native Councils in 1924.[15] Trusted chiefs and headmen were integral parts in the administrative machinery in Kenya colony, but missionaries never relinquished their role as the primary 'civilizing' arm of colonialism in Kenya. Even if the role was largely artificial in the face of settler political power, missionaries provided substantive checks upon settler movements for self-government, ensuring that "settlers were essentially supplicants at the Imperial table."[16] Concerned with the prospects of their own work in Kenyan communities, however, missionaries like Canon Burns needed to tread lightly when it came to challenging settler advances.

Like missionaries, women occupied a liminal role in settler society, at once essential to reproducing British society abroad but without formal power in the political sphere. Lady Isabel McGregor Ross, the founder of EAWL, helped define settler women's' niche as the maternalistic force in Kenya's settler society. Isabel was the wife of William McGregor Ross and the couple

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[13] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship in Colonial Kenya," 112.

[14] CJD Duder, "An Army of One's Own: The Politics of the Kenya Defence Force," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 25 (2) (1991): 210.

[15] R.M. Mambo, "Local Native Councils and Education in Kenya: the Case of the Coast Province, 1925-1930," *Transafrican Journal of History* 10 (1981): 61-86. See also Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya*.

[16] Duder, "An Army of One's Own," 210.

were two of the eminent critics of settler policy in Kenya. William served as the Director of

Public Works until 1922, offering continuous opposition to settler policy, especially in Nairobi.[17]

Meanwhile, under Isabel's leadership, the EAWL concerned itself mostly with the care of

Kenyan women and children, while linking settler women in the larger urban centres to their

sisters not only in the rural areas of Kenya Colony but across the British Empire more generally.

The EAWL was not an overtly political group, but its members shaped the contours of social life

in Kenya Colony and, from time to time, weighed in on political issues where a particular policy

fell under the traditional domain of women or required a women's perspective.[18] The EAWL was

by no means the only women's organization in Kenya Colony, but it was a dominant force in

Kenya's civil society.

The earliest work of the League focused on direct war relief in tandem with the Red

Cross. Capitalizing on movements throughout the British Empire, and McGregor Ross' status as

a leading suffragette, the EAWL also led the campaign for the women's franchise in Kenya

Colony, which they achieved in 1918. [19] Thus the EAWL was part of an Empire-wide

renegotiation of women's role in the building of nations, the maintenance and extension of

Empire, and, crucially for the auspices of this study, healing the wounds of war in the interwar

era.[20] The founders of the League thus responded to the great outpouring of need in the wake of

the First World War, finding a role for settler women in the rebuilding of society after 1918.

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[17] Diana Wylie, "Confrontation over Kenya: The Colonial Office and Its Critics, 1918-1940," *The Jorunal of African History* 18 (3) (1977): 428.

[18] Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak."

[19] Ibid. East Africa Women's League, "Formation of the EAWL," History of the EAWL, last updated 2015, www.eawl.org/formation.

[20] The literature on gender, war, and commemoration is significant, as is the growing attention to women at war. See, for example: Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jane Potter, *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nicoletta F. Gullace, *"The Blood of Our Sons": Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002); Erika Kuhlman, *Reconstructing Patriarchy after the Great War: Women, Gender, and*

The evolution of the EAWL is itself a fascinating, yet underappreciated, aspect of Kenya's colonial history. McGregor Ross' early presidency gave way to Lady MacMillan's presidency by 1923, with the organization under financial duress, which signaled a change in direction in the EAWL's work.[21] Lady McMillan, the wife of American millionaire Northrup McMillan – who renounced his American citizenship to fight in the First World War with the Frontiersmen[22] - was a close friend and political ally of Lord Delamere.[23] The McMillans mingled within a social group that gave them access to political power and elite social status. Unlike Isabel McGregor Ross, Lady McMillan was a firm ally of the 'big men' (and women) in Kenya Colony, with the McMillan Memorial Library still standing in Nairobi as a testament to their political clout.

McMillan's presidency moved the organization from a mandate that sought to relieve suffering in Kenyan communities to concrete interventions in 'native areas' to overhaul existing household practices. In short, the EAWL began lobbying for policies that curbed 'uncivilized behaviour.'[24] Despite poor documentation in the KNA for the EAWL's early history, the reputation of Isabel and her husband William suggest a marked shift after their departure towards cultural reform in Indian and Kenyan households with McMillan at the helm. After 1925, where documentation provides a clearer definition of the organization and its principles, the EAWL

Postwar Reconciliation between Nations (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Christa Hammerle, Oswald, Uberregger, and Birgitta Bader Zaar, eds., *Gender and the First World* War (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Susan Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor, eds., *Gender and the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Alison S. Fell, *Women As Veterans in Britain and France After the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[21] East African Women's League, "The 1920s," History of the EAWL, last updated 2015, www.eawl.org/the1920s.

[22] Judy Aldrick, *Northrup, The Life of William Northrup McMillan* (Kijabe: Old Africa Books, 2012), 125.

[23] Ferdinand Mwongela, "The fortress Sir McMillan live in," *The Standard*, December 31 2009, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/home-away/article/1144031466/the-fortress-sir-mcmillan-lived-in. See also Aldrick, *Northrup*.

[24] See Deanne Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak: Imperial Activism and Settler Society, c. 1930," *Journal of British Studies* 54 (April 2015): 433-456.

moved in lockstep with the settler political elite. The EAWL is therefore an illustrative group

through which historians can glean a fuller understanding of settler society, specifically the ways

in which women influenced colonial culture.

Ultimately, through their commemorative programs the EAWL and missionaries

established threads of non-state memory-making in the 1920s. Missionaries and women

exemplify how settler, state, and supra or sub state threads of memory knotted together in the

context of colonial politics. In the process, Kenyan memory of the First World War beyond the

community level became locked within the knots. With settler society, the state, missionaries,

and the IWGC all unable to straighten out the threads of memory in Kenya Colony, they only

pulled the knot tighter. Kenyan memory and meaning-making rarely made it into official

commemorations. The state and civil society appropriated Kenyan sacrifices and supposed they

could speak for Kenyan communities. Whether it was a trans-imperial organization like the

IWGC, the settler political elite, Governors and administrators, or liminal members of settler

society like women and missionaries, Kenyan sacrifices were deployed to achieve particular

political agendas when they were not suppressed outright. Meanwhile, the ostensible trustees of

Kenya Colony offered few opportunities for healing, mourning, grieving, and building

communities around the memory of the Great War.

**The 'Native' War Memorial Hall: Segregation, Town Planning, and the Politics of
Trusteeship**

If there was a sector of Kenya Colony's civil society that was most likely to provide

outlets for a Kenyan memory of the First World War, it was missionaries. Borne partially of self-

interest, but driven largely by genuine efforts to bring Africans into line with Christian notions of

'civility,' missionaries took on the quotidian work of colonialism within Kenyan communities. Their work was largely resigned to spaces outside large urban centres because urban settings were reserved mostly for settler uses. Nonetheless, Kenyans still outnumbered Britons in cities like Nairobi, which created a role for missionaries in the capital. As the settler population grew in the years immediately following the Great War, the pressures of Black, Indian, and white bodies coming into contact in the capital stimulated a series of policy-making decisions meant to alleviate conflict between the groups.

In 1924, Nairobi was in the middle of scheme to overhaul its city layout. On the one hand, the Municipal Council wished to have a capital worthy of other capitals of the Empire, but on the other its redevelopment plan was a remedy for the presence of Indian and Kenyan bodies in white-coded Nairobi.[25] It was the first of several Town Planning schemes in the 1920s, overshadowed only by the plans for 1927-1928. The key to both plans was the creation of 'native locations' that would segregate the city. The Town Planning Committee established Pumwani in 1923 and Kariokor in 1929 as the two main designated areas for Kenyans in Nairobi.[26] As Ainsworth envisioned it, Kariokor became a 'native location' in the same area that served as the Carrier Corps depot during the First World War. Stemming from concerns over the poor conditions of Kenyan housing, the health of labourers in Nairobi, and the segregation of the races, the Town Planning Schemes clearly demarcated the boundaries of white, Kenyan, and Indian spaces, despite the inability to enforce boundaries over the long-term.[27] As early as 1919, it was clear that memorialization and segregation could go hand-in-hand.

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[25] KNA, RN/6/45, "Meeting Concerning the City Square Scheme," n.d., 1. See also Luise White, *Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), especially chapter 3; Alison Hay and Richard Harris, " 'Shauri ya Sera Kali': the colonial regime of urban housing in Kenya to 1939," *Urban History* 34 (3) (2007): 504-540.

[26] White, *Comforts of Home*, 51. On the history of Kariokor see redevelopment plans from 1962: KNA, ACW/31/73.

[27] Hay and Harris, "The colonial regime of urban housing in Kenya."

While the connection to the First World War is obvious for the Kariokor district, Pumwani also had a commemorative purpose. After years of advocacy, the Committee decided on Pumwani as the site of a Memorial Hall for utilitarian uses. It was to be managed by the missionaries responsible for the programs and services in 'native locations.'[28] The commemorative project achieved two related goals, namely transferring the responsibility for providing services to Nairobi's Kenyan population to non-state entities, and dispensing of funds from the East Africa War Relief Fund for Africans, which had been on the books since the end of the war. Thus, the Town Planning Committee carefully fitted the plans for the 'Native' Memorial Hall into its existing plan for segregating the city and streamlining its administration as a colonial capital. The Hall was not a testament to Kenyan sacrifices from 1914-1918, but a part of achieving the Town Planning Scheme's objectives.

The 'Native' Memorial Hall, however, was clearly not a priority for the Town Planning Committee. The plans for the redeployment of funds from the East Africa War Relief Fund for Africans began in 1919, but Governor Robert Coryndon only laid the first cornerstone for the 'Native' Memorial Hall in 1924, at a ceremony for which scant evidence remains.[29] Further, the Pumwani housing scheme did not begin in earnest until 1925, leading to considerable delays in erecting the Memorial Hall.[30] The transfer of the program for the Hall to the missions in the area highlight the division of responsibilities within Kenya Colony when it came to administering services for Kenyan populations. Specifically, the state and settlers were concerned more with making the 'idle' Kenyan work and farm, while the missions took up educational and social

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[28] KNA, AP/1/1106, "Minutes of a Meeting Held at Mr. Ainsworth's House," October 10th, 1919, 1-2.
[29] KNA, "Ukamba Annual Report, 1924," subsection on Native Affairs in non-Native Areas, 18. Government Archives, Reel 1.
[30] "Public Health," Kenya Colony Annual Report, 1924 (New York: Andronicus), 6-7. All annual reports are available at the University of Syracuse Bird Library.

tasks. The division of responsibilities thus defined the framework for Kenyan memorialization in Nairobi, leading to the considerable delay in the Hall's construction.

After the transfer of responsibilities to the missions, Canon Burns asked for a plot of land to be set aside for the Memorial Hall in close proximity to the IWGC monument.[31] In November 1925, with the Memorial Hall apparently built, the Native Affairs Committee proposed an official opening for 12 December 1925,[32] but this was delayed until at least 20 March 1926.[33] The missionaries, settlers, and the administration were still debating the actual use of the Memorial Hall throughout 1926, with the Native Council "unanimously in favour of the Native Memorial Hall being used as a school."[34] The debate over the uses of the East Africa Memorial Fund and any potential memorial project also date to 1919 and the advocacy of J.W. Arthur, another prominent missionary in Kenya Colony. Arthur was an ardent advocate for training schools and education under the direction of missionaries.[35] The Hall, however, was eventually used for dances and other entertainment, falling into disrepair by the 1930s.[36] Nonetheless, the missionary responsibility for schooling and civilizing prompted the proposal for a utilitarian function of the 'Native' Memorial Hall.

First World War memory also had clear benefits for missionary work in Kenya Colony. Advancing educational policy was key to spreading religious teachings in an effort to civilize and extend Church power throughout the British, and indeed European, Empire(s). Especially in the planning stages of the Memorial Hall between 1919-1923, the missionaries responsible for the development collaborated with the Municipal Council in ways that provided for the

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[31] RN/4/55, "Works Committee," May 9th, 1919, 61.
[32] KNA, RN/4/55, "Report of Native Affairs Committee," November 17th, 1925, 166.
[33] KNA, RN/4/67, "Report of the Municipal Council Meeting," March 16th, 1926, 13-14.
[34] KNA, RN/4/55, "Report of Native Affairs Committee," August 30th, 1926, 175.
[35] Anne King, "JW Arthur and African Interests," in *Biographical Essays on Imperialism and Collaboration in Colony Kenya*, B.E. Kipkorir ed. (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980).
[36] White, *Comforts of Home*, 191.

segregation of the city.[37] The contradictions of at once desiring the settler community to be a good influence upon Kenyans and "on the other hand, the European community [being] not ready to share services with Africans, [resulted in] segregated services in Nairobi, administered by the same missionaries."[38] The commemoration of the First World War for Kenyans thus supported ongoing policies of distancing Kenyan populations from the white community, in turn subsuming their memorialization to colonial control. Borne of good intentions – the improvement of Kenyan areas of Nairobi through social services – the Municipal Council constrained missionary efforts to achieve their 'civilizing mission.'

The irony is thick when considering the demographics of Nairobi and the impetus for segregation. The First World War made Nairobi a hub for Carrier deployment, thus increasing the Kenyan population in the city. Furthermore, the Soldier Settlement Scheme increased the settler population of the city and put pressure upon the existing infrastructure. Pumwani itself was part of a scheme to eliminate two other Kenyan locations – Kilelwesha and Pangani – concentrating the non-white areas to free up "valuable" land for settler uses.[39] Thus a fund developed for relief from the conditions of warfare morphed into a program to commemorate Kenyan sacrifices, which in turn helped consolidate the segregation of the city and a shrinking of available area for Kenyan uses. The result was a far cry from what Ainsworth had envisioned when he helped create the War Relief Fund. The plans for Pumwani and the 'Native' Memorial Hall drove settler control of Nairobi rather than providing real relief for and remembrance of the Kenyan part in the Great War.

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[37] KNA, RN/4/55, especially after 61.
[38] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship," 112.
[39] KNA, RN/4/67.

Shamsul Alam's discussion of colonial hegemony is instructive here. Following leading theorists of colonial hegemony, Alam delineates the specificity required to understand the hegemonic relationship between colonizer and colonized in the context of "mature" imperialism.[40] In particular, the dynamic interplay of persuasion and coercion constitute the dual pillars of colonial rule. Persuasion "constitutes the apparently benevolent mission of colonial modernity, like the introduction of Western education, health care, penal systems, or railways," while coercion is the use of direct force and violence.[41] Coercion and persuasion were key elements of achieving "the domination of physical space, the transformation of natives' minds, and the integration of the local economy into the Western capitalist system."[42]

The location of the Hall was replete with the symbolism of colonial hegemony. Close to the IWGC monument, the Hall was under the watchful gaze of the loyal Kenyans who came to the defence of the Empire and the Colony. As if that was not sufficient, the Native Commissioner's office sat at the junction just outside of the monument and close to the Hall. The monument defined the ideal Kenyan subject – loyal, sacrificial, obedient – while the Native Commissioner served as the unseen eyes of the colonial state in the panopticon of Nairobi. All the while, the intended uses of the Hall were about civilizing Kenyan society. The settler dominance of local politics pulled the missionary-driven commemoration of the First World War in the Kenyan section of Nairobi into the knotted political context of colonial control. In an attempt to turn the sacrifice for Empire into better living conditions and social lives for Kenyans inhabiting Nairobi – itself an aspect of colonial hegemony – commemoration was meaningful only insofar as it remained responsive to settler imperatives.

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[40] S.M Shamsul Alam, *Rethinking Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1-20.

[41] Ibid., 6.

[42] Ibid., 15.

Fundamental to understanding the development of a commemorative culture in Kenya Colony is that there was both broad commonality within the white community of Kenya but also contestation as well. Missionaries and the colonial state, supported by metropolitan interests, attempted to soften the edges of colonial projects. Nonetheless, the necessity of the settler community for the successful subjugation and development of the territory opened those systems up to cooption, with varying levels of success. In what was deemed a "non-Native" area like Nairobi, the successful cooption of commemorative programs is unsurprising. The missionary response and impulse to 'civilize' fit well with plans to re-shape Nairobi's urban dynamics, meshing with an evolving system of urban segregation.

The EAWL, Maternal Trusteeship, and Great War Memory

The history of urban segregation, the concentration of 'native areas,' and the development of Pumwani and Kariokor through the 1920s has important connections with the history of the EAWL as well. Until 1922, Isabel and William McGregor Ross were key figures in Kenya Colony, with the latter serving as the Director of Public Works for 17 years. The Rosses' personal views on settlement flowed from "puritan ethics as a practical guide for the behaviour even of government."[43] As a proud Scotsman who "disapproved of the English class system,"[44] William McGregor stood in stark opposition to the political elite in the settler community. Isabel was a prominent suffragette in Britain, bringing the cause to Kenya in 1919.[45] According to Marc Matera, she was "staunchly independent in her views[,]…an ardent feminist and committed

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[43] Wylie, "Norman Leys and McGregor Ross," 295.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Robert M. Maxon and Thomas P. Ofcansky eds., *The Historical Dictionary of Kenya* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), 63.

activist."[46] Above all, the couple was part of a growing movement, both amongst administrators and in the metropole, who objected to settler behaviour and desired a more humanitarian approach to Empire.

In some ways, the stories of the Rosses and Fabian Ware bear resemblance. They shared a common disdain for a class system that upheld inequality and recognized that the elite in society did not necessarily earn their roles. The egalitarian visions of the Rosses and Ware drove their work within the Empire, with Ware insisting upon equal treatment, while William McGregor Ross emphasized the importance of Kenyan development and the sharing of the fruits of the Colony's labour. Ware certainly did not oversee a program that adhered to his vision, in many ways a product of existing circumstances caused by the politics in Kenya and competing views and practices within the IWGC. Likewise, Ross operated predominantly under settler-friendly conditions, which in turn constrained his ability to lobby for his particular vision of Empire. In many ways, both Ware and the Rosses embodied the competing visions under the common banner of the British Empire. The contestation of what Empire meant played out through the practice of colonialism and Kenya was caught in between self-governing territory and trading colony statuses.

The Rosses left Kenya when their calls for adherence to the tenets of trusteeship grew too loud for prominent settlers who had long rejected William's role in Kenya. The Public Works Department thus moved from a period of overwhelming government action on the file, to domination by private enterprises.[47]Meanwhile, the EAWL shifted its leadership and focus. The

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[46] Marx Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 226. See also Susan Pedersen, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy Making," in *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*, Margaret M. Lock and Judith Farquhar eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 337.
[47] Wylie, "Norman Leys and McGregor Ross," 303-304.

departure of the Ross' is thus essential to the trajectory of commemoration in Kenya for multiple reasons. First, it should be noted that the Nairobi War Memorial Hall and Obelisk were erected through private enterprises rather than the government, as was the 'Native' Memorial Hall in Pumwani.[48] This correlated with the marked shift towards settler dominance of Municipal Affairs in Nairobi, and settler suspicions of government officials like McGregor Ross. Further, Ross' departure as Director of Public Work hints at the extent of settler power in the early 1920s, especially as their control over infrastructure, development, and land allocation delimited the extent to which non-state actors, and even the state itself, could act on behalf of Kenyan populations. Missionaries, political lobbies, and liberal-minded officials either functioned within the framework of settler ascendency or met the same fate as Ross. Finally, for the EAWL, the change in leadership precipitated by Ross's leave to England meant it was freed up for a more settler-friendly occupants.[49] Those crucial six years between 1918-1924, and especially between 1922-1924, represented the period when Kenya Colony devised the majority of infrastructural commemorative work, and when a growth in population and political power stimulated a more aristocratic socio-political culture.

The EAWL, however, was not simply a carbon copy of male settler society. The organization, especially after Ross's departure, specialized in projects that sought to bring Kenyan domestic life to European standards, including curtailing practices deemed barbaric, such as female circumcision in Gikuyu culture.[50] The EAWL, in reference to the campaign against female circumcision, differed greatly from Isabel Ross, as the latter supported Kenyan

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[48] See Chapter 3 for Memorial Hall and the Obelisk. For 'Native' Memorial Hall see KNA, RN/4/55.

[49] See Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak," 440. Indeed, Ross' trepidations about the fate of the EAWL appeared early, as quoted in Van Tol: "[the EAWL] might just become a woman settler Society for bickering the Government!"

[50] See KNA, AZG1-7-24, "EAT Dutton to Mrs. R.B. Turner," January 17th, 1930, 5-6.

rights to practice cultural traditions.[51] The differences between Ross and the EAWL on the circumcision issue emphasizes the organizations' move from the politics of maternal imperialism[52] to maternal settler colonialism.[53] Settler women were just as instrumental to the subjugation of Kenyan communities as their male compatriots.

The two frameworks for understanding women's role in Empire – maternal imperialism and maternal settler colonialism – shared a common purpose, however. Settlers still thought themselves "inhabitants of a country they deemed to be the most progressive and civilised nation of the world,"[54] but "[those] emigrant women in settler societies did not necessarily act in accordance with the objectives and approaches prescribed by campaigners in Britain."[55] While much of the EAWL's work might be understood through the lens of an Empire-wide deployment of racial difference as a means to extoll the superior qualities of whiteness,[56] I argue here that several programs connected to the First World War spoke exclusively to the settler community.

One of those programs, the Poppy Drive, remained largely unchanged from 1922 through to the end of the 1920s. The EAWL orchestrated yearly Poppy Drives and Legion Balls as social events that were exclusive to the white settler communities. The organization's annual reports indicate that these social gatherings were some of the League's only programs directed at the care of the white settler community as opposed to their work in the domestic lives of Kenyans

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[51] Pederson, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts," 337.

[52] The idea of feminists in Britain finding their place in Empire through their 'daughters' in the colonies owes its origins to work by Antoinette Burton. See Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Inidan Women, and Imperial Culture 1865-1915* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

[53] More recent than its counterpart in imperial studies, maternal colonialism is more specific to settler colonies. Growing out of the newer field of settler colonial studies, the term provides a useful degree of specificity, shifting our view from the metropole to the colony. See Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

[54] Claire Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 9.

[55] Ibid., 10.

[56] See Burton, *Burdens of History*.

and Indians. Its commemorative work framed the First World War as a white experience, playing a constitutive role in postwar schemes to ensure settlers cared for their veterans and remembered their dead. Given the EAWL's maternal role in Kenya Colony's civil society, it is no surprise that the League championed veterans' care. But considering the immense toll the Great War exacted upon Kenyan communities, especially women and children left without husbands and fathers, it is curious that the EAWL's commemorative projects did not also include remedies for Kenyan communities.

The administration of Poppy Drives and the organization of Legion Balls prior to 1928, when the British Legion's East African Branch came into being, were staples of social cohesion in the interwar years. The EAWL called upon the settler community to contribute to the care of white veterans through the Poppy Drive, while it brought settler communities together through Legion Balls. Notably, these were two of the only programs that did not concern the welfare and reform of Kenyan domestic life.[57] As the history of the organization described, "the family system of the Indians in the Colony, and the tribal customs of Africans, have covered the major problems that come under the heading of the welfare of women and children."[58] The poppy drive and the Legion Balls thus contributed to the racialized colonial discourse of Kenya Colony, but through action in white communities rather than settler work in Kenyan communities. The EAWL viewed the First World War as the history of white settlers, crucial to the meaning of the conflict for white communities, rather than acknowledging the broad-based mobilization of Kenyan society.

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[57] The extent of the EAWL's programs can be found in their yearly annual reports. See, for example, KNA, AZG1/7/24, "Report of the Annual Meeting of the EAWL Council and The President's Annual Report, 1930," 14.

[58] EAWL, "A Short History of the EAWL," KNA AZG1/7/24, 216. See also the larger literature on the 'Black Peril' and the regulation of Kenyan bodies as a means of extending white prestige as part of a broader colonial discourse, for example, Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 85-88; Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 128-147.

The EAWL's commemorative work in the inter-war years is fascinating because the colonial discourse at work was not necessarily that of 'othering' Kenyans, but of fastening the bonds of the white community through the memory of the First World War. Inevitably, the act of reproducing social events and norms from the metropole set the white settler community apart from the subjects over whom they ruled; however, the type of identification in which the EAWL engaged through commemoration was not as explicit as the 'civilizing' and domestic reform narratives that marked the EAWL's other programs. The EAWL had a vested interest in setting themselves out as settlers, as opposed to British citizens, because their livelihoods were equally in question as their male counterparts, if not more so due to their liminal role in settler society.

As E.A.T. Dutton put it to Ailsa Turner, the League's President from 1925, it was essential that the EAWL "disabuse people…of the apparently prevalent idea that women in East Africa do absolutely nothing for the natives…. The whole of the debate is an example of the kind of thing which is being said about the country and apparently allowed to pass by default."[59] Deanne van Tol argues, for example, that in the debate over Closer Union with Uganda and Tanganyika, "empowered white women in Kenya…involved [themselves] in a colonial politics that sought to disempower African men and women."[60] In order to do so the EAWL needed to create strong bonds of white settler identity, to feel at home in Kenya, and unite themselves "to do everything we possibly can to assist our fellow countrymen to obtain a solution of the question of the future of this Colony."[61] The Poppy Drives, Legion Balls, and commemorative work served such a purpose, highlighting the distinct ways that women intervened in colonial practice.

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[59] KNA, AZG1/7/24, "E.A.T. Dutton to Mrs. R.B. Turner," November 10th, 1929, 2.
[60] Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak," 437.
[61] "Ailsa Tuner to Mrs. Stephen Ellis," June 20th, 1930, as quoted in Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak," 437.

Figure 10. Poppy Day advertisement from the *East African Standard*, November 11th, 1925.[62]

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[62] *EAS*, "Poppy Day Advertisement," November 11th, 1925, 5. All references to the East African Standard were collected at the Bird Library at the University of Syracuse.

The EAWL administered its program from the heart of Nairobi's city centre, occupying

space in the Memorial Hall. Just as the male settler politicians used a commemorative building to

symbolize their opposition to metropolitan policy, women inhabited a memorial building that

served as a consistent reminder that the First World War was a foundational event for the British,

and particularly settler, presence in Kenya. The centrality of Memorial Hall in the political and

social life of the Colony are testaments to the meaning of war memory in inter-war Kenya

Colony. The physical presence of a First World War memorial in the capital facilitated the

organization and practice of official political and voluntary service in Kenya; living memorials

provided spaces of memory where the sacrifices of 1914-1918 were meant to shape daily life.

Because settlers went about their daily lives in these spaces, meanings shifted with socio-

political contexts. For settlers, this meant that Memorial Hall bound them to one another as

Kenyan settlers rather than as British citizens in a far-off outpost of Empire. Sacrifice entailed

both imperial unity and settler independence.

The EAWL's Poppy Drive, however, pre-dated the Memorial Hall. Although Annual

Reports for the EAWL are not available prior to 1930, their history suggests that the program

goes back to 1922 – coincidentally the same year that Isabel McGregor Ross left the colony.[63]

The British Legion's appeal in England pre-dated the EAWL's organized drive in Kenya Colony

by only one year.[64] It was one of the EAWL's oldest campaigns, which in tandem with its

collaborators from its First World War work, the British Red Cross and the British Legion,

remained a staple of the EAWL's work until decolonization. Entailing the care of veterans and

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[63] KNA, AZG1/7/24, "Annual Report for 1930," 32.
[64] Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 99.

healing from the wounds of war, this was an appropriate outlet for settler women[65] to make their mark in inter-war Kenya, fitting with its more general purpose of domestic reform.

As was the case with many of its programs, the EAWL delegated responsibilities out to District-level EAWL branches, or in cases where there was no branch, prominent settlers or administrators. Nonetheless, the central branch at Nairobi executed much of the work, with Ailsa Turner and colleagues in Nairobi sending letters across the colony to prominent community leaders and district administrators facilitating the dissemination of poppies, which were made in Nairobi but distributed through depots set up by EAWL members in their respective outposts.[66] The EAWL sent monies raised for the Haig's Poppy Fund back to London for distribution, though over the course of the 1920s funds raised within Kenya Colony could be distributed to support veterans locally first based upon need.[67]

Much of the documentation surrounding the Poppy Drives is procedural correspondence, but it is clear that the campaign consumed much of the organization's time and effort each year.[68] Most of the sales of individual poppies and wreaths were from the settler community, but in Mombasa the Arab and Indian communities also purchased wreaths each year.[69] The laying of wreaths was a crucial aspect of Armistice Day ceremonies, reflecting key political dynamics in Kenya Colony, a topic to which I return in the next chapter. The EAWL's role in making, distributing, and administering funds associated with the Poppy campaign served as connective tissue for the settler community, but also linked the colony to the metropole and other nodes of Empire through collective commemoration. Nonetheless, the EAWL's political activity cannot

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[65] Ibid., 101.
[66] KNA, AZG1/7/24, "Annual Report for 1930," 32.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Armistice Day files are available for most provinces and districts. From 1925-1930, Ailsa Turner's name features prominently in these files, writing letters to gain support for Poppy and wreath sales in the lead-up to each November's events. See Chapter 7.
[69] See KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161.

be separated from its work in First World War commemoration. Women settlers, Patricia Lorcin argues, found voice in growing urban centres.

Where conflict between races seemed inevitable to metropolitan critics and colonial administrators, settlers battled against policies that sought to "forestall…protests and violence that the racial inequality would ultimately engender."[70] The bonds of the settler community thus took precedence over the EAWL's broader mission of connecting women across the Empire and improving conditions for all women, regardless of race.[71] The same politics of duress, arising in the context of a community in question, shaped the commemorative acts of women settlers as it did for the male political elite.

Legion Balls complemented the Poppy appeal. Again in concert with the British Legion, the EAWL organized Legion Balls across the colony throughout the 1920s, which were exclusive events to honour officers and soldiers who fought both in Europe and in Africa from 1914-1918. The Legion Ball followed from the tradition of dances as social gatherings in Kenya with the first "Armistice Night Fancy Dress Dance at the Railway Institute" on 11 November 1921.[72] This was not organized by the EAWL, though it appears that the Legion Ball overtook any other social gatherings as the place to be in Nairobi (and other outposts) after 1923.[73]

The reason for this might have been reviews of the Fancy Dress Ball in the *East African Standard* in 1922. One observer noted that "the Armistice Day Ball, where the public of the Capital threw off resolutely the sad memories which had been engendered by the impressive ceremony of the morning…went to the other extreme in frivolity and nonsense."[74] This was not

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[70] Particia M.E. Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia: European Women's Narratives of Algeria and Kenya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 108.
[71] Ibid., 68-71.
[72] East African Standard, "Armistice Day: Arrangements for Celebration," November 11th, 1921, 4.
[73] See Ibid., from 1922-1936.
[74] East African Standard, "Fancy Dress Ball," November 13th, 1922, 6.

something that the commentator lamented, but "the most wonderful the town has seen since the dark days of deep depression."[75] In later years, as the EAWL's program moved towards temperance, uplift, and moral behaviour, the annual dances took on more elite sensibilities.

In 1923, a concerned *East African Standard* reader addressed the issue that the Civil Service Association, who organized the Armistice Ball, "should have chosen Armistice Eve to promote a dance to benefit their own funds when it was possible to promote a dance to benefit a charity on behalf of some of the poor lads, who, through the war, are unable to play football."[76] The reader conveyed "considerable disgust expressed that the financial results…are to be devoted to augment the funds of an Athletic Association and not, as many people thought, to benefit a war charity."[77] The annual celebration clearly disturbed some onlookers, and the East African Standard noted a move towards a more reverent rather than celebratory Armistice. "The moment of joy," it wrote, "has been succeeded during the past five years by many periods of sadness."[78]

It appears as though the general populace agreed, transferring responsibilities in 1924 and 1925 to the St. Dunstan's Anglican Church, whose outposts delivered programs for disabled veterans across the Empire. The admissions fees remained the same as in previous years, though presumably the funds went to supplementing their existing programs. The St. Dunstan's Ball remained a prominent event in Nairobi, whereas the EAWL-organized Legion Balls performed a similar role outside the capital.[79] Thus the EAWL and missionaries, with decidedly less political

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[75] Ibid.

[76] East African Standard, "Armistice Eve Dance," November 13th, 1923, 5.

[77] Ibid.

[78] East African Standard, "Armistice Day," November 10th, 1923, 4. See also for the example in Britain, East African Standard, "Hotels Gala Night," November 14th, 1925, 1. "Armistice Night was marked by reverence instead of revelry, as heretofore at the Albert Hall."

[79] For the procedural correspondence regarding the Legion Balls see, for example, KNA, PC/COAST/2/13/7; PC/COAST/2/13/21; KNA, PC/NZA/3/4/25; DC/KJD/3/8/2. Most files concerning Armistice

power than the settler political elite, intervened in Kenya Colony's commemorative practices in a similar fashion to one another, albeit with divergent – yet not altogether different – agendas.

As Adrian Gregory argues, this was not just a matter of accounting for the dead of Empire but a more general acknowledgement of sacrifice that extended to those living with service-related disabilities and impairments.[80] By supporting charitable remembrance drives, the *East African Standard* noted, "we are giving practical assistance to those in need of it we are contributing to the welfare and happiness of men and women who are still called upon to suffer anxiety, hardship, and misery as a consequence of the great fight which they or those dear to them did so much to win."[81] Indeed, the very basis of the Haig Poppy Campaign was tending to veterans' needs by employing them to produce poppies and wreaths and dedicating funds raised to their care. That the EAWL took part in both of the programs speaks to their vision of what settler society ought to be. Missionaries, like women, took on both the roles of spiritual leaders through death and loss, as well as the main caretakers of those unable to care for themselves.

Though much of the EAWL's documentary evidence in the KNA is procedural correspondence, it appears that the Legion Balls were an extension of its Poppy Day programs.[82] Duder notes that soldier settlers had a difficult time organizing associations and organization in the immediate aftermath of the war, with the East African section of the British Legion not established until 1929.[83] Nonetheless, the Haig Campaign in Kenya foregrounded the British Legion instead of the EAWL after 1927, hinting at the growth of soldier settler groups in the late 1920s.[84] By the 1930s, the Haig Fund in Kenya no longer went straight back to Britain but was

Day preparations, especially after 1925, contain EAWL requests for prominent community members to attend the Legion Ball.
[80] Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 103-104.
[81] East African Standard, "Remembrance Day," November 11th, 1925, 5.
[82] East African Standard, "Earl Haig Fund: Kabete," November 9th, 1927, 13.
[83] Duder, "Soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919," 591.
[84] Ibid., 725-726.

administered by the Combined Benevolent Committee, dominated by British Legion members, but with the President of the EAWL present as well.[85] This reflected both the growth of the British Legion as a powerful charity in the lead up to the Second World War, as well as the delegation of duties within society based on gendered conceptions of appropriate work. The EAWL remained behind-the-scenes throughout the entirety of the Haig Fund appeals, yet British Legion members administered funds and public uses of the monies.

These Poppy Drives and Legion Balls were socially exclusive.[86] They bounded a settler elite to Empire through commemoration, but also highlighted their Britishness and community dynamics in a particular context. The EAWL's legitimacy to speak for women settlers stemmed from their work not only to improve domestic conditions in Kenyan communities, but in binding their white communities together. Thus, their role often defended white prestige, not only in reference to Kenyans and Indians but to the behaviours of their own as well. This is an essential filament of the settler thread of memory, especially considered within the context of the EAWL's political advocacy in the later-1920s and early-1930s.

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[85] KNA, AZG1/7/24, "EAWL Annual Report 1935/1936," 131.
[86] See Footnote 79.

Figure 11. *East African Standard* Advertisement for Haig's Poppy Fund, 1927.[87]

The EAWL, Commemoration, and Creating 'Home' in Kenya Colony

When Lady Eleanor Cole accompanied Lord Delamere to London to tell the settler story

in the debate over Closer Union with other East African territories, her expressed goal was to

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[87] East African Standard, "Remembrance," November 11th, 1927, 1.

emphasize that women settlers "are making permanent homes in Kenya, they are bringing up their children in the country with the idea that they too should make Kenya their home."[88] Throughout the 1920s settlers struggled to define their home as Kenya, not just as trustees, but as permanent inhabitants. From their perspective they had earned this status by fighting for the Empire in East Africa, developing the Colony through agriculture and infrastructure, and directing the development of a Kenyan labour force. The First World War, both in its direct effects and its commemoration, was central to this claim to political independence and the necessity of support from the metropole.

Part of making their home in Kenya Colony was the curbing of white and black behaviours that threatened the social balance by undermining white prestige. As one concerned EAWL member wrote to Ailsa Turner, "The 'Happy Valley' or 'Hot Stuff Corner'…was a disgrace to any country, and the behaviour of the residents was not of the kind to add to the prestige of the white man, or to cause the native to have any respect for white women."[89] While working in Kenyan communities intended to secure credibility in London, events like the Poppy Appeal and the Legion Balls extolled the virtues of a settler community in Africa. This gave the EAWL the internal credibility to speak on behalf of women's issues in the settler political causes in the metropole.

Much has been made of women's role in grieving, mourning, and rebuilding in the wake of the First World War.[90] In the colonial context, women harnessed those energies towards their political empowerment. Commemoration served a political purpose alongside healing from the wounds of war through the care of veterans. This was especially so when the thin-white-line in

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[88] Eleanor Cole, "Memorandum," March 18th 1931, as quoted in Van Tol, "The Women of Kenya Speak," 437.

[89] KNA GH/24/7, Isabel Murray to Ailsa Turner, February 13th, 1930, 14-15.

[90] See Note 526.

Kenya Colony was in a state of duress. As Will Jackson and Chris Youé argue, this state of perpetual defence of settler legitimacy only increased as the prospect of self-governance and settler paramountcy waned.[91] Women were not the political elite and therefore pulled on the imperial threads of commemoration in ways that highlighted their importance to the future of settler colonialism in Kenya. They shared the views of the settler political elite, driven by settler communities in question, but are differentiated by their liminal position in Empire.

Liminality, Colonialism, and Commemoration: Missionaries and Women Remember

Women and missionaries feature as peripheral players in the historiography of Kenya Colony. Defined by their liminality – not quite full settlers, despite their whiteness – both groups took an active part in commemorative practice in inter-war Kenya. Marxist and politico-economic histories have dominated analyses of settler colonialism in East Africa. Similarly, much of the work on Kenya's female settlers has fallen under the heading of literary studies,[92] which often fails to look at the political implications of their views, actions, and relationships with their male counterparts. Even cultural histories of women in Kenya that tend to focus on men's concerns over women's bodies presume Kenyan aggressive sexuality and the prospect of miscegenation.[93] The work of the EAWL and associated groups within the confines of a male-dominated political elite are essential to broadening our understanding of the foundations of white settler society.

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[91] Jackson, "Settler Colonialism in Kenya, 1880-1963," 238-239; Youé, "Settler Colonies or Colonies with Settlers?," especially in his review of Shadle's *Souls of White Folk*.

[92] See, for example, Susan H. Aitken, *Isak Dinesen and the Engendering of Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Derrek R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the World of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004); Tabitha M. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1950* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2005); Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia*.

[93] See literature on the 'Black Peril' in Kenya. For representative work see Kennedy, *Islands of White*, especially Chapter 7, and Brett Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, especially Chapter 4.

Necessarily subordinate to the male members of the settler community, women found spaces that reflected appropriate work, and thus did not fall exclusively under the purview of either the colonial state or the 'native authorities.' Women, by the gendered nature of their work, transgressed what Mahmood Mamdani has called the 'bifurcated' colonial state, split between direct rule and indirect rule.[94] Settler women were labourers, though not in the same way as Kenyan women,[95] supporting the colonial state both through the solidification of the white settler community (direct rule), and the reform of Kenyan domestic life (indirect rule). The EAWL's work that I have studied here augmented women's standing and political authority in both realms.

Missionaries, likewise, supported neo-traditional authority in 'native areas' through education and religious indoctrination, while collaborating with state and settler authorities through what Lorenzo Veracini, channelling what Alan Atkinson calls "settler colonial geographical imagination."[96] Keeping their global vision of ecclesiastical spread, missionaries in Kenya were forced to act within a settler colonial imaginary that figured Kenya as the primary space of reference. That is, the global purview of missionary work was subsumed under the pressure of settler dominance, especially in segregated urban areas. Claire McLisky's observations on 19th Century missionaries in Australia are equally applicable to the Kenyan case in the 1920s: "settler colonial missionaries actively endorsed and benefited from colonial policies of segregations, which…gave them almost complete control over their 'charges.'"[97] Even as

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[94] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 17.

[95] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 87-88.

[96] Lorenzo Veracini, "The Imagined Geographies of Settler Colonialism," in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 191.

[97] Claire McClisky, "(En)gendering Faith?: Love, Marriage and the Evangelical Mission on the Settler Colonial Frontier," in *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 107.

prominent critics of settler vices and the exploitation of Kenyan communities, missionaries'
liminal position granted them both power in Kenya Colony, but also required collaboration and
concession.

The missionary and settler women's roles in commemoration are examples of the ways
that the Empire-wide memory of the war was also fixed in place. Settlers acknowledged and
appreciated imperial forms of First World War memory but defining their place within that fabric
was essential for their claims to difference, rooted in geographical coordinates. The centring of
Kenya in commemorative traditions, and specifically the white settler experience, was common
across the white political elite in the colony. Women and missionaries pulled at the threads
differently, defining their own experience based on their liminal socio-political standing.
Missionaries may have been responsible for an African Memorial Hall, but they centred their
goals in its design and implementation within the confines of settler policy on urban public
spaces. Likewise, women configured First World War memory within maternal notions of caring
for society, again attempting to redefine the settler thread of memory as partially their
responsibility. Just as missionaries drew upon their global mission, women adopted frameworks
and strategies of remembrance from Britain and the Empire, but their programs spoke to the
ever-evolving role of women in Kenya's public sphere. Ultimately, an imperial framework for
memory was insufficient for the political context of Kenya Colony, producing another colonial
thread of remembrance.

6 – State Tethers I: Great War Memory Between Empire and Nation

> Every great civilization has left its memorial in buildings of some sort, even those ones in Mesopotamia which had little material to build with but wattle, clay and thatch. Not that our human forbearers built to impress posterity; they built to express themselves and to make a dignified setting for the life of the people and the State.
>
> Sir Edward Grigg, Governor of Kenya Colony (1925-1930)[1]

When Sir Edward Grigg arrived in Kenya Colony in October 1925, he was no stranger to the continent. As one of Lord Alfred Milner's kindergarten students, he had spent considerable time administering education policy in South Africa. Grigg was instrumental in the founding of the Round Table movement, serving as an editor of its journal from 1913 which espoused ideas of imperial federation.[2] The appointment was beneficial to settlers, to whom both Grigg and Secretary of State Leo Amery were sympathetic,[3] and a boon to their ongoing struggle to attain responsible self-government. Grigg was immersed to British politics, having served in Parliament as a Liberal representative for Oldham. Politicians at home, he surmised, consistently opposed Amery, Grigg, and the settlers' strong conviction that white supremacy and trusteeship could coexist.[4] Grigg, recovering from long untreated low-grade Yellow Fever, lamented to his friend Neville Chamberlain in 1930 that "this maniacal insistence upon native rights and interests to the exclusion of all other rights and interests is producing a temper between the races, and particularly amongst our own people here, which is simply disastrous."[5] The expatriate lives and

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[1] Edward Grigg, *Kenya's Opportunity: Memories, Hopes and Ideas* (London: Faber & Faber, 1955), 224.

[2] Andrew S. Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 68.

[3] See, for example, Dame Margery Perham, "The Round Table and sub-Saharan Africa," *The Round Table* 60 (240): 548-549; Deborah Lavin, "Margery Perham's Initiation into African Affairs," in *Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa*, Mary Bull and Alison Smith eds. (New York: Routledge, 2013); Gorman, "Organic Union or Aggressive Altruism." On Amery specifically, see Bernard Porter, *The Lion's Share: A History of British Imperialism, 1850-2011* (New York: Routledge, 223-224.

[4] Porter, *The Lion's Share*, 224.

[5] "Grigg to the Rt. Hn. Neville Chamberlain," May 10th, 1930, Grigg Papers, Oxford Bodelian, MS FILM 1002.

livelihoods of fellow countrymen in Kenya, Grigg presumed, were consistently under threat from British politicians and humanitarians, as well as those advocating for Indian interests from India.

As Bruce Berman notes, "settler efforts to gain control of the state constituted a threat to the very existence of the Kenya Administration and to the ultimate control exercised by the metropole."[6] Thus, Coryndon and Grigg, presiding over the administration through the critical years of debate over settler and 'native' paramountcy, had vested interests in maintaining the legitimacy of the Governor's office as the seat of power in East Africa,[7] even if their goal was eventual settler control.[8] Grigg advocated for a union between the territories of Tanganyika, Uganda, and Kenya as a means to secure majority white rule in East Africa, but Amery warned Grigg against moving too fast, lest he subvert the principles of the Mandate system at work in Tanganyika.[9] Whether Coryndon or Grigg personally agreed with the principle that "imperial 'trusteeship' could not be delegated or shared,"[10] the concept remained a crucial impediment to the latter's vision of Closer Union and settler self-governance. Critically, Grigg's Closer Union required a massive demographic shift away from the aristocratic constitution of Kenya's settler society who dominated its political cadres.[11] Consequently, Grigg envisioned an enlarged role for the state, stimulating settler 'responsibility' and self-sufficiency.[12] Thus, while the "single chain mail" of whiteness needed protection, the means through which settlers, the state, and the Colonial Office sought to do so differed.

Coinciding with these years (1923-1928) was the major thrust in commemorative landscape development in Kenya. Coryndon unveiled the Memorial Obelisk and Memorial Hall, while

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[6] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 136.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Gorman, "Organic Union or Aggressive Altruism," 263.
[9] Ibid., 262.
[10] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 136.
[11] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 74.
[12] Ibid. See also Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 154.

Grigg, alongside Acting Governor E.B. Denham, presided over the ceremonies at the relocation and unveiling of the IWGC's African Memorial in Nairobi (1927), as well as its sister monument in Mombasa (1926). The way each of the governors spoke about the monuments, and how some settlers responded, accentuates the careful language necessary in every act of public discourse. Balancing elite settler opinion, Colonial Office dictates, and their own aspirations for Kenya Colony, both Grigg and Coryndon remained tethered to imperial narratives of 'trusteeship,' the Dual Policy, and a measured approach to settler dominance. These moments knotted together the imperial fibres, settler filaments, and state tethers of memory more tightly. With Kenyan memory locked within the knot, the entangled nature of Kenya Colony's politics squeezed it even tighter. Remembrance and acknowledgement of their sacrifice were rarely spoken outside the context of the colonial state's control over their affairs.

Under Grigg the key tenets of imperial union were the backdrop for speaking about the First World War. Three policies help contextualize the ways Grigg spoke about the Great War: the Dual Policy and the ongoing negotiation of its meaning, increased settlement of small-scale farmers, and the Defence Force Ordinance. Each of the policies had roots that went deeper than Grigg's governorship, however, his interpretation of how they ought to be implemented was distinct. Commemoration departed significantly from its settler-focused iconography in the early-1920s, centring Kenyan iconography as means to define an alternative trajectory for Kenya Colony. As we shall see in the next chapter, rituals of remembrance in inter-war Kenya continued to foreground a white memory of the First World War, meaning the colonial state had multiple tethers to connect back to the imperial fibres of remembrance.

Sir Edward Grigg, Closer Union, and the Settlers of Kenya Colony

The idea of Closer Union between Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika pre-dated Grigg's arrival in Kenya by only a year. The Labour Government created an East Africa Commission to assess the feasibility of administrative and economic cooperation in East Africa. Headed by William Ormsby-Gore, the Commission reiterated the terms of the Devonshire Declaration, especially 'Native Paramountcy' and the responsibilities of the colonial state for safeguarding and promoting African interests.[13] The Commission's report did not move the needle on Closer Union, deeming it premature.[14] Instead, it brought a more moderate tone to discussions of Kenya's settler community in Britain, with Lord Delamere doing much of the legwork in showing the members of the Commission hospitality during their stay in East Africa.[15]

When the Labour Government fell in 1924, succeeded by the Conservatives, the idea of Closer Union gained new advocates in positions of power. Amery wanted a more strident advocate for the governorship of Kenya, Lord Lloyd, who turned down the position when Amery could not meet his condition of immediate union.[16] Grigg accepted the position, and while he was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea, he apparently heeded the advice of colonial officials who were more suspect of the plan, taking the initiative on piece by piece. Nonetheless, he quelled much settler agitation over the idea that the metropole and the Colonial Office were consistently disregarding their needs in favour of taking on the responsibilities of 'trusteeship,' by advocating for a settler-led union in East Africa.[17] Overall, Grigg held onto the idea of settler self-governance as a means to protect international security, British power, and the advancement

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[13] Michael D. Callahan, "The failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25 (2) (1997): 268-269.
[14] Gorman, "Organic Union or Aggressive Altruism," 262.
[15] Brett, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, 183-184.
[16] Gorman, "Organic Union or Aggressive Altruism," 262.
[17] Ibid., 263.

of Western civilization. His perspective was not grounded in Kenya but in London as the centre of a newly constituted British Empire in line with the Milnerite school.[18]

Flowing from Ormsby-Gore's report, Grigg took on the Dual Policy as a necessary element of settler ascendency. As previously elucidated, the Dual Policy never judged Kenyan and settler production equally in practice but, from a purely ornamental perspective, Kenyan production on reserves needed to be promoted. It was a means of showing a genuine commitment to shared responsibility in trusteeship[19] and, more pressingly for Closer Union, the ability of small-to-mid scale settlers to provide a solid base for settlement.[20] Despite the usage of the term Dual Policy, which Grigg accredited to Coryndon, "Grigg's emphasis was on the political aspects of complementary development … and even this theory of governance was little more than a convenient circumvention of Devonshire's African paramountcy since it gave recognition to settler participation in administration."[21] Essentially, Grigg wanted to keep up appearances of engaging Kenyan production, but only as it served the interests of settler farmers through the flow of labour.

Grigg's interpretation of the Dual Policy correlated to another of his initiatives, namely increased state support for British immigration to Kenya Colony in the form of small-scale farmers. The new crop of settlers, Grigg argued, would put less of a demand upon Kenyan labour at times of harvest, thus undergirding self-sufficient settler production.[22] Though the policy eventually failed, vetoed by the Colonial Office in 1928,[23] Grigg's commitment to creating a stronger settler base for eventual self-government was the hallmark of his administration. This

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[18] Ibid. See also John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 445.

[19] Callahan, "The Failure of Closer Union," 268.

[20] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 73-74.

[21] Youé, *Proconsular Imperialism*, 178.

[22] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 74.

[23] Ibid. See also Berman, *Crisis and Control,* 167.

required a fundamental overhaul of the settler community, specifically the dominance of 'big

men' in agriculture and politics, and the dependence upon the colonial state to ensure the supply

of Kenyan labour and capital.[24]

The final element of Grigg's vision of Closer Union also relates to settler self-sufficiency.

The Defence Force, which sought to conscript settlers, was the military arm of Grigg's

"ambitions for a self-governing and European-dominated Kenya."[25] The Defence Force was

initially proposed in 1921, emanating from longstanding worries about the security of the colony,

dependent upon Indian Expeditionary Forces at the outset of the First World War, and the King's

African Rifles thereafter. During the deliberation of the Indian Question, settlers feared that their

plans for a defence force might be coopted, as "its members would be subject to the Army Act,

and hence liable to court martial for disobedience of an order….hardly an appealing prospect

when the Colonial Office was considering a policy of granting equal rights."[26] But after the

Devonshire Declaration, when the Indian Question seemed settled, settlers pushed for the

Defence Force again. The Labour Government rebuked the proposal on pacifist grounds,

recalling threats of settler rebellion, and the prospect of sanctioned violence upon Kenyans.[27]

The change in leadership in both London and Nairobi in 1925 created a sympathetic

environment for the revival of the Defence Force. Grigg appealed to the examples of South

Africa, Australia, and New Zealand as the models of "European communities in the Empire

which are far removed from great centres of European population and which enjoy responsible

government [who] have found it wise for many years to adopt the principle of compulsion for

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[24] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 143.
[25] Duder, 'The Soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919," 708.
[26] Duder, "An Army of One's Own," 212.
[27] Ibid.,

self-defence."[28] By the time the Bill reached maturity in 1926, however, small-scale settlers, to whom Grigg aligned, opposed the Defence Force if it meant compulsion and interruption of their livelihoods. In Duder's estimation, this signaled opposition to the settler elite from within Kenya Colony, which hindered "another step…to making Kenya a white man's country."[29] Nonetheless, until the Hilton Young Commission of 1929, the settler elite continued to support the Defence Force if it meant eventual self-governance.

Each of these proposals was part of Grigg's overriding commitment to Closer Union and a white settler dominion in East Africa. Settler politicians, the elite cadre of settler society, supported Grigg's proposals on Closer Union and the Defence Force as means of securing self-government, while protests against the latter Bill unearthed cleavages long-existent between the 'small men' and 'big men' in Kenya Colony. In the process, the Kenyan and Indian roles in the development of the economy were either proclaimed, as politics of appearances, or disregarded altogether. The language through which Grigg fashioned Kenyan sacrifices in the First World War promoted increased settler responsibility, thus redefining the defence of the Colony in settler terms. In the process, Grigg tied settler's nationalist aims to imperial vitality in the form of self-defence. He summoned the memory of 1914-1918 as a reminder that defending Kenya Colony "is impossible unless Europeans, as well as Africans, are organized to provide the King's Government with the necessary safeguards for good order at home."[30] Where settlers deemed that they had already earned self-governance in their military service during the Great War, Grigg emphasized the need for continued white self-sufficiency.

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[28] CO533/364, "His Excellency's Speech, Legislative Council," December 17th, 1926, 169.
[29] Duder, "An Army of One's Own," 214-218.
[30] "His Excellency's Speech," 169.

Speaking Through the Built Environment: Memorials and Political Discourse

The degree to which Grigg used memorial unveilings and invoked the First World War in political policy to advance his particular vision of Closer Union is set into relief against Coryndon's role in a similar event. Coryndon, at the unveiling of the Memorial Obelisk in 1924, framed the memorial as a testament to the growing national character of Kenya's settlers. He declared that "this memorial to Our Glorious Dead [is] to friends who had shared the trials and difficulties of a great work in a young country, and who willingly sacrificed all they had in its defence…so that the country may attain that position they had anticipated and worked for but were never destined to see."[31] Not yet having attained "that position," the settlers who died "did not die in vain if their memory leaves us with a nobler conception of duty to our King, to our Colony, and to ourselves."[32] Coryndon's address reiterated the Empire nationalism emerging in Kenya Colony, nesting the nascent national identification of the settler community within their identification with the broader Empire.

In the context of Nairobi's racial segregation, Coryndon necessarily directed his address towards the settler community. Commemoration of Kenyan sacrifices at the 'Native' Memorial Hall, and the IWGC's African Memorial, did different work in Kenyan areas of the city. Coryndon thus spoke through the built environment, instantiating the Dual Policy he put into practice in Kenya through the memorial landscape. Kenyan and European areas were separate and ostensibly equal in their importance. Fittingly, the African Memorial was not unveiled formally during Coryndon's time as governor, a reminder that the colonial state disproportionately supported European development, and by extension, their memorial spaces.

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[31] *EAS*, "Governor's Address," December 1st, 1924. As quoted in Larsen, "Shaping the Symbolic Landscape," 285.
[32] Ibid.

There was no conflict when C.K Archer, the President of the Convention of Associations, presumed he was presenting the portrait of a man, Lord Delamere, who would someday become "the Colony's first Prime Minister," at the unveiling of the Memorial Hall that same day.[33] In 1924, the memory of the First World War was firmly rooted in the context of settler ascendency; it was a pre-ordained trajectory foretold by settler sacrifices from 1914-1918.

This is not to say, as Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper aptly observe, that national aspirations necessarily drove participation in the First World War; ultimately, "it was not a war over colonies…but a war among empires as multiplex polities."[34] But settlers in Kenya envisioned themselves as different from Britons in the metropole, thus demanding the management of that difference in order to maintain an overriding imperial structure. The British Empire doled out rewards and shares of power in ways that allowed it to maintain a unified polity, if through decentralized governance.[35] The inherent contradiction, however, of supporting settlers who shared little interest in Kenyan development on the one hand, while maintaining a commitment to Kenyan development through state intervention on the other, produced critical choices about how to "share power to exert power."[36] Though Coryndon made considerable efforts to stimulate Kenyan production, his administration still dispersed power to the settler elite with the knowledge that the state continued to enjoy control over Kenyan development. Managing difference meant reinforcing the idea of separate spheres of influence, which in reality could not be segregated.

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[33] *EAS*, "C.K. Archer's Address," December 1st, 1924. As quoted n Larsen, "Shaping the Symbolic Landscape," 286.

[34] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 371.

[35] Ibid., 2.

[36] Timothy H. Parsons, "The Unintended Consequences of Bureaucratic 'Modernization' in Post-World War II British Africa," in *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*, Peter Crooks and Timothy H. Parsons eds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 413.

Thus nationalism in Kenya's settler community was not tied to the shared linguistic and cultural origins of its adherents, but a particular geographic space instead. That is, shared cultural heritage and language justified a British presence in Africa, while ties to the Kenyan landscape and its development united a subset of those Britons into a nation. Their whiteness and Britishness provided a discourse of 'civilizational' superiority rooted in the British Empire, just as their collective experience within Kenya Colony shielded settlers from the colonial state and metropolitan critics who "seemed to favour their African subordinates over settlers."[37] Even if almost every policy benefitted settler production, the symbolism of trusteeship was the counterweight to outright settler self-governance. Thus the nested settler identity might dislodge itself from its imperial layer should that symbolic counterweight remain an impediment to complete settler control.

By the time of Grigg's administration, this created a climate wherein self-governance threatened to destabilize London's ability to control Kenya's development, even if the administration shared faith in a settler-dominated future. Thus, Grigg attempted to redefine the terms of settler identification beyond the borders of Kenya, establishing a broader East African context for settler ascendency linked more explicitly to London, yet independent in its control over its domain. Brett Shadle describes colonial discourse in Kenya as stage play, where daily interactions "required all actors to inhabit their roles."[38] To continue this metaphor, Grigg cast settlers not as strong supporting actors, but as the lead protagonists on Kenya's stage. To play the role properly, however, settlers needed to adopt new characteristics befitting the status. Grigg, as the director, attempted to mold settler society to fit his grander narrative of imperial reconfiguration through Closer Union.

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[37] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 59.
[38] Ibid., 60.

Grigg's arrival coincided with the acceleration of Nairobi's Town Planning, which dated back to the end of the First World War.[39] The development of the city centre, and the city square specifically, featured "the idea that was that the future Square containing the principal Government offices, the Law Courts, the Municipal Offices and any public monument which might be erected should form the focus of the town in the same way as Church Square and Market Square are the centres of city life in Pretoria and Johannesburg respectively."[40] The City Square location was one block to the southeast of Memorial Hall, constituting an extension of the city's administrative and commercial headquarters.[41] This also built upon the segregation of the city, increasingly defining the city centre as a white space.[42] For matters of convenience and access to the colonial administration, settlers strongly favoured this approach.[43]

At the edge of the proposed City Square Scheme lay the African Memorial erected in 1924. As previously discussed, the African Memorial was one of the IWGC's main contributions to Kenya's commemorative landscape, responding to their conception of duty to commemorate and a particular interpretation of Equality of Treatment.[44] Nonetheless, the Memorial fit into Nairobi's segregated urban space in 1924, near to the new 'native' location of Pumwani and close to an area designated for Kenyan use. With industrial development and urban transformation, however, the administration moved the monument in April 1928.[45] The

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[39] See KNA, RN/6/45, Notes of the Nairobi Town Planning Committee, 1924-1930.
[40] KNA, RN/6/45, "Proposed Surrender of Lands by the Uganda Railway," 1925, 2.
[41] See Figure 9 for reference. See also David M. Anderson, "Corruption at City Hall: African Housing and Urban Development in Colonial Nairobi," *AZANIA* 36-37 (1) (2001): 138-154.
[42] See Bill Freund, *The African City: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89.
[43] KNA, RN/6/45, "Report on Secretariat Hill and the Civic Cenre as alternative sites for main Government buildings," n.d., 1-4. See also excerpt from *EAS*, "Government Offices in City Square," in KNA, RN/6/45.
[44] See Chapter 3.
[45] KNA, RN/6/27, "Progress Report for Month of March, 1928," April 13th, 1928.

monument, the *East African Standard* complained, had long been neglected by the colonial administration, covered in cloth during the Armistice Day ceremony in 1927.[46]

Grigg apparently had the last word on the monument's new location, which stood directly opposite the Memorial Obelisk on Sixth Avenue.[47] The occasion of the memorial's unveiling on 20 May 1928, provided an opportune moment for Grigg to etch his own signature on the meaning of the First World War in Kenya Colony. With Princess Marie Louise there to tether the ceremony back to the metropole, Grigg spoke clearly of the exigencies of the Defence Force Bill and the Dual Policy of development. In essence, it was not the Kenyans to whom the IWGC dedicated the monument that he addressed, but the settlers in attendance. The imperial fibres of commemoration remained, but these tangled with the Grigg's political preoccupations.

His speech highlighted this reality when he proclaimed that "there is one feature of the Memorial which is, I think an especially happy one. Dedicated in the first instance to the Native Africans who served the King, it was also dedicated to the memory of all men of whatever race who fell in the East African theatre."[48] This, of course, was false; the inscription on the monument, as well as the IWGC's deliberations, confirm that the monument was "to the memory of the Native African troops who fought to the Carriers who were the feet and hands of the Army." In fairness to Grigg, the inscription also mentioned "all other men who served and died for their King and Country," but the iconography of the memorial and the existence of dedicated European memorials clearly defined the intent of the African Memorial. That Grigg chose to accentuate the service of all races in the defence of Empire signaled his political intent and the pulling of the imperial thread of memory into the context of colonial politics.

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[46] East African Standard, "A Neglected Memorial," November 14th, 1927, 4.
[47] See Red Star on Figure 9.
[48] *EAS*, "King's Cousin Unveils the Native War Memorial," May 21st, 1928, 1; 9.

Figure 12. Sketch of Nairobi City Centre,[49] Edited to Show Locations of Memorials.[50]

Indeed, Grigg argued that "without our help the Africans who fought for the King could not have held this, their own land."[51] Two aspects of Grigg's political agenda seeped into his unveiling speech in one passage alone. In the first instance, the Governor reiterated the need for shared responsibility in imperial defence as a mechanism for the legitimation of self-governance.

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[49] KNA, RN/6/27, "Sketch Plan of Suggested and Possible Road Alignments," January 5th, 1928,
[50] Yellow = Memorial Obelisk, Red = African War Memorial (IWGC) c. 1928, Green = African War Memorial (IWGC) c. 1924.
[51] Ibid.

Grigg's speech to the Legislative Council in 1926 regarding the Defence Force is remarkably

similar to his speech at the unveiling of the African Memorial. Specifically,

> there is no danger of strained relations between the races here unless the European becomes too dependent upon African services and the African realises that he is so. We rely at present entirely upon African soldiers and African police. Splendidly they have served us. But they will serve us all the more loyally if they realise that at any moment when the King's peace may be endangered, organised Europeans…will answer the King's call.[52]

Whereas settler memorialization was exclusive and segregated, Grigg brought the symbolism of

the First World War into conversation with his vision of imperial union. This meant that the

symbolism of the war could not be segregated, but that Kenyan service needed to be understood

as reinforcing white military prowess. In the pre-Grigg memorialization of the First World War

settlers envisioned a future of self-governance purely upon their merits, but under his

administration and focus upon Closer Union, the means of achieving self-governance was

tethered to imperial defence, thus changing the tenor of commemorative discourse.

This connected as well to the Dual Policy. As Grigg intimated at the unveiling "we must

strive to understand each other's needs, to respect each other's rights, to help each other's

progress, if all races are to enjoy peace plenty and happiness in this, our common land….no race

in Kenya can prosper long…by looking only to its own interests."[53] Again Grigg refashioned his

consistent political dialogue to fit the occasion. As he argued at the Caledonian Dinner in

November 1926,

> stability and security in this Colony can only be secured if, on the one hand, you have an independent settler community based on crops, which are practically free from the vagaries of African labour, and, on the other hand, at the opposite pole, Africans developing their own reserves and in no way compelled to labour for European employers unless they choose. If you have these two firm bases, there will be between them a very large common ground for cooperative development.[54]

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[52] CO533/364, "His Excellency's Speech, Legislative Council," December 17th, 1926, 169.
[53] *EAS*, "King's Cousin Unveils the Native War Memorial", May 21st, 1928, 1; 9.
[54] CO533/364, "His Excellency's Speech, Caledonian Dinner," November 30th, 1926, 146.

By unveiling the African Monument through the language of colonial politics, Grigg changed its meaning entirely. What the IWGC envisioned as a memorial that would fulfil its duty to provide symbols of sacrifice to Empire suitable for particular communities, now served a different function.

The motivation for Grigg to defend his policies in an otherwise non-political unveiling were clear. A concerned settler wrote to the East African Standard in 1926: "did not thousands – yea millions – join up during 1914 and the terrible years that followed believing that they were going to down militarism for ever? Did not recruiting posters advertise that this was one of the chief reasons why we went to war?"[55] Meanwhile, the Anti-Conscription Committee, a metropolitan critic, asserted that "if it were true, as alleged, that the white settlers of this Colony could only safely face the unarmed tribes, which live in the reserves and among the settlers of Kenya, with rifles in their hand, then indeed they would brand themselves before the world as unfitted to share in the Trusteeship for these natives."[56] Two divergent communities, small-scale settlers and pacifists in Britain, threatened the very basis of the Defence Force Bill, and from Grigg's perspective, the future of white settlement in Kenya. Joined with long-standing critics of Kenyan labour practices and the implementation of the Dual Policy, the future of Closer Union required consistent defence.

The significance of IWGC sites of memory, however, was not limited to the African Memorial at Nairobi. E.B. Denham, acting on behalf of Governor Grigg, unveiled the African Memorial in Mombasa one year earlier, on 28 May 1927. Unlike Nairobi, the Mombasa monument was only erected in 1926 due to a Town Planning Scheme in Mombasa.[57] Denham, in

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[55] CO533/364, Excerpt from the *EAS*, "E.A. Beavon to the Editor," December 16th, 1926, 130.
[56] CO533/364, "Petition Regarding the Defence Force Bill," May 9th, 1927, 92-95.
[57] KNA, K.711. 58. MOM.

a much longer address to the crowd at Mwembe Tayari, lauded the service of Kenyans and Arabs in the defence of Empire, but again highlighted "our duties towards and our responsibilities for all those who serve the Empire and to whom we owe so much for loyal cooperation, - who on their part ow so much to those who rule and govern them for the preservation of the great peace, security and welfare of the Empire."[58] Tethered again to imperial defence, the need for a white military presence foregrounded the unveiling of a monument to African service.

In Mombasa, it appears as though the African Monument needed its own defence in the face of a lack of European commemoration in the coastal city. A settler wrote that

> the glorious deeds of the Mighty Dead of our own race are commemorated fittingly throughout the whole world on appropriate occasions, and the Silent Shrines at Westminster Abbey and at the Cenotaph alone are sufficiently impressive and far-reaching enough to embrace every White soldier who Fell on the widely scattered battlefields of Armageddon.[59]

That commemoration was the subject of competing memories[60] of the First World War in public space speaks to the political nature of commemorative activities. Grigg and Denham iterated the complimentary nature of the memorials, however, the segregated nature of settler memorials brought the two interpretations into competition. Colonial forms of First World War memory, tied to the geographic boundaries of Kenya Colony, tangled with Empire-wide memorial programs. Through renegotiation in the context of colonial politics, that entanglement became a knot.

In Nairobi, the competition was not only discursive but embodied through the juxtaposition of the African Memorial and the Memorial Obelisk. In its new position, Kenyan

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[58] CWGC/1/1/9/D/34, Excerpt from the Mombasa Times, "The War Memorial: Unveiling at Mwembe Tayari," May 28th, 1927.

[59] Ibid. This letter to the editor is affixed to the same page in the CWGC file.

[60] On the difference between competitive and multidirectional, or mutually supporting, memory, see: Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-7.

iconography butted up against the existing abstract form of the Obelisk. Grigg explained the move in practical terms, citing that in its previous "position it could not have been included in the great annual commemoration of those who fell in the War."[61] At a theoretical level, the monument's new position also brought trusteeship, responsibility, and self-sufficiency to the city centre's commemorative landscape. It reminded settlers that, in order to achieve their ultimate goal of self-governance, they needed to take on the characteristics of a protagonist that both the colonial administration could defend, and metropolitan critics could approve. This was an exploitative use of Kenyan service and sacrifice in the First World War, but in bringing Kenyan iconography to the fore, Grigg tied settler memory to a grander vision of imperial unity.

Laragh Larsen's study of Nairobi's "symbolic landscape" figures the African Memorial as an imposition of imperial dominance, emphasizing loyal Kenyans in a white space.[62] The African Memorial "was used as a tool by the British to reaffirm the authority of Imperial rule."[63] While at the broadest level of analysis this is certainly true, the layers of First World War memory and the process behind the memorial's removal from its original place are essential to contextualizing commemoration at the level of colony. Imperial rule was not an homogenous force imposed upon Kenyan populations, but a manifold of different ideas about what Empire meant, how nationalism functioned within Empire, and what it meant to rule or be ruled in Kenya Colony.

Putting this chapter into conversation with development before Grigg's governorship brings clarity to the political discourse at the heart of commemoration in Kenya Colony. Larsen argues that African and European memories were "concretised by the two memorials…

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[61] *EAS*, "King's Cousin Unveils the Native War Memorial", May 21st, 1928, 1; 9.
[62] Larsen, "Shaping the Symbolic Landscape," 100.
[63] Ibid.

heightened in the contrasting iconography of the two monuments."[64] But this misreads the

historicity of the monuments, especially the African Memorial. The IWGC did not view the

African Memorial and its other commemorative works as competitive, but complementary. It

was only through the erection of European-specific memorials that separate spaces of

commemoration emerged. Furthermore, Grigg's reinterpretation of the African Memorial in

1928 – the basis of Larsen's analysis – decontextualizes the deeper history of segregationist town

planning,[65] competing visions of Empire, and nationalism within it. Thus, the commemorative

monuments in Nairobi may have concretized a *form* of commemoration, but settlers,

administrators, and the IWGC, all negotiated the *meaning* of those representations differently.

Viewed in this framework and context, it is impossible to conclude that commemorative spaces

and works in Kenya were simply the imposition of imperial power. The insufficiency of the

imperial fabric of memory for the politics of Kenya Colony pulled at its dangling threads from

all directions.

Imperial Memory in a Colonial Space: The Changing Meaning of Commemoration

In trying to understand the remembrance of the First World War in interwar Kenya, I

have focused on specificity and context as crucial factors in the interpretation of

commemoration. Studies of commemoration in Kenya have generally sought out commonality

with the rest of Empire as signifying the imposition of Imperial power on the Kenyan landscape,

reiterating the racial boundaries of imperial logic through the built environment.

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[64] Ibid., 103.
[65] For Nairobi, see, for example, White, *The Comforts of Home*, and Garth A. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonial and Space in Urban Africa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 33-54. For a theoretical basis for understanding colonial cities see Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power, and Environment* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), and Robert Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp, eds., *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context* (Boston: Matinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985).

Commemoration, however, was not static or concrete. It is true that sites of memory are imperial signifiers and "discretely designed," but they are also "contextualized by their surroundings."[66] Settlers and administrators thus put memorials into the context of colonial politics, shifting their meaning, and changing the basis of the viewers' identification with the objects. How, then, did settlers identify with the IWGC's African memorials, and, how did governors attempt to shift that identification?

Patricia Lorcin delineates the differences between what she terms imperial nostalgia and colonial nostalgia. Though her analysis is in the context of an Empire already lost, the idea that there were multiple levels of identification is essential to understanding the memory work at play in interwar Kenya.[67] The imperial 'loss' is articulated through feelings of "decline of national grandeur and the international power politics connected to economic and political hegemony."[68] Colonial nostalgia is articulated through the feeling of loss of status, specifically the "colonial lifestyle."[69] In post-war Kenya, likewise, memory was both linked to the wider British Empire and fellow Britons through familiar forms of commemoration, emphasizing the permanence and necessity of imperial power, and yet concurrently there was a colonial context specific to Kenya which put those forms into dialogue with the framework of settler colonialism in cities like Nairobi. As scholars of the British World have argued, there was a distinct similarity in goals, practices, and identities in many of the outposts of Empire, even if there was internal variation.[70]

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[66] Shanti Sumartojo, "National Identity and Commemorative Space: Connections to the nation through Time and Site," *Landscape Review* 15 (2) (2015): 9.

[67] See also, Smyth, "The Material Cuture of Identity and Remembrance."; Foster, *Washed with Sun*.

[68] Patricia E. Lorcin, "Imperial Nostalgia; Colonial Nostalgia: Differences of Theory, Similarities of Practice?," *Historical Reflections* 39 (3) (2013): 97.

[69] Ibid.

[70] For a useful interrogation of the claims of the 'British World' and settler colonial studies see Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), especially Chapter 5.

In other words, as Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue, "the imagined community of white men was transnational in reach…[but] nationalist in outcomes."[71]

Grigg certainly grasped the stakes of commemoration and the meaning of the First World War in Kenya. He wrote on Armistice Day in 1928 that "the East African Campaign has never figured much in the post-War discussions of the war, but the consequences will probably be greater and more lasting than those of any other sideshow campaigns into which the Empire threw such strength as it could spare from the main Western Front."[72] The overriding settler goal of self-governance, and indeed Grigg's conception of Closer Union, harnessed the memory of the Great War in order to define what the consequences might be. Proud Britons on the one hand, settlers required a language of commemoration that also protected their status within Kenya, ironically challenged by the same associations of Empire that initiated their presence in the first place. In Grigg they had an ally from the metropole, and the language of commemoration changed from a settler-exclusive discourse to one that spoke to the wider imperial project.

The conception of how self-governance ought to be conceived transformed, partially due to the symbolism of the Devonshire Declaration, but also in response to changing attitudes in London after 1924. With sympathetic officials in the Colonial Office and the Colonial Administration, a source of previous antagonism, settlers and the Colonial Administration worked in concert to mollify the remaining critics of settler society. Thus, the settler thread of memory that weighed down the imperial threads of memory between 1920 and 1924 stitched itself back into the imperial fabric between 1925 and 1928. In the process, the African iconography of the IWGC's thread of imperial memory was trapped inside the knots, becoming

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[71] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *The Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.
[72] Edward Grigg, "East Africa: The Comradeship of Races," *The Times*, Saturday, November 10th, 1928.

the symbolic fibres of Grigg's administrative memory thread. Where the monument had once served as the imperially-imposed representation of African sacrifice, Grigg's usage of the monument exploited Kenyan memorialization with the illusion of inclusion.

Ultimately, Grigg's hopes for Closer Union and an eventual white dominion in East Africa evaporated in 1929. Amery's own commission of inquiry on the topic, which he expected to rule in favour of Closer Union, determined that "the obligation of trusteeship for native interests [remain] in the hands of the imperial government."[73] White settlers in Kenya viewed the ruling "as a betrayal."[74] Concerns over the settlers' interests and the status of Tanganyika as a League of Nations Mandate[75] sapped Grigg's ability to convince settlers that his policies were in their interest. In June 1929, Labour once again took control of Parliament in London, and Grigg gave way to Joseph Byrne as Governor, who reinvigorated the concept of 'native' paramountcy. The context for commemoration changed accordingly.

The transition from Coryndon to Grigg exemplifies the reasons why commemoration must be analyzed in the context of colonial politics. The politics of memory production responded to transnational imperial forms but could only be put into context within the constraints of Kenya's socio-political atmosphere. This meant centring settler experiences, desires, and lived realities to the exclusion of all others. At times, this also meant highlighting Kenyan memorialization, but only as a means of furthering settler dominance.

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[73] Callahan, "The Failure of Closer Union," 270.
[74] Ibid., 271.
[75] Ibid.

7 – State Tethers II: The Script and Unscript of Armistice Day in Kenya, 1920-1929

Ceremony lay at the heart of remembrance in Kenya Colony in the 1920s. From 1918, when peace celebrations united the Empire, the significance of Armistice Day was not lost on settlers. As the *Mombasa Times* reported in 1931, settlers responded "with that air of expectancy that always seems to overcome any crowd of Britishers when anything of a ceremonial nature is at hand."[1] The annual ceremony was a powerful social gathering where settlers and the colonial administration united to pay homage to the men and women who fell in service of Empire, not just in East Africa, but from across the globe. Mark Connelly argues that in East London the celebratory aspects of Armistice Day gave way, over the course of the 1920s, to sentiments of international reconciliation, albeit with a focus on exceptionality within that global community.[2] The same transition, from celebration to revelry, took place in Kenya Colony as well, but at the core of Armistice Day remained an appeal to the prestige of the British Empire and the white skin to which it attached itself. Armistice Day, unlike memorialization, was exclusively a state responsibility. Accordingly, the colonial administration wrote a script for ceremony that reflected its status as a "power-bearing institution" that could prescribe the ideological framework of commemoration.[3] On the one hand, the script shared much in common with ceremonies elsewhere in the Empire – the two minutes silence, the laying of wreaths, and the singing of hymns – but on the other, it reflected a prevailing order of things in Kenya Colony, which specialized the careful inclusion of Kenyan actors, accentuated symbols of white prestige, and

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[11] KNA, PC/COAST/2/13/21, Excerpt from the Mombasa Times, "Armistice Day," November 12th, 1931, 69.

[2] Connelly, *The Great War, Memory, and Ritual*, 170-175. See also King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 240-242; Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 36.

[3] King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain*, 249.

disciplined non-white bodies. In Kenya, as elsewhere, the context of colonial rule came to bear on the transnational nature of remembrance.

At a deeper level, the colonial climate, the presence of non-white bodies, and the distinctive brand of Empire nationalism in the settler community constituted the 'unscript' of Armistice Day. The colonial state may have desired strict control over Armistice Day and its meaning, but the geographic particularity of Kenya, the context of 'bodies in contact,'[4] and local formations of settler identity contested that hegemony. If Armistice Day was another imperial fabric of memory, patched together with the IWGC's memorialization, colonial remembrance practices and rituals, alongside environmental factors, pulled at its threads as well.

The emergence of Armistice Day as an annual occasion, which after 1924 played out on the commemorative landscape stage, suggests several overriding trends as well as some significant changes. I focus primarily on the top-down features of remembrance. Following Tom Lawson, use of predominantly state and elite media sources means "local ceremonies or monuments have only been considered when they reflected on a national community or identity... [which] only offers an account of the ideas and identities that *surrounded* ordinary men and women in the aftermath of the Great War, of the ways they were told to remember it, rather that [how it] was constructed by ordinary people themselves."[5] This was only one side of a multivocal negotiation taking place throughout the Empire that tried to determine how Britain related to the world, but which also negotiated how Kenya Colony (or other any other colony) related to Britain and the world at the local level.

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[4] I borrow this term from Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[5] Tom Lawson, "'The Free-Masonry of Sorrow'? English National Identities and the Memorialization of the Great War in Britain, 1919-1931," *History & Memory* 20 (1) (Spring/Summer 2008): 92.

Nonetheless, Armistice Day ceremonies in inter-war Kenya were determined by a state-defined script which attempted to find some uniformity of practice across the colony. Kenyans featured in rituals as either the military guard or as headmen laying wreathes at the monuments. The Kenyans whom the state included in the ceremony reinforced the image of the loyal African in both its military and civilian forms, while Kenyans in the crowd were the subject of discourse and observation that reinforced the need for discipline and 'civilized' behaviour. Thus, the state pulled at the strings of 'invented traditions' in both the military and as a function of indirect rule to define the contours of Armistice Day, itself an 'invented tradition.' Indians were likewise treated as foils to mostly obedient and dignified white behaviours (and, when useful, Kenyans as well), although if settlers provided a poor example they were also chastised, especially in the media. Thus, Armistice Day was part of the repertoire of state power that it exerted primarily upon Kenyans, but also reflected and moulded settler society as well. The repertoire of power was thus responsive to both imperial forms of remembrance, and Kenya-specific exigencies.

Armistice Day was ultimately a brief ceremony where the state reproduced itself – its hierarchies, its power, and its connections to the metropole – in contrast to the ways that settlers performed remembrance. Acknowledging the peace meant respecting the administration's responsibility for governance, and for maintaining peaceful relations between settlers, Kenyans, and Indians in Kenya Colony. There were avenues for settlers to participate in the events (for example, the EAWL's Poppy Appeal), but their roles were complementary to those of officials, headmen, and the King's African Rifles. Armistice Day was a reminder that Kenya Colony was a shared responsibility, rather than the domain of white settlers. United as white skinned folk might have been in public spectacle, the power politics of Kenya Colony lurked behind the façade. Threatening the whiteness of officials and settlers alike, however, was a hostile Kenyan

environment that broke any illusion of uniformity across the Empire. Kenya Colony's Armistice Day ceremonies were but simulacra of the main show in London, exposing the tenuous British grip on the territory.

Origins and Precedents: The Peace Celebrations, 1918-1919

> The spread with which Nairobi knew can be guessed, and before five o'clock the signs of it were evident. Motor cycles and rickshaws flew the Union Jack; Whitesway and Laidlaw blazed out with the flags of all the allies; from the uncompleted clock-tower of the new E.A. Standard buildings fluttered the Union Jack, and rockets were let off at intervals.[6]

> With its typical flair and sense of dramatics, the *East African Standard* announced that

the War in Europe was over. Foregrounding the news, however, was that while "Von Lettow's Force [was] Beaten Again," the "pursuit continues."[7] It would take another thirteen days for the German forces in East Africa to surrender, but that did not dampen the excitement in Nairobi on Tuesday, 12 November 1918. Indeed, "there was never such a day in the history of Nairobi as Peace Day on Tuesday, nor such a marvel of rapid organisation as the big noon meeting in the New Staley Hotel and the afternoon procession which it arranged."[8] It was a day full of celebration, pride, and thankfulness, which "awoke [Nairobi] from their torpor in no half-hearted fashion."[9]

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[6] *EAS*, "The News Received: Rockets Herald Peace in Nairobi," November 12th, 1918.
[7] *EAS*, "K.A.R. in Action," November 12th, 1918.
[8] *EAS*, "Armistice Day," November 14th, 1918, 1.
[9] *EAS*, "Nairobi's Effort," November 14th, 1918, 1.

> # PEACE
>
> NAIROBI, 11th Nov., 1918.
>
> The *E. A. Standard* issued two Special Editions yesterday afternoon containing the Cables announcing the End of the War.
>
> The *E. A. Standard* staff, including the General Manager, Editorial Department, and Printing Staff assisted in distributing the tidings over Nairobi and District in Motor Cars, etc.
>
> But the distribution had results which our readers will well understand and overlook under circumstances which will never again occur.
>
> Owing to these we are able only to produce an "attenuated" Edition of the newspaper, which readers will accept as a souvenir of "The Day."
>
> Knowing the Newspaper Fraternity we fear the *E. A. Standard* will not be the exception in this respect.
>
> Of one all-important fact our readers can be assured: *Every Cable* received is faithfully and SOBERLY reproduced. The *E. A. Standard* staff have not made even this occasion an excuse for failing in their public duty.

Figure 13. Announcement of the Armistice in the *East African Standard*.[10]

Following the initial celebrations, the city declared a public holiday extending through to 17 November, with the K.A.R. Band providing the soundtrack for events in churches, on the streets, and in the theatres. The highlight of the holidays was the military "tatoo" and subsequent

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[10] *EAS*, "Peace," November 12th, 1918,

bonfire, where "Nairobi let itself go for once, and the joy of the public at the victorious conclusion of hostilities was amply demonstrated."[11] The people of Nairobi presented the Band's headmaster with an engraved cigarette case to thank him for their service during the celebrations, while the band itself was welcomed into the Theatre Royale for a special showing.[12] Joined together with the *askari*, Kenyan bodies were at the centre of the inaugural peace celebrations in Nairobi.

Thus not only was there the overriding confidence in the might of the British Empire – in its vitality and virility – but also of the "kind of African that is idealised, with a share in the colony's future…those who participate in the colonial administration of the territory, rather than fight it."[13] Crucially, the celebrations occurred in the context of both a society emerging from four years of economic uncertainty, social anxiety, and existential threat, as well as a favourable political climate fomented by state concessions. With the state, and the Governor, firmly invested in the settler colonial project the celebrations were on imperial terms, celebrating the victory of Empire and the advancement of settler goals and aspirations. In Bart Ziino's terms, settlers were "permitted widespread expression of their long trial."[14] There was a unity of purpose in the white community of Kenya, one that permitted the selective inclusion of Kenyans.

The parading and inclusion of black bodies in commemorative events did not threaten settler control in the same ways it would after the Devonshire Declaration.[15] The idealized African, in the context of commemoration, was the brave *askari* who came to the defence of the Colony and Empire. The KAR and Kenyan headmen featured in Armistice Day rituals

[11] *EAS*, "Military Tatoo," November 18th, 1918, 6.
[12] *EAS*, "Afternoon Treat to the 'Boys'," November 21st, 1918, 4.
[13] Clive Gabay, *Imagining Africa: Whiteness and the Western Gaze* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 83.
[14] Bart Ziino, "The 1918 Armistice and the Civilian Experience of War," in *The Great War: Aftermath and Commmoration*, eds., Carolyn Holbrook and Keir Reeves (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2019), 72.
[15] Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk*, 30-32.

throughout the colonial period, but the terms of their inclusion were predominantly contextualized by the battle over the responsibility of trusteeship between the settler community and the colonial state. Thus, the first celebrations of the Armistice represent an aberration as the thrust of exuberance and exaltation of victory gave way to the politics of ritual.

Celebrations of the Armistice in Mombasa the next year included a similar call for inclusion. Provincial Commissioner C.W. Hobley instructed the Committee for the celebrations that it was "the wish of the Government that all races shall participate in celebrating the great peace."[16] Nonetheless, invitations to the celebrations went out to the consuls at the Portuguese and Belgian embassy's before they went out to leaders in the Arab and Indian communities.[17] Moreover, the reverential aspects of Armistice were exclusively white events in Mombasa. The Mombasa Cathedral held a Thanksgiving for Peace gathering "at which all officers are requested to be present."[18] Thus the illusion of inclusivity in public spaces gave way to exclusivity as the public spectacle of celebration moved to the confessional space of the church. Recalling Connelly's distinction between civic and institutional commemoration, the celebration of the Armistice supported the state-driven framework for colonialism – trusteeship and the multi-racial state – while the religious elements undergirded the civilizational differences attached to white skin that united the white community. As the "struggle for Kenya" continued between the Colonial Office and the settler political elite, the symbolism of black bodies in public commemorations took on a more overtly political tone.

Indeed, the events in Mombasa in 1918 foreshadowed the political battle at the centre of commemoration. Hobley intimated to Brigadier General Llewellyn, the commandant of the

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[16] KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161, "CW Hobley to the Secretary, Chamber of Commerce," July 5th, 1919, 20.
[17] KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161, "Consul for Belgium to CW Hobley," July 4th, 1919, 22.
[18] KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161, "Provincial Commissioner's Note on Thanksgiving for Peace," n.d., 23.

KAR, that the costs of loaning the KAR Band for the Peace Celebrations in 1918 should be charged to the government account because "the function was one which had a very desireable [*sic*] political effect."[19] This indicates that the public gatherings in large urban centres were first and foremost opportunities for civic engagement to become part of the colonial state's political agenda. Consolidating loyalty to the Crown and deference to white skin was essential at these public gatherings. The integration of select black bodies into the social relations of commemoration thus reiterated the "political and economic relationships, supporting the fiction that the inequalities structured into the relationships were the result of endogenous, probably genetic, inequalities between 'races.'"[20] But the state interpreted the roles and responsibilities in upholding those perceived 'innate' differences differently.

The state's dependence upon "indigenous hierarchies, and cultivating and supporting native rulers at the top of them,"[21] was on full display at the 1918-1919 celebrations. The King's African Rifles and their Band formed one part of the hierarchy, while segregated celebrations represented another. Non-white communities were left to organize their own celebrations, especially outside of Mombasa, with the state providing resources for a "big ngoma," where "township regulations [were] being relaxed for the occasion."[22] Bruce Berman exposes the contradiction of colonial rule in Kenya, showing that "the British accumulated power as they multiplied their allies and forced down the price of African assistance," and "structural change from coexistence to control meant that the 'rewards of collaboration' had to be given a civilian context and stabilized."[23] In 1918-1919, the imperative of rewarding Kenyan elites for having

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[19] KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161, "Hobley to Brigadier General Llewellyn," June 5th, 1919, 11.
[20] Alfred J. Lopez, *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 121.
[21] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 138.
[22] KNA, PC/COAST/1/3/161, "District Commissioner, Voi, Notes to CW Hobley," July 7th, 1919, 30-31.
[23] Berman, *Crisis and Control*, 53-54.

provided labour and military personnel took place in the reserves, while the KAR performed it in the cities. As Armistice Day became more ritualized in the mid-1920s, however, headmen joined the KAR in performing their allegiance, and the authority of the state, in public space.

The celebrations of 1918-1919 quickly gave way in subsequent years to a more planned and state-driven commemorative project. The *EAS* complained in 1920 that the enthusiasm with which settlers celebrated the peace had not translated into the raising of funds for appropriate war memorials throughout the territory.[24] In fact, the original plans for the War Memorial Fund were not a cenotaph and Memorial Hall, but instead an addition to the European hospital of a balcony befitting the sacrifices of the soldiers of Empire.[25] It was "a matter of considerable regret that the Memorial scheme as originally contemplated has had to be considerably curtailed for want of funds."[26] Nairobi, however, did hold a ceremony in 1920 to observe two minutes silence, which focused upon a children's service and the laying of wreaths.[27] These were typical elements of Armistice Day programs in the 1920s, setting the stage for more organized and well-attended public spectacles (aided by official sanction of time off work, unlike the declaration that it was not a public holiday from 1918-1920).

One particular piece of reporting stands out from the Armistice Day coverage. The *EAS* observed that "the few Europeans assembled [at the Railway Station] reverently bowed their heads and paid their homage to those in whose memory the silence was commanded by the sovereign."[28] It also highlighted that "the Indian babies appeared to have deliberately gone out of their way to make as much noise as possible, as also the African porters."[29] The commentator

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[24] *EAS*, "An Unwon War," November 11th, 1920, 4.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] *EAS*, "Armistice Day: Partial Success of Nairobi's Two-minute Silence," November 12th, 1920, 4.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

went on to recommend that future silence be better organized, that employers instruct Kenyans

of its significance, and that Indians should remember their own dead properly by acknowledging

the silence.[30] The report set the precedent that Indian and Kenyan bodies were under strict

observation at public spectacles, subject to the colonial discourse that attempted to discipline

their behaviour according to their perceived civilizational status. Europeans could instruct

Kenyans as to the significance of the two-minute silence, but Indians ought to have known

better, reiterating their traitorous and subversive role in the Colony.

Though the celebrations of 1918-1919 were but a short burst of energy in the wake of the

Great War, they set crucial precedents for the ritualization of Armistice Day in the 1920s. The

selective inclusion of black bodies, the observation of Indians and Kenyans in attendance, and

the establishment of rituals through which settlers observed and disciplined continued as main

features of Armistice Day. The discourse on death that the IWGC negotiated related to this

discourse of remembrance. The colonial administration circumscribed the available modes of

publicly remembering for settlers, Kenyans, and Indians, in turn suppressing non-state threads of

memory. Settlers, at first, joined in this discourse of domination, but as the ad-hoc celebrations

turned to scripted commemorations, the state attempted to establish a hegemony over the

commemorative discourse. The state remained tethered to the imperial fibres of memory, while

settlers' own rituals and commemorative practices, as we have seen, continued to pull those

threads in different directions.

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[30] Ibid.

Ritual and Repetition: The Colonial Administration and the Script of Armistice Day

In 1921, the Colonial administration set out a script for Armistice Day that was much more programmatic than even 1920. On 2 November 1921, the official announcement explicitly alluded to the changing focus of Armistice Day from celebration to "reverent remembrance of the glorious dead who fell during the Great War."[31] The *Kenya Gazette* announced that all local authorities should arrange for a ceremony on the 11th, emulating the procession in Nairobi. A "flagstaff [was] erected at the junction Sixth Avenue and Government Road at the foot of which wreaths [were] laid before 11 a.m."[32] Apparently not heeding the advice of the *East African Standard* the previous year, a single siren sounded to signify one minute before the two-minute silence, followed by another siren blast at "11.02 a.m. to break the silence."[33] Observers were instructed to sing the Hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past," commonly sung across the Empire, with the Reveille ending the formal ceremony. "Representatives of all Religious Denominations [were] invited to be present."[34]

By 9 November, the program underwent several alterations. While it is unclear who initiated the changes, the *EAS*'s criticism of the proceedings around the two-minute silence the previous year appear a likely impetus. Rather than one siren at 10.59 a.m., the program now included the firing of a gun at 11 a.m. to mark the beginning the silence. Further, in addition to the hymn, the program now included the KAR Band's rendition of "God Save the King."[35] The original program also indicated that the Governor would lay his wreath and leave the procession, with other wreaths laid before the silence. Now, the revised outline indicated that all wreaths

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[31] Kenya Gazette, "Government Notice No. 407: Armistice Day," Vol. 23, No. 797, November 2nd, 1921, 973.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] *EAS*, "Armistice Day: Revised Arrangements for Celebration," November 9th, 1921, 4.

were to be presented with the Governor present after the two-minute silence.[36] The small

changes may appear insignificant, but the revised program de-centred the Governor as the

primary actor at the ceremony. It also added an air of celebration with the singing of "God Save

the King," which also took away from the significance of the two-minute silence as an impetus

for thoughtful reflection. In essence, the changes elevated the ceremony from a brief pause in the

daily life of the Colony, to a more elaborate gathering.

Strangely, the *EAS* did not report on the events on 12 November, an omission made more

striking by its reporting from 1918-1920 and in the years after 1921. Perhaps the looming Indian

Question (and particularly forthcoming meetings of the Convention of Associations and lobbying

in Britain)[37] preoccupied the presses in the face of a small ceremony. On the other hand, perhaps

it was what a concerned settler wrote in preparations for the 1922 ceremony that "what should

have been an impressive ceremony was made more or less a farce."[38] Nonetheless, the 1921

ceremony was a transitional moment for Kenya Colony's commemorative rituals. The

implanting of a flagstaff at the corner of Government Road and Sixth Avenue (the original

proposed cite for the Obelisk), the expansion of Armistice Day ceremony beyond the two-minute

silence, and the formalization of wreath laying all became standard aspects of Armistice Day in

the 1920s.

Importantly, ties to Empire were also essential features of 11 November. The

foregrounding of the proceedings in London – in 1921, for example, a showing at the Theatre

Royale in Nairobi of the unveiling of the London Cenotaph in 1920[39] – went alongside local

events. Indeed, as the *EAS* editorialized, it was not the dead and veterans of East African

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[36] Ibid.

[37] See *EAS*, November 12th – 14th, 1921.

[38] *EAS*, "'Enquirer' to the Editor," November 6th, 1922, 6.

[39] *EAS*, "Armistice Day: Arrangements for Celebration," November 11th, 1921, 4.

Campaign, but "[those] in England to-day…for whom death would still spell release"[40] that needed care and attention. In 1921, there were elements of the local texture of Armistice Day – an organ recital at the All Saints Church and the Armistice Night Fancy Dress Dance – yet the program was tethered tightly to the metropole. It was only once the colonial administration fully ritualized Armistice Day, through repetition, that the Kenya-specific events entangled with Empire-wide commemorations, exposing the weaknesses of those tethers.

The ceremony the next year built upon the expanded program of 1921. The *Gazette* detailed that the lengths of Government Road and Sixth Avenue would close for the ceremony.[41] The closing of the space added to the ritual, providing a designated area for the gathering, rather than the business of the town briefly pausing for the two-minute silence. The warning shot at just after 10:58 a.m. was replaced by a drumroll and the Last Post.[42] The rest of the ceremony continued as usual, though the hymn changed to "All People that on Earth do dwell," and the wreaths were escorted to the cemetery to be laid "at the foot of the Memorial Cross."[43] The KAR, as always, formed the guard of honour, but there was no official mention of headmen laying wreaths or participating in the ceremony. In all other aspects, however, Armistice Day reached its maturity in Kenya in 1922.

In preparations for the day, however, the Colonial Secretary called on "all employers [to] impress upon their native employees the absolute necessity for a fitting silence and a reverent deportment during the ceremony."[44] The *EAS* underlined the importance of controlling the black bodies in attendance – especially those "vagrant and masterless" – saying

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40 *EAS*, "The Glorious Dead," November 11th, 1921, 4.
41 Kenya Gazette, "Government Notice No. 357: Armistice Day," Vol. 24, No. 854, November 8th, 1922, 683.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 *EAS*, "Reverence," November 6th, 1922, 4.

we have no wish to debar their attendance. On the contrary we should be glad to think that they might possibly gain some inkling of the nobility and the high ideals of those whose memory we are endeavouring to perpetuate. But they should be controlled, and, we suggest that, if possible, they should be allowed ample spaces in one spot only, and that native arriving during the ceremony should be kept back from mixing with the general assemblage.[45]

Ritual thus served a dual purpose in 1922: control and obedience, as well as a settler version of trusteeship by example. In the midst of town planning that sought to segregate the races, Armistice Day was another opportunity to clearly delineate white and black spaces, with Kenyans clearly at the margins. Similarly, it was white memory of the war – "the flower of our race"[46] – that took centre stage. The *EAS* did not mention a word about Kenyan sacrifices from 1914-1918, instead applying the words "'in remembrance of me'…to those of our kin, or of our affectionate friendship, who fell, believing that the world would be better for their sacrifice."[47] Black bodies were to be observed and disciplined, white bodies were to be remembered and celebrated.

Indeed, the successes of Armistice Day prompted a thorny editorial in the *EAS* three days later.

The result of [Armistice Day] was the most conspicuous success, which reflects great credit on those responsible for what is generally termed the 'stage management' of the function…We wish now to see curbed [the native's] propensity towards petty larceny, burglary, and thieving which, since the termination of the war has been so marked a feature of suburban life.[48]

This was an example to the colonial administration that they had a significant role to play in cleansing Nairobi of what they deemed nefarious Kenyan elements.[49] Settlers had clear ideas about how to limit Kenyan "naer-do-wells," and the governor needed to step in to ensure that

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[45] Ibid.
[46] *EAS*, "The Glorious Dead," November 11th, 1921, 4.
[47] *EAS*, "Armistice Day," November 11th, 1922, 4.
[48] *EAS*, "A Lesson," November 14th, 1922, 4.
[49] Ibid.

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"the native [is] properly handled."[50] One year before the Devonshire Declaration proclaimed that Kenya Colony was primarily an African territory, it seemed to the *EAS* that a well-handled ceremony portended a future where segregated spaces and properly policed urban areas might protect the white settler community. Armistice Day was no longer a celebration of Empire, nor just a memorial to the members of the British race, but a commentary on the local political climate. Kenya Colony could be a white man's country, if only the colonial administration and the Colonial Office would throw their support behind the settler community and share the responsibility to govern Kenyans.

Between Armistice Day 1922 and 1923, the Devonshire Declaration set the white settler community on edge. The Armistice Day ceremony again grew in size, with thousands attending from all the communities of Kenya.[51] The ceremony in 1923, building upon the scripted ritual in 1922, mobilized white civil society in the remembrance of the Great War. Judges, the Executive Council, the Legislative Council, clergymen, Boy Scouts,[52] and the governor were all expected to attend, situated within the space created by the Guard of Honour.[53] Only the KAR represented Kenyans in the official program, the last year that this would be the case. 1923 thus established the repetitive nature of Armistice Day in Kenya, state-driven and controlled.

As David Cannadine argues, repetition in ritual can often be intentional, "in a static age, unchanging ritual might be a genuine reflection of, and reinforcement to stability and consensus. But in a period of change, conflict or crisis, it might be deliberately unaltered so as to give an impression of continuity, community and comfort, despite overwhelming contextual evidence to

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[50] Ibid.

[51] *EAS*, "Armistice Day: The Passing of a Very Solemn Ceremony," November 12th, 1923, 4.

[52] Boyscouts were an exclusively European outfit until the late 1920s. See Timothy Parsons, *Race, Resistance, and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athen: Ohio University Press, 2004), especially Chapter 4.

[53] Kenya Gazette, "Government Notice No. 363," Volume 25, No. 910, October 31st, 1923, 860.

the contrary."[54] The context of 1923, with the Devonshire Declaration predating Armistice Day by only four months, is difficult to surmise. On the one hand, the *EAS* hoped the ceremony would promote a "deeply seated desire to sink our differences in a mutual effort to discharge our duties one to the other for the general advancement of humanity, particularly those who are still suffering to-day from the effects of their sacrifices in the cause of Empire,"[55] where "Kenya too, will join tomorrow in the Empire-wide tribute."[56] The sentiments indicate a genuine desire to take part in the remembrance of men from across the Empire who set the example of, in another repeated turn of phrase, "the flower of its manhood."[57]

In the next column on 10 November, on the other hand, the *EAS* congratulated the Legislative Council on deferring to the Convention of Associations, "the Peoples Parliament," on agricultural issues. Speaking for the wider settler society the *EAS* lauded work, "since the appointment of Sir Edward Northey, [for] co-operation and mutual good feeling between the Government and the public…[encouraging] a deeper sense of responsibility."[58] A subtle nod towards self-governance, the juxtaposition of a ceremony common across the Empire, and a political movement exclusive to settlers, stimulates the question of whether or not this was simply the illusion of consensus in the face of a crisis within settler society. That is, while there was likely genuine feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood with the white folk of the Empire, political issues lingered just beneath the surface. It was not that the Empire and the Crown were unimportant, but that they were interpreted uniquely in Kenya Colony, gesturing towards the nested layers of identification amongst the settlers.

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[54] David Cannadine, "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c 1820-1977," in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 105.
[55] *EAS*, "Armistice Day," November 10th, 1923, 4.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] *EAS*, "The Convention," November 10th, 1923, 4.

The unscript of Armistice Day also crept into the events of 11 November 1923. The colonial climate struck the Boys Scouts, with an outbreak of whooping cough apparently limiting the number of scouts and troops in attendance for their pre-ceremony parade.[59] Instilling the youth with a sense of duty and understanding of the Great War was an essential aspect of Armistice Day. Thus, the inhospitable Kenyan environment worked against this aspect of ceremony and ritual. Meanwhile, at Muthaiga, the townspeople adorned the memorial with wreaths of their own, making the private memorial the centrepiece of Armistice Day. Nairobi's certainly was not the only ceremony in the colony, but the vast majority were still orchestrated through state apparatuses. Muthaiga marked itself out as a unique site of settler memory. Finally, the *EAS*'s column reporting the events of the Fancy Dress Ball was actually longer than its summary of the Armistice Day ceremony. Members of the colonial administration attended, but it is still noteworthy that a social event – albeit ostensibly to raise money for veterans[60] – was the more newsworthy gathering. It was not in reverence and ritual that Armistice Day struck its strongest chord, but in the celebratory and community-building event of the evening.[61] As the script for Armistice Day became more rigid and ritualized, so too did other, more localized traditions emerge.

Unfortunately, the 1924 Armistice Day ceremony is not on record either in the Kenyan National Archives or in the Syracuse University's special collection.[62] This lacuna is particularly unfortunate because 1924 was a monumental year in Nairobi. The commemorative culture in Kenya developed with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York in February 1924[63] when he

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[59] *EAS*, "Kenya Boy Scouts," November 8th, 1923, 1.
[60] See Chapter 5 of this dissertation.
[61] *EAS*, "The Armistice Ball: Kenya Civil Servants Score a Success," November 12th, 1923, 6
[62] The November 1924 reel of the microfilm collection is missing.
[63] See CWGC, WG 122/22/1, "Duke of York in East Africa – 1924-1925."

paid a visit to the IWGC cemetery, laying a wreath at the foot of the Memorial Cross.[64]

Representatives of the Crown often presided over the unveiling of monuments, and other

commemorative activities in Kenya Colony, creating a crucial link between the memory of East

African war dead and the monarchy. But this link was different than the public spectacles prior

to 1924, wherein the colonial administration was the link to Empire, establishing its role as the

seat of power and the ultimate trustee in Kenya. After 1923, the tethers to Empire and the

explicit acknowledgement of Kenyans – other than the KAR – reinforced the colonial

administrations' vision for the Colony.

In 1925, for example, a crucial addition to the Armistice Day program set the year apart

from both the earliest phases of celebration and the subsequent transition to a reverent and

scripted Armistice Day ceremony. In addition to the twelve groups who had made up the

procession inside the enclosed area the KAR guarded, "Headmen" constituted a new arrival.[65]

The Memorial Obelisk and the Memorial Hall now featured in the ceremony, as the Armistice

Day events moved from the junction of Government Road and Sixth Avenue to the new sites.

The appearance of Kenyan elites in the wake of the Devonshire Declaration and Governor Grigg

was not simply coincidence. Viewed by one official, Eric Dutton, as fascistic,[66] Grigg

understood the symbolism of having prominent Kenyans in public space as a representation of

indirect rule.

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[64] Ibid. This event was widely noted in the Press throughout the Empire.
[65] KNA, PC/NZA/3/53/2/1, "Notice: Two Minutes Silence," n.d. 1925, 1. This was a circular sent out to, presumably, all Provincial and District Commissioners detailing the events as planned in Nairobi.
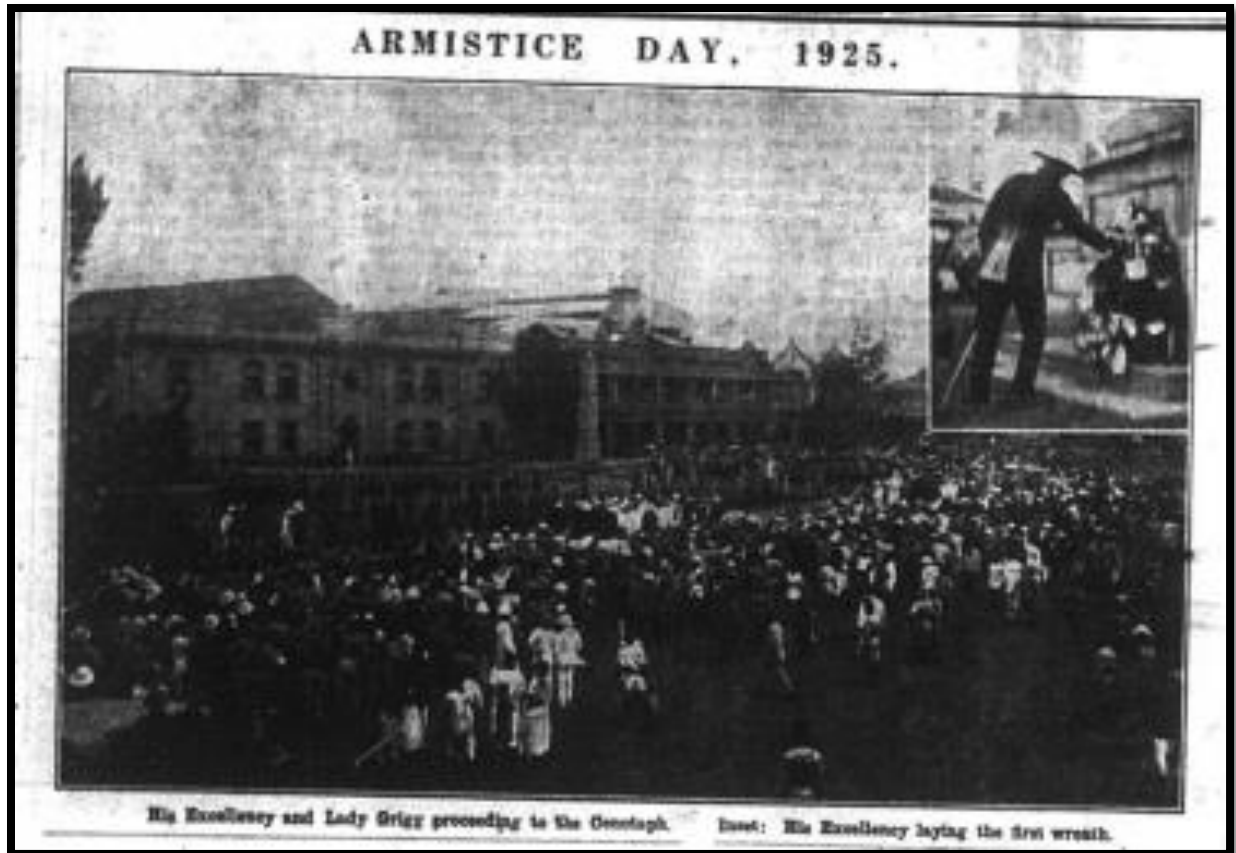[66] Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, 45.

Figure 14. Memorial Obelisk and Sir Edward Grigg Laying a Wreath.[67]

The *EAS'*s report of the "Impressive Ceremony in Nairobi" the next day made no mention of the Kenyan presence at Armistice Day, other than the KAR.[68] The commentaries of years passed were not present in 1925, and much like the ceremony itself were presented in a formulaic, ritualized fashion. Indeed, in 1926 and 1927, the program appears to have remained unchanged, noted in the archives by a singular circular communicating that "the arrangements for the observation of Armistice Day in Nairobi will be similar to the programme forwarded

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[67] *EAS*, November 12th, 1925, 1.
[68] *EAS*, "Armistice Day: An Impressive Ceremony in Nairobi," November 12th, 1925, 1.

under cover of my circular memorandum of 24th October, 1925."[69] Reports from Kyambu and Mombasa confirmed the ritualized, almost uniform ceremonies outside of Nairobi.[70] Armistice Day was an administrative affair after 1925, and the chatter in the *EAS* about November 11th waned in the succeeding years.

In 1927, the program as published in the *EAS* made explicit mention of the inability to observe the two-minute silence when Kenyans did not respect the tradition. "An earnest appeal is made to all to make the Two Minutes Silence as complete as possible and employers of Native labour can be especially helpful in this respect by instructing their employees in regard to the significance of the event," it emphasized.[71] The imperative to control black bodies was apparently more of an issue in Mombasa, where an *EAS* correspondent indicated that "one of the great difficulties is to get the natives to maintain both the silence and the proper pose consonant with the impressiveness and dignity of the occasion. For the most part, they are a noisy irresponsible crew whom it is hard to control and the clamour and dim outside of the immediate scene of the ceremony is usually frightful."[72] Partially the result of its invented-ness, but also the settler-exclusive spaces within which Armistice Day took place, the reporter framed the ceremony in exclusively European terms. Between 1922 and 1927, the colonial administration scripted the event in administrative terms thus alienating the memory of Kenyans, except the KAR and, after 1925, headmen, who were key to the administration.

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[69] KNA, PC/NZA/3/53/2/1, "Armistice Day, Memorandum by J.E.S. Merrick for Colonial Secretary," October 16th 1927. See also Ibid., October 30th, 1926.
[70] *EAS*, "Armistice Day," November 14th, 1925, 5.
[71] *EAS*, "The Armistice," November 11th, 1927, 1.
[72] Ibid., "Mombasa Observance."

A Search for Kenyan Memory? Armistice Day, 1927-1929

The *EAS* in 1927 seemed to challenge the administration's script for Armistice Day from a rather peculiar angle. In the political context of another push for shared trusteeship, it is hard to discern whether the *EAS* genuinely believed that Kenyans needed a more prominent spot in the ceremony, or whether it was a self-serving play to advance the settlers' political agenda. On 11 November, the *EAS'*s main section on Armistice lamented "that it has again found impossible, for reasons which we have never understood, to associated in the recognition of Armistice Day the African peoples who played so distinctive and worthy a part in the East African campaign."[73] The editorial targeted the IWGC's African Memorial, now laying well beyond the centre of ceremony since 1925. The editorial criticized the lethargy of the administration in its intent "to remove that striking tribute to the African dead and re-erect it on a site opposite the present War Memorial in order that ceremonies such as that of Armistice Day might be carried out around symbols which signify and perpetuate the memory of dual sacrifice of white and black in a common cause."[74] The sacrifices of white settlers and Kenyans needed to complement each other, just as a shared responsibility for trusteeship would allow settlers to share again in a common cause. The issue was of such note that the *EAS* published a full column on the need to move the statue three days later.[75]

The editorials on the African Memorial do not name an author, but they are personal in tone. Rather than chastising either the government alone, or the settler community, "this ignored and neglected memorial at the moment is a constant reflection on the European community and a source of bewilderment to all ordinary right-minded people."[76] This specific instance of invoking

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[73] *EAS*, "Armistice," November 11th, 1927, 4.
[74] Ibid.
[75] *EAS*, "A Neglected Memorial," November 14th. 1927, 4.
[76] Ibid.

Kenyan memorialization should be interpreted as an intervention in the battle for control over the tutelage and trusteeship of Kenyans. The neglect of the monument, according to the author, was representative of the administration's neglect of its duties. It was thus the settlers' responsibility to "constantly and frequently [remind] it of its neglect, [less] the history of the past two years will be callously repeated."[77] As we have seen, by Empire Day 1928 the administration moved the monument in coordination with the IWGC. Whether the *EAS* author had any influence in the matter, the editorials seem a striking commentary on the state of Kenya Colony in 1927, before the Hilton Young Commission laid down the final blow to settler aspirations of self-governance.

With the memorial now opposite the Obelisk outside Memorial Hall, the 1928 ceremony represented a truly "united service."[78] The event was an auspicious one, with the Prince of Wales presiding over the ceremony on his visit from Britain to the East African Territories.[79] It was the second great day of celebration throughout the Empire that featured a visit from a royal to Kenya, the first being the unveiling of the African Memorial on Empire Day that year.[80] The event was "a striking episode.... In the Capital was the long procession of people of all communities, carrying wreaths which were principally of Flanders Poppies, then providing om the one gesture a tribute to the Memory of the dead."[81] The truly heartening event for the *EAS* came during the two-minute silence, when "the thousands of natives who participated in yesterday's service in Nairobi appeared to realise something of the depth of meaning in the two minutes silence. Like those of other races. They remained motionless throughout, and this African tribute served to add considerably to the impressiveness of the ceremony."[82] The

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[77] Ibid.
[78] *EAS*, "Armistice Ceremonial in Nairobi," November 12th, 1928, 3.
[79] Ibid.
[80] See Chapter 4.
[81] *EAS*, "Armistice Ceremonial in Nairobi," November 12th, 1928, 3.
[82] Ibid., "The Silence."

question again arises as to whether this was a genuine shared experience or a show for a key representative of the Crown in Britain, who might advocate for the settler cause. In either event, the Kenyan body remained the centre of attention, collectively observed and spoken about through the discourse of civilization.

A clue as to the meaning of the increased presence of Kenyans at the 1928 ceremony comes from the headlining news of 12 November. It was not the Armistice Day ceremony, but the Prince of Wales' luncheon with settlers that occupied a full three pages of the *EAS* that day. Lord Delamere chaired the event and the Prince delivered a lengthy speech lauding the development of the country.[83] A potential boon to those desirous of self-governance and shared trusteeship, it was essential that the settlers put on a representative show for the Prince of Wales. Plucky as the settlers were, it was through exploiting Grigg's "government by agreement" and investing in good relations with London, that settlers might achieve their ultimate success. The visit and the Prince's speech, it seemed, proved that "the progress of local government will give a new impetus and anew sense of responsibility to the people."[84] With Grigg and Amery the buttresses of settler aspiration, it appeared as though – from the settler perspective – they had a new friend in tow.

In 1929 the ceremony reverted to its more ritualistic and repetitive qualities. It was rather the Ex-Servicemen Reunion, organized by the newly established Kenyan branch of the British Legion, that took centre stage. There, apparently undeterred by the Hilton Young Report, Grigg addressed the gathering with a message of "shared comradeship" in the face of revolutions abroad, seditious activities, and the great responsibility of trusteeship in Kenya.[85] The *EAS*

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[83] *EAS*, "HRH Lunches with the Settlers of the Colony," November 12th, 1928, 1; 7-8.
[84] Ibid., 8.
[85] *EAS*, "Inspiring Close to Armistice Day," November 12th, 1929, 1; 7.

foregrounded the gathering by saying it was a "unique gathering, the assembly of men and women who know the trials and test of a time which is beyond the knowledge of the younger generations."[86] C.J.D. Duder identifies fears of the youth losing their martial spirit and the waning significance of the First World War as a prime motivation for reviving the British Legion in Kenya as a soldier settler community. The 1926 Census indicated that almost a third of Kenya Colony's white population was under the age of 26, but only "the smallest minority of this group would have served in the First World War. One of the reasons given for the establishment of both the Legion and the Defence Force was that these bodies would inculcate spirit and loyalty among the youth of Kenya, qualities which were apparently found to be both desirable and lacking."[87] The youth needed to understand the sacrifices of the men and women who made up the white community in Kenya, while the Defence Force stood in as the adult variation of shared responsibility for colonial defence. The ceremony, by contrast, served its purpose outside the realm of colonial politics, with the settler community clearly under threat from London. By 1931, the *EAS* eschewed its yearly tribute to the meaning of Armistice Day on November 11th.[88]

The period from 1927-1929 is the most striking example of the ways that Armistice Day became entangled with colonial politics. Evolving from community exaltation in the wake of the Armistice, through to an administrative affair in the mid-1920s, by 1927 the desperation of the settler community in its quest for self-governance, alongside favourable powers in the Colonial Office and in Nairobi, the ceremony became a public ritual ripe for exploitation. Rather than fight back against the inclusion of Kenyans in the ceremony, the settler community – or at least the political elite – embraced the change, all the while building their own community up through

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[86] *EAS*, "Remembrance Day," November 11th, 1929, 8.
[87] Duder, "The Soldier Settlerment Scheme of 1919 in Kenya," 727.
[88] *EAS*, November 11th, 1931.

other events that were exclusively theirs. Settlers and the administration alike pulled at the strings of Empire-wide commemoration, making Armistice Day something unique, born of colonial culture and politics. Analyzed within the framework of the political struggles we have traced throughout this study, Armistice Day represented another battle for control over the colony, and the attendant need to control, discuss, and discipline Kenyan bodies.

If Armistice Day was a battle over political control, sometimes through divergent state and settler narratives but at other times through collaboration, the climate was a consistent threat to all those with white skin in Kenya. Dane Kennedy argues that the colonial environment was a constant threat in the everyday lives of settlers, with many coming to the conclusion that the climate precluded Kenya from being a white man's country.[89] The ceremony on November 11th, occurring just as the mid-day heat was taking effect, meant that performing the invented tradition exposed settler vulnerability in the territory. Disease, as in the example of the whooping cough amongst the Boy Scouts, also threatened settlers. Pitted as they were against politicians in London, it was perhaps a non-human agent, not the Hilton Young Report, that represented the settlers' greatest enemy.

In 1935, for example, the *EAS* reported on "a remarkable feat of courage and endurance," on Armistice Day.[90] A man, whose car had broken down "in the heart of Masai lion country," was finally able to reach Nairobi "after tramping for 18 hours, meeting herds of game with their attendant lion…in an exhausted and waterless condition."[91] The ordeal, the man told the *Standard*, reinforced to him that it was "good to be up against it physically, and keep on going, and after it's over you can look back and appreciate it all."[92] But the reporter questioned, "how

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[89] Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 120-125.
[90] *EAS*, November 13th, 1935, 5.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 6.

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many of the modern generation would appreciate his point of view"; "familiar sentiments," Mr. Sinclair had apparently shared "about 'modern youth' which his old Masai guide had expressed."[93] It was a story of triumph, as a plucky old settler had braved the African terrain to participate in the tribute to the Empire's glorious dead.

Sinclair's story highlights the lengths to which settlers went to secure their dominance in a hostile territory, despite evidence that their constitution was not fit for East Africa. The Africanization of the East African campaign was a direct result of the environmental impediments to fielding a white army with animals. Black bodies withstood the East African terrain, the tsetse fly, and heat to a greater degree than European soldiers. Mr. Sinclair, however, offered evidence to the contrary. Just as the consistent presence of black skin was a reminder of the Kenyan role in Kenya Colony's defence, both in the 1920s and during the Great War, the Kenyan environment also reminded participants in commemorative activities that the imperial script, refined in Nairobi, had clear limits.

Part of enjoying the leisurely settler lifestyle meant confronting the reality that the Kenyan environment, outside of the Highlands and the Coast, was inherently hostile to white bodies. Indeed, the white civil uniform that settlers and administrators donned in Kenya responded to environmental realities. With the typical safari helmet, lightweight white button-up shirt, and either white trousers or shorts, the civil uniform was a familiar sight at any ceremony, celebration, or public spectacle in Kenya up until decolonization. This was a marker of white prestige that not only helped the settler deal with the Kenyan heat, but also stood in stark contrast to the dark-skinned subjects who might attend.

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[93] Ibid.

Accordingly, the white civil uniform was the desired attire for officers and officials alike at Armistice Day ceremonies, at least from the late 1920s. In the case that an ex-serviceman or officer was not entitled to wear the white civil uniform, only then would they attend Armistice Day in full military dress. An interesting note appears in the circular to Provincial and District Commissioners concerning Armistice Day, asking those wearing the civil uniform not to attend in shorts but in full trousers. Apparently, with the ceremony occurring in the mid-day sun, some attendees had opted for wearing shorts to combat the discomfort of standing in crowded areas without cover on Armistice Day. As a moment marking the white prestige and out of respect for the importance of the occasion, however, the colonial administration clearly wished that officials and officers would dress for the occasion accordingly. Perhaps a seemingly innocent transgression against the colonial administration's script, the need to reiterate the expected norms of dress on 11 November served as a reminder that the colonial context consistently affected the ability of white settlers to participate in public life.

In one instance, a letter from a Provincial Commissioner to the head of a school from which young girls had participated in the official Armistice Day ceremony commented that while the participation of the girls had been exemplary, one girl had passed out due to the mid-day heat.[94] In another example, an administrator apologized for being unable to attend the Armistice Day ceremony in Kakemega, owing to an illness that periodically recurred during his tenure in Kenya. "It is sheer funk," he complained, but he "dare not risk doing anything funny during the 2 minutes silence."[95] Recalling the appeal for non-white communities to understand and respect British tradition, it was not only sickness but the potential for interrupting a signpost of white prestige that spurred the writer to apologize. Ultimately, the hostile Kenyan environment had

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[94] PC/NZA/3/4/25, 37.
[95] PC/NZA/3/4/25, 45, "Letter from Unknown Sender to Sidney H. Fazan," November 21st, 1936.

made him "lose his guts,"[96] and prevented his presence at the public spectacle. He deemed it absurd that he had just recently participated in a heated tennis match, a frustrating example of the volatility of the Kenyan environment, especially for white settlers.[97]

There are only traces of the threats that the Kenyan environment posed to the settler and administrator alike, though historians have noted the concerns with white viability in East Africa.[98] Compounding the metropolitan insistence that Kenya was primarily an African territory, the environment also reiterated the facts on the ground. Nairobi and Mombasa, alongside the White Highlands, might have been relative retreats from the climatic threats, but disease and heat bore heavily upon the settler constitution throughout the Colony. Empire-wide uniformity was thus an illusion, as it was renegotiated to meet the needs, or deal with the consequences, of living in far off outposts.

Armistice Day: The Politics of Public Spectacle in Kenya Colony, 1918-1929

Armistice Day represented the focal point of a range of activities in Kenya Colony each year. It tied together aspects of the IWGC's fabric of memory, with the presence of its monument to African sacrifices, and the transporting of wreaths to its cemeteries, to settler events like the Armistice Ball, the Poppy Appeal, and theatre showings (which themselves drew upon trends and traditions abroad). The colonial administration, however, bound those threads together as the party responsible for scripting the event. The script itself was subject to negotiation, but consistently featured members of the government and, at times, the Crown as one manifestation of its responsibility to govern and administer the Colony according to metropolitan dictates. Its

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] See, for example, Jackson, "White Man's Country," and "Settler Colonialism in Kenya, 1890-1963." See also Kennedy, *Islands of White*, 120-125.

role as stage master, especially after 1922, gave it the power to mould Armistice Day across the colony into a unifying event.

Yet throughout the 1920s, commemorative practices shifted alongside the whims of metropolitan governments, who had their own distinct visions of what Kenya Colony ought to be. Through the intense periods of debate on the issue, with the crucial signposts of the Devonshire Declaration and the deliberations of the Hilton Young Commission, settler buy-in to the ceremony changed as well. The ceremonies in 1927 and 1928, correlating with the Hilton Young Commission, represented the apex of civic mobilization in Kenya Colony, giving way, thereafter, to a highly ritualized, almost mundane ceremony thereafter. By 1929, the presence of ex-servicemen's organizations and the long-standing settler traditions of Armistice Balls and social events dominated the headlines on 11 and 12 November.

Throughout the inter-war years, the observation and discourse surrounding black and Indian bodies was a consistent concern for settlers. It was part of a colonial discourse that cemented white prestige, reiterated the civilizing mission (and the settler role therein), and denigrated the participation of other races on Armistice Day, or otherwise, exploited their behaviour for self-congratulation. In combination with the invented-ness of Armistice Day traditions, the disciplinary nature of ceremony also locked Kenyan memory of the Great War into the knot that resulted from the negotiation of remembrance practices in inter-war Kenya Colony. Armistice Day, whether administrative or settler-driven, was a decidedly white endeavour, performed in white spaces. Kenyan iconography and inclusion was useful only insofar as it complemented administrative and settler narratives of colonial control.

Even though Armistice Day was performed in white spaces, getting there, or being able to attend, was a different matter altogether. Disease, climate, and transportation barriers – just as

they had in the East African campaign – eroded the artifice of the white man's country. At the same time, it also precluded any understanding of the ceremony as a faithful copy of the metropolitan tradition. This was a colonial culture of remembrance that evolved according to the context of Kenya Colony. There were imperial fibres, settler filaments, and state tethers entangling, but they left few lasting threads onto which Kenyans might find meaning. The memory of the Great War was white-washed in public spaces, with seemingly little reason for Kenyans to vindicate an imperial war that only served their subjugation.

Conclusion: A Culture of Commemoration: Kenya Colony and Remembrance in the 1920s

***Mau Mau,* *Uhuru,* and Constructive Forgetting: White Supremacy as the Legacy of the**

First World War

On 15 October 1964, the newly independent Kenyan government sent out a circular proclaiming that "from this year…and all subsequent years Remembrance Day shall cease to be observed in Kenya."[762] Just short of 50 years since von Lettow-Vorbeck successfully defended German East Africa's port city of Tanga in November 1914, Jomo Kenyatta relegated the 11 November ceremony to the annals of settler history. In creating a new identity for the Kenyan Republic, regardless of its representativeness, it was clear that symbols of colonial rule ought not define the civic identity of Kenyans or its government. The 'invented traditions' that Europeans brought or negotiated in the colonial context were not appropriate for the type of cultural memory Kenyatta wished to foster. It did not mean that the First World War no longer had meaning in Kenyan communities, or even for the Kenyan state, but that imperial frameworks for publicly commemorating 1914-1918 had little purchase in the post-Independence era.

The colonial administration anticipated the antipathy towards symbols of its rule in the last year of transition towards Independence. Colonial politicians worried that Kenyans might vandalize colonial architecture, particularly statues of prominent settlers like Lord Delamere, but also sites commemorating royals like Queen Victoria and King George.[763] F.A. Loyd advised the colonial office that it was in the government's interest to consider removing some statues lest they "[become] a target for political spite which we must assume will inevitably be the case sooner or later since in the eyes of the African nationalist they represent the era of the colonial

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[762762] KNA, DC/KMG/2/3/10, "Permanent Secretary Re: Remembrance Day Celebrations," October 15th, 1964, 166.
[763] See File KNA, AZG1/4/2, "Statues and memorials."

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oppressor."[764] The British assumed that some Kenyans, in building a new nation-state, would vent their frustrations by effacing any traces of settler society and colonial rule.

The discussions about the statues reveal an important distinction between memorials deemed artistic and impersonal, and those of a more personal nature. The officials tasked with investigating the issue labelled the Muthaiga War Memorial, which had come under the care of Nairobi City Council,[765] as well as the East Africa War Memorial (the Obelisk), as "artistic work."[766] These works, alongside the busts of former royals, "were unlikely to give offence."[767] The corresponding determination was that the statues were best left where they were, with only the Delamere statue provoking any level of consternation. Ultimately, the colonial officials believed that when it came to works of art and public amenities "the Government would probably not wish to arrange for removal."[768] The statues and gardens that lined the city streets were not readily identifiable as symbols of colonial rule.

As it turned out, Kenyans views on colonial statues, and specifically First World War memorials, were subject to wide variation, as in the case of the proposed Kimathi statue. It was not that the history of Kenya's involvement in the First World War had been forgotten, even in 1984, but that it was the subject of debate and negotiation in light of the transformations in Kenyan society since the Second World War. The new stage in Kenyan history, enacted through the liberated nation-state, put Kenyans in a new set of relationships with the past. Images of prominent settlers might be the subject of particular outrage, but colonial authorities rightly

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[764] Ibid., "F.A. Loyd to P.J. Kitcatt," June 6th, 1963, 3.
[765] Muthaiga was originally separate from Nairobi proper, but in 1928 became part of the Nairobi Municipality. See Douglas Kiereini, "The Early History of Present-Day Muthaiga," Thursday, September 20th, 2018, *Business Daily Africa*, https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/lifestyle/society/The-early-history-of-present-day-Muthaiga/3405664-4769632-ete018/index.html.
[766] KNA, AZG1/4/2, "Aides Minutes: Statues and Memorials," n.d., 22-23.
[767] Ibid., 22.
[768] Ibid.

judged commemorative statues as respected sites, though they did not anticipate the scale of reinterpretation that took place after Independence.

Defending the First World War monuments did not surface in post-Independence Kenya as an attempt to recover and analyze a tragic period in Kenya's colonial past. It was a response to the potential erasure of Kenyan iconography, which stood in for the memory and history of the First World War. The unfortunate result of this reality, however, is that the *askari*, porters, carriers, and other Black military personnel are stuck in between a European-focused memory and history of the First World War in Britain, and a nationalist historiography in post-Independence Kenya. The nationalist struggle, including Mau Mau and Uhuru, severed many of the ties to the socio-cultural life of the colonial era. Re-writing Kenyan history from a nationalist perspective, tribal perspectives, and Africanist perspectives left little room for the First World War to mean anything more than a period when settlers asserted their will through force and policy. This is not to dismiss Kenya's constructive 'forgetting' as a flaw, as the process of reassembling Kenya's history in the wake of British Imperialism required such omissions. Instead, I argue, this was an accurate portrayal of the First World War, and this study has been an exercise in understanding the ways that commemoration facilitated the extension of colonialism in Kenya, making the collective public memory of the conflict meaningful only insofar as it undergirded white supremacy.

Thus I do not question or challenge Kenyan historiography in the post-independence era, but instead I hope to re-focus studies of the First World War in ways that highlight its global reach, its role in bringing the world into closer contact, and its dire consequences for those on the wrong side of the "global colour line." The First World War was an opportunity to re-shape the world in a more egalitarian mould; seeking out the ways that Western Europeans and their

offshoots squandered that opportunity, despite calls to do so, is an essential exercise in

understanding the frameworks of oppression, neo-colonialism, and inequality that still shape

global politics beyond "the end of history."[769] Exploring this reality, however, requires a deeper

investigation of the different ways that settler society, the colonial state, and civil society in

Kenya Colony negotiated their dominance. The commemoration of the First World War offers a

particular instance of the tangled threads of Kenya's colonial past, ever responsive to the

political context of colonial control.

White Anxiety, Empire Nationalism, and the Commemoration of the First World War

In many ways, the Centenary laid the groundwork for interrogating the mythos of the

First World War by highlighting the diverse forces that made up continental armies,[770] or

emphasizing the global reach of the war.[771] These were not new approaches, but challenging the

Eurocentric conception of the war has been an uphill battle for historians of Africa, India, the

Middle East, and Asia. Despite a renewed interest, especially in Britain, in the First World War

from 2014-18, the Centenary remained overwhelmingly white, though laudably focused on the

experiences and sacrifices of soldiers and home front contributors to the war effort. Black and

Brown bodies made their way into the narrative, displacing the illusion that it was the plucky

little island nation of Britain, and her loyal British peoples in the colonies, that resisted the

German advance alone. Ultimately, however, the appetite for a wholesale reconceptualization of

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[769] I reference Francis Fukuyama's famous refrain on the spread and ultimate ascendency of Western liberal democracy here, because the argument that liberal democracies function without the baked-in history of imperialism undergirds the narrative of the "birth of the nation" in many of Britain's former colonies and Dominions. The First World War was not, according to these cultural memories, the extension of Imperialism, but the re-birth of British peoples across the world in the new mould of the nation-state. Yet, as Burbank and Cooper argue, Empire remains the predominant organizational mode in human history, with its influence still tangible in the supposed era of the nation-state. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

[770] See Chapter 1.

[771] Ibid.

the conflict from the perspective of Africans, Indians, Arabs, and Asians, was already filled by the buffet of new and emotionally significant remembrances of the Western Front. Four years was simply not enough time to both rekindle the interest of the British public in First World War history, while also confronting the imperial dimensions of 1914-1918.

Indeed, for historians like Gary Sheffield, building on the work of Daniel Todman, it was essential to reclaim the First World War as not only a just war, but a 'forgotten victory.'[772] Sheffield re-released his book with this title (originally published in 2001) in 2014 to smash the public perception of the war as "a futile, pointless conflict that was fought about nothing and solved nothing," and that "bone-headed British generals who, faced with trench deadlock, could think of nothing more imaginative than to hurl long lines of troops against German trenches and barbed wire, where time after time they were cut down in swathes."[773] When viewed from Britain, Sheffield makes a strong case that not only was the war primarily caused by Austria-Hungary and Germany, but that it was also a just war, which the British public conceived of as worth fighting despite the losses.[774] Likewise, as Aimee Fox demonstrates, the British Army evolved as the fighting raged, reacting as best as it could to limit casualties and expedite victory in Europe.[775] The memory of the conflict, it seems, belied the evidence. 1914-1918, and the death and injury that accompanied it, needed to be reclaimed as a righteous sacrifice.

As I indicated at the outset of this study, I was a late comer to the study of the First World War. Until 2015, I knew little of the conflict outside the myths and truncated public histories of the conflict in my home country of Canada. But as a historian of Africa, and

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[772] Gary Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory: The First World War: Myths and Realities* (London: Endeavour Press Ltd., 2014). iBooks.

[773] Ibid., 31-32.

[774] Ibid.

[775] Aimee Fox, *Learning to Fight*

specifically the influence of European-descended people on the continent, the locus of study –

the Western Front – obstructed my understanding of the conflict, and especially the revisionist

accounts that centred on redeeming the First World War as anything more than a brutal,

protracted assault on humanity. Redeeming the First World War from this position meant also

redeeming and sustaining the imperial context of white supremacy.

As important as it is to understand the ways that the First World War redefined the

balance of power in Europe, itself fraught with dire political ramifications,[776] the fact remains

that this was a multi-sided conflict consisting mainly of Empires who viewed power in global,

rather than local, terms.[777] While emerging nations like South Africa, Canada, Australia, and

New Zealand recognized the opportunity to extend local control, the power to do so was couched

in imperial discourse. As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds put it, drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois,

Britons across the globe drew on whiteness as a "mode of subjective identification that crossed

national borders and shaped global politics."[778] Despite the complexities of the millions who

came to the call of the British Empire, I am still unable to reconcile the abhorrent valuation of

Black, Brown, and other racialized bodies that motivated many Britons, with the undeniable

tragedy of death and injury from 1914-1918. It is not simply an appeal to revisionism and

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[776] The literature on the peace process is extensive and detailed. Historians have examined how the reorganization of the Balkans and the Middle East, as well as French and German territorial boundaries, presaged later political and military conflicts. The mandates system in Africa has also featured in these studies, however, the volume of ink spared for the consequences of the First World War in Africa is relatively insignificant. In Michael Neiberg's recent concise history, for example, Africa features only briefly. When a revered historian of the First World War makes critical choices about what to include in such a brief history, it tells us much about what not only academics, but the general public, understands as essential to the peace process. See Michael Neiberg, *The Treaty of Versailles: A Concise History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[777] This general claim elides, to a certain extent, the European origins of the First World War. Whether it was Franco-Russian, Austro-Hungarian, or German belligerence that sparked the conflict, however, the 'origins' debate is inconsequential because the war did evolve into a global conflict. Should the conflict have been contained to a localized and 'preventative' war in Serbia, this may not have been the case, but the mass mobilizations of the French, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German forces in the first week of August, 1914, set an altogether different trajectory. It should be noted that the revisionist approaches to the origins of the First World War saw renewed interest from 2014-2018, again drawing First World War historians' energy away from other theatres.

[778] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 2.

anachronism; white supremacy might have been inevitable given the historical period, but the particularly virulent forms it took during the war and into the 1920s and 1930s certainly was not.

According to Lake and Reynolds, it was not the inevitability and taken-for-grantedness of white supremacy that drove its entrenchment, but its contingency and contestedness.[779] Colonized peoples the world over clamoured for their place at the proverbial table, whether it was nationalists in the colonies, Pan-Africanists at Versailles, or more localized everyday resistances to colonial rule. Critics of colonialism at home and abroad, no less convinced of their present supremacy as white folk, also argued for the universality of human value, and the need for a gentler Empire. In other words, white supremacy was a choice, though necessarily constrained by prevailing scientific, ecclesiastical, and academic racial discourses. Thus, beyond the limited goal of checking German ambitions on the continent and maintaining the balance of power in Europe, the more general aim was to strengthen the British Empire's power in global affairs, necessitating the defence of whiteness as the mark of civilization.

It was not only the war itself that anchored the defence of whiteness, but the conceptualization and remembrance of the war in its immediate aftermath. In Europe, the devastation and feeling of loss gave emotional impetus to commemorative work, but as the history of the IWGC indicates, creating a stronger union between white Britons the world over remained a constitutive element of memorialization.[780] Anxieties over the decline of the British Empire, the possibility of colonial loss, and the potential for colonized peoples' liberation, lurked beneath the surface of an ostensible tribute to the Empire's glorious dead. As Kent Fedorowich, Andrew Thompson, Bill Schwarz, and others demonstrate, processes and pacts unified the

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[779] Ibid., 3.

[780] John Lack and Bart Ziino, "Requiem for Empire: Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission," in *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict*, Andrew T. Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty eds. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 351-375; See also Chapter 3 of this study.

British World.[781] Whiteness provided Europeans with the power to mobilize local institutions for their exclusive benefit, "a paradoxical politics, at once transnational in its inspiration and identifications but nationalist in its methods and goals."[782] The First World War accelerated both transnational racial identifications, and the discrete production of whiteness in particular locales.

Just as Sheffield and Todman identify the myths of the First World War as scarcely representative of the evidence, the idea of a white man's war also had to be produced by omitting much of the evidence of racialized communities' contributions, and oppositions to the war effort. In the contact zone of the colonies, where Black and Indigenous bodies were part of the quotidian practice of colonialism, the reality of Black and Indigenous veterans, the physical evidence of the colonized dead, and narratives of their substantive role in the prosecution of the war, were direct threats to the power of white skin. It was thus far easier to find comradery and commonality with their former enemies who shared light complexion. Local political context required different responses, but the shared anxieties over the future of white supremacy guided post-war narratives of 1914-1918.

Friend or Foe? Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck Comes to Dinner

In Kenya, while Britishness was essential to settler identification, racial solidarity was as important to justifying their existence. In 1929, the annual East African Forces Dinner invited Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, their former foe in the East African Campaign, to share a meal with prominent settlers and expatriates in London.[783] It was a sign of respect, perhaps reconciliation,

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[781] See Bill Schwarz, *White Man's World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson, *Empire, migration and identity in the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

[782] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 4.

[783] *The New York Times*, "British Entertain German War Chief," December 3rd, 1929.

extended to a man who had been directly responsible for the prosecution of a campaign that took the lives of many settlers and inflicted injuries with which many veterans still lived. Lettow-Vorbeck enjoyed close friendships with his former foes in the field, including Jan Smuts, proving that in colonial Africa white skin, and European blood, was thicker than water.

The gathering spoke to what Edward Grigg elucidated on Armistice Day in 1929. He was "certain indeed that force is necessary in many parts of the world, and particularly in the backward parts, if civilisation is to be spread and if the civilisation is even to be maintained."[784] That is, the backward and still resistant African could be subject to the use of force if the ends justified the means. When it came to white-on-white violence, however, "if war were ever to break out again between great civilised nations, then indeed, our civilisation would be condemned, and our material ruin would be complete."[785] The anxiety at the idea of civilizational decline, putting white prestige into question, was of utmost importance. It was clear that Germans, despite their direct role in killing Britons, were not the ultimate enemy of civilization.

On the anniversary of Armistice Day in 1934, the *East African Standard* noted that "the sixteen years that have passed since the Armistice was signed have not brought forgetfulness, but rather that a new meaning in thought for the future is being associated with these anniversaries."[786] But Armistice Day had always been about creating meaning for the future, justifying the deaths of men and women across the Empire in ways that reinforced the legitimacy of the British role in the world. The meaning Britons created was representative only of those who remained loyal, who behaved according to their version of civilization, and who remembered the dead properly. It included African troops, and centred their bodies, but the

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[784] *EAS*, "Inspiring Close to Armistice Day," November 13th, 1929, 7.
[785] Ibid.
[786] *EAS*, "Armistice Celebrated in British Empire," November 13th, 1934, 1.

necessity of obedience always meant that settlers reserved special indignation for the Africans that had little regard for the 'invented traditions' of 11 November. Even in the 1920s and 1930s, it was clear that many Kenyans did not find meaning in the Two Minutes Silence, requiring "steps [to be] taken to instruct natives in the meaning of the ceremony."[787] It was not evidence that Kenyans found meaning elsewhere, or ascribed a different significance to 1914-1918, but that the civilized white man was still a necessary force in East Africa.

Kenya Colony and Commemoration: The Case For and Against Exceptionality

The initial thrusts of the commemoration of the First World War aligned with a period in Kenya Colony's history when settler self-governance seemed a real possibility. The Devonshire White Paper put into policy that settler independence was not the trajectory of the colony, yet it was the Great Depression that vanquished the hopes of settler ascendency for good. For this reason, the period between 1923-1930 represents a crucial timeframe when the power dynamics in Kenya Colony were at their most volatile. Struggling to maintain their status as the logical leaders of Kenya Colony, settlers made the First World War meaningful for their uses, only acknowledging the immense sacrifice and strain the war exacted upon Kenyan communities when it suited their needs. The IWGC, for its part, left a huge physical footprint, including Kenyan iconography, that remains at least somewhat meaningful for Kenyans, but the nationalist struggle, including Mau Mau and Uhuru, severed many of the ties to the socio-cultural life of the colonial era. Re-writing Kenyan history from a nationalist perspective, community perspectives, and Africanist perspectives left little room for the First World War to mean anything more than a period when settlers asserted their will through force and policy.

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[787] *EAS*, "Sixteenth Anniversary of the Armistice: A Jarring Note," November 12th, 1934, 1.

Representations of the First World War in present-day Kenya remain relatively muted. During the Centenary the Kenyan government and its military forces organized official Remembrance Day ceremonies, though they took place largely for the consumption of military personnel and visiting Britons rather than for the general public.[788] Ceremonies generally are held in CWGC cemeteries, though wreaths are often laid at the foot of the African Memorial as well. While a much different kind of research would be necessary to ascertain whether the memory of the First World War remains in the oral histories of Kenyan communities, it remains clear that civic engagement with the history of 1914-1918 is largely absent in Kenya.

This study makes clear that the reasons for the lack of civic engagement with the First World War have roots in the public commemorations of the colonial era. Settlers centred their experiences, ambitions, and power in commemorative traditions during the 1920s, fashioning the First World War as a justification for the British Empire, and settler self-governance more specifically. When those experiences, ambitions, and power structures were no longer ascendant, the motivations for remembrance receded as well. That the commemoration of the First World War in Kenya was built on the foundations of white supremacy and British traditions meant that the Independent Kenyan government needed to eliminate public commemorations in order to strip white supremacy and British sensibilities from the Kenya's civic fabric.

The question remains whether Kenya represents an exceptional case borne of the unique political circumstances of Kenya Colony in the 1920s, or if Kenya's commemorative history might provide fruitful comparisons for other former African colonies. I suggest that it is both. As First World War historians move beyond the Centenary, it will be essential to continue to

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[788] See for example: ATC News, "Kenya Prepares to Commemorate the End of World War I," September 29th, 2018, https://atcnews.org/2018/09/26/kenya-prepares-to-commemorate-the-end-of-world-war-i/.

interrogate how the memory and remembrance of the conflict manifested quite differently depending on the socio-political context of the nation-state, or colony in question. Kenya Colony, for its part, stood out amongst British territories because of settlers' struggles to gain a measure of independence from Britain, along the lines of southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Yet the framework of white supremacy, violence and dispossession, and struggle against colonial rule are essential aspects of colonialism in Africa more generally. Thus, the commemoration of the First World War, a seminal period in the solidification of colonialism south of the Sahara, provides a discrete field of study capable of finding the pulse of British rule.

Consequently, the history of the IWGC in Africa is an important starting point for studying commemoration in British Africa. Its imperial fabric for commemoration, with all of its dangling threads, still provides a mass of commemorative work that served as the literal foundation of all subsequent commemoration on the continent. Even the study of the IWGC, heretofore undertaken almost exclusively by Michele Barrett, remains underdeveloped. Her work has allowed me to continue investigating the threads that settlers and administrators pulled away from the imperial fabric of commemoration, offering a more in-depth understanding of how remembrance went hand-in-glove with the everyday practice of colonialism in particular settings. Historians may have re-conceptualized the First World War as a global and imperial conflict, but it is now time to focus on how settlers, colonial administrators, and colonial subjects also understood it as such.

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