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**Agent of Imperialism: The Aborigines'  
Protection Society and the Indenturing of  
Bechuana Rebels in 1897**

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Agent of Imperialism: The Aborigines' Protection Society and the  
Indenturing of Bechuana Rebels in 1897

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## Introduction

On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1897 an advertisement appeared in the Cape Times indicating that, “a number of Bechuana rebels will be available as farm servants;” men, women and children suited for, “general farm work,” offered on an indenture contract of five years.<sup>1</sup> The notice, submitted by the Superintendent of Native Affairs, J. Rose-Innes, marked the culmination of the Langeberg rebellion, an uprising within the southern subcontinent that resulted in the forced displacement of 2000 Bechuana ‘natives’ and the creation of a, “Cape Town Slave Mart.”<sup>2</sup> The indenturing of Bechuana rebels, a clear affront to Joseph Chamberlain’s declaration that, “native reserves in that territory shall remain inalienable,” prompted a profound humanitarian response, with multiple agencies appealing to both the Colonial Office and the Cape Government.<sup>3</sup> Suggesting that the episode violated the Emancipation Act of 1835, and was a flagrant, “revival of slavery in the cape colony,” the Aborigines’ Protection Society (hereafter the APS) led a lengthy, and ultimately unsuccessful, campaign to liberate the natives of Bechuanaland and restore their independence within southern Africa.<sup>4</sup> Within their response, the society appealed to Britain to reassert cultural, political, and legislative hegemony over the Cape, while simultaneously deriding the colonial settlers present within the region. This dissertation will provide a micro-study of the APS’s response to the Bechuana crisis, investigating the society’s motivations behind intervention; it’s aspirations for the British Empire, and the innately imperial disposition of its members and mandate in response to this particular episode of colonial violence.

Historical studies into the APS have produced insights into how the society defined natives and native rights within the colonial setting, illuminating parallels between

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<sup>1</sup> Kew, The National Archives (Hereafter ‘TNA’): DO 119/327, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion and Treatment of Rebels After Surrender,’ 4 October 1897. Indentured labour was a form of bonded labour that became commonplace in the wake of abolition. Labourers signed contracts that committed them to work for a fixed term of 4/5 years, on the condition that they would be fed, clothed, and housed by their master.

<sup>2</sup> H.R. Fox Bourne, *The Bechuana Troubles: A Story of Pledge-Breaking, Rebel-Making, and Slave-Making in a British Colony* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1898). The word ‘native’ is a general, overarching term that does not account for distinctiveness between Aboriginal peoples. As such, it is considered derogatory and offensive by this author. However, as the society use the term liberally with reference to the Bechuana, it will appear frequently throughout this dissertation, where it will appear hereafter as plain text, as opposed to within inverted commas.

<sup>3</sup> TNA: CO 417/143, ‘Despatches: Bechuanaland Protectorate,’ 5 September 1895.

<sup>4</sup> TNA; CO 879/51/1, ‘Affairs of South African Republic, including position of Africans, Cape coloured persons and British Indians, the Jameson Raid, and the dynamite monopoly,’ 18 October 1897 - 15 December 1898.

imperial discourse and the agency's doctrine of securing the establishment of "civilized rule over uncivilized races."<sup>5</sup> The existing literature elucidates the society's paradoxical mantra of attaining native welfare through the "conquest of native lands," and the dichotomies of power between those who administer and those who receive aid.<sup>6</sup> Despite the practical historical tropes appropriable from such studies, the role of the APS in Africa has been remarkably under-researched; a "strange lacuna, given the society's vast, accessible archives and its historical importance."<sup>7</sup> James Heartfield has offered a narrative-driven history of the society from its inception to its merger with the Anti-Slavery Society in 1909, focussing specifically on the delusionary interventions of the APS and their unintended imperialist outcomes. Kenneth Nworah, in his analysis of late 19<sup>th</sup> century APS pressure-policy, reaffirms this "agonizing paradox," juxtaposing the society's genuine compassion for indigenous peoples and its pseudo-imperialist philosophy.<sup>8</sup> Nworah concludes that, while the "motives of individual members could not all be the same," they were generally both benevolent and altruistic, embodied by the enigmatic figure of the society's secretary, H.R. Fox Bourne.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Charles Swaisland has argued that under the stewardship of Fox Bourne the APS "took up a stance against imperial expansion," disputing the existence of a link between the growth of Empire and the proposed protection of its indigenous inhabitants.<sup>10</sup>

This dissertation aims to not only fill a historiographical void – there exists no study on the APS's response to the Bechuana crisis – but also challenge historical perceptions regarding the role of the society in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The current literature reveals the convoluted template for the preservation of native welfare, characterising the organisation's endeavours as philanthropic naivety. Drawing links between society intervention and the consolidation of imperial property (Heartfield, Nworah), existing studies illuminate the intimate bond between humanitarian lobby

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<sup>5</sup> H. R. Fox Bourne, 'The claims of uncivilized races: a paper submitted to the International Congress on Colonial Sociology, held in Paris in August, 1900.' *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Collection*. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60231384>.

<sup>6</sup> James Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836-1909* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Heartfield, J. (2011). *The Aborigines' Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836-1909*. London: Hurst & Company.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth D. Nworah, "The Aborigines' Protection Society, 1889-1909: A Pressure-Group in Colonial Policy," 1971: 79-91.

<sup>9</sup> Nworah, 'The Aborigines' Protection Society,' p91.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Swaisland, "The Aborigines protection society, 1837-1909," *Slavery & Abolition*, 2000: 265-280.

and government yet fail to address the imperialist disposition of the society. This deficiency is perplexing, with the temperament of the APS during the jingoist hysteria of the 1890's integral to any study on society intervention.<sup>11</sup> The reflection, and embodiment, of imperial values regarding race and colonial autonomy shed light on the APS's interferences, elucidating the parallels with imperial growth. In turn, the objectives, endeavours, and motivations behind intervention are exposed, revealing an agenda compliant with the "power of the state" and sympathetic towards the Empire's expansion.<sup>12</sup>

The Cape Colony presents an ideal forum for analysis into the society's doctrine of imperialism, with the indenturing of Bechuana rebels largely "ignored by scholars and writers" and revelatory of the intricacies of imperial/colonial power dynamics.<sup>13</sup> Ruth Edgecombe has suggested that the metropole's need to conciliate South African Whites "stood in the way of the protection of Blacks," an indicator of the emerging complexities of colonial autonomy.<sup>14</sup> Pragmatic in their pursuit of imperial expansion, the APS exploited this. The society manipulated the difficulties of securing "South African Whites, Blacks and Imperial strategic interests" to invalidate the authority of the self-governing Cape.<sup>15</sup> Esme Cleall has suggested that the APS's demand for British intervention within Bechuanaland undermined the ideals of the Empire, specifically the principles of "justice" and "freedom."<sup>16</sup> In reality, however, the society buttressed imperial rhetoric, embodying the Empire, its values, and its prejudices. Thus, by exploring the constitution of the society and its design's for Bechuanaland, this study will confront the notion that the APS's relationship with imperial growth was innocent, explicitly disputing Swaisland's claim that the APS opposed expansion.<sup>17</sup> To do so, this dissertation will relate the society's proposed initiatives for the

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<sup>11</sup> The "jingoist hysteria" referenced here relates to the patriotic conservatism and aggressively imperialist foreign policy that characterized late 19<sup>th</sup> Century politics.

<sup>12</sup> Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2012: 729-747.

<sup>13</sup> Harry Saker and John Aldridge, "The Origins of the Langeberg Rebellion," *The Journal of African History*, 1971: 299-317.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth Edgecombe, "Sir Alfred Milner and the Bechuana (Langeberg) Rebellion: A Case Study in Imperial-Colonial Relations, 1897-1898," *South African Historical Journal*, 1979: 56-73. The Cape Colony was granted responsible governance in 1872, giving the Cape government total control of internal affairs while prompting a seismic shift in the region's political landscape. Forming an integral component of South African history, the concepts and consequences of colonial autonomy will subsequently be drawn upon throughout this study.

<sup>15</sup> Edgecombe, 'Sir Alfred Milner,' p56.

<sup>16</sup> Esme Cleall, "In Defiance of the Highest Principles of Justice, Principles of Righteousness: The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897-1900," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2012: 601-618.

<sup>17</sup> Swaisland, 'The Aborigines Protection Society,' p277

resolution of the Bechuana crisis to the work of social theorists (Gramsci) and political analysts (Barnett) as well as historians.

The records drawn upon for this dissertation are broadly archival; APS and government dialogues that reveal the mentalities, agendas, and psyches prevalent within the society's late 19<sup>th</sup> century incarnation.<sup>18</sup> These documents comprise correspondence between the Colonial Office administration and the APS, offering an intimate vista into the society's mind-set and objectives of intervention. The intricacies of the society's language illuminate the core focus of this study – the APS's imperialist agenda – by exposing a commitment to the coercive control of Britain's imperial subjects, evident in the proposed enforcement of law and establishment of “political and cultural authority.”<sup>19</sup> There exists, however, a need to examine the public rhetoric of the society in order to fully unearth the complexities of the APS's outlook on humanity, civilization, and the duty of the “superior race.”<sup>20</sup> This dissertation will thus also consider the pamphlets published by the society in the 1890's, astute indicators of the organisation's personality and temperament. Disseminating the “views held by the Aborigines Protection Society,” these pithy catalogues of jingoistic discourse unmask the imperialist mantra of the agency, exposing an adherence to Darwinist concepts of racial classification and a broader concurrence with the principles of Empire.<sup>21</sup> By examining the discourses that emerge from both these bodies of source, this dissertation will show how the APS reflected the imperialist spirit of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, actively pursuing an extension and consolidation of Britain's imperial property in the process.

This dissertation will consist of two sections. Section I will look at the intimate relationship between the APS and Empire by reviewing the philosophy, temperament and prejudice of the society. It will shape an understanding of how the society embodied and celebrated imperial values, establishing the APS as a synecdoche of the British Empire. It will also form the basis for understanding why the society

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<sup>18</sup> The majority of the sources referenced have been retrieved from the Aborigines' Protection Society archives in Oxford. However, as most are also available online, and were subsequently consulted in their online form, they have been cited as such.

<sup>19</sup> Steve Jones, *Antonio Gramsci* (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Aborigines' Protection Society, 'The Aborigines' Protection Society: Chapters in its History,' 1899, *LSE Selected Pamphlets*. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60221819>.

<sup>21</sup> H. R. Fox Bourne, 'The claims of uncivilized races,' p12. Despite being published under the secretary's name, the pamphlets distributed by the society in the 1890's neatly encompass the views of the APS as a whole. Nworah's suggestion that the society's membership “found its apotheosis” in Fox Bourne supports this, alleviating the risk of conflating disparate opinions. Nworah, 'The Aborigines' Protection Society,' p91.



intervened in Bechuanaland, and what it sought to achieve in southern Africa. Section II will consider these motivations, exploring the aims of the society through a microscopic analysis of language. Existing historiography has, thus far, refrained from suggesting the society had an explicitly expansionist agenda, attributing the correlation between imperial growth and society interference to naïve benevolence.<sup>22</sup> Through an analysis of the APS's response, Section II will contest this notion, exposing the society's proposed extension of British law, suzerainty, and culture. The argument presented is that the APS actively propagated imperial expansion, subverting the nascent autonomy of the Cape Colony while establishing British cultural hegemony. By examining the apparent desires of the society in relation to its imperial disposition, it will become evident that the APS acted as a zealous 'agent of imperialism' in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The definition of this term is both simple and pivotal: one who carries Empire, importing and projecting the leading hegemonic values across varying spheres of governance.<sup>23</sup> Illuminated by imperial/colonial exchanges, contemporary attitudes towards race, and the conflict between civilization and barbarity, this dissertation will expose the APS as an institution of imperial endeavour, a cog in the imperial machine working to secure British hegemony.

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<sup>22</sup> Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society*, p306.

<sup>23</sup> In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century NGO's are typically characterised as 'agents of imperialism,' diffusing western values and systems of governance across the globe. In the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christian missions have continually been given the same label, engaging in a similar dispersion of European norms.

## Section I - 'The White Man's Burden'

3 years after its inception in 1837, the Aborigines' Protection Society established a framework for the protection of, "defenceless," and, "uncivilized," tribes throughout the British Empire.<sup>24</sup> Seeking to capitalise on the, "mighty energies of Christian benevolence," the APS conformed to Michael Barnett's characterization of early 19th century humanitarian impulse; establishing a neo-conservative Christian ideology centred upon the twin themes of, "civilization and conversion."<sup>25</sup> By the 1890's, however, in tandem with both the growing tide of Liberal Imperialism and the emergence of a Darwinist school of social study, the society had emerged as a major protagonist within the secular wing of humanitarianism, advocating the, "discreet control," of indigenous populations by superior (white), "guardians;" an innately paternalistic dogma.<sup>26</sup> The agency, under the stewardship of its secretary, H.R. Fox Bourne, underwent a shift in allegiance, aligning with the colonial doctrine of, "gradual modification of the native system," built on the principles of, "humanity," as opposed to religion.<sup>27</sup> In their shared acceptance of this imperial duty to protect "intrinsically vulnerable" races, both the Colonial Office and the APS fostered the concept of a, "white man's burden," encapsulating contemporary views on race, society, and the moral obligation of "superior" civilizations.<sup>28</sup> The link between official colonial policy and the view of the APS extends, however, far beyond the triumph of paternalism over the Christian mission. As Andrew Porter has suggested, the moral mission of an incongruously 'benevolent' British Empire was one that the APS embodied, a relationship hitherto unexplored in the context of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Africa and Bechuanaland.

Porter's work, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism,' establishes this connection between the humanitarian and the expansionist lobby. According to Porter, the British had an obligation as, 'trustee' of her colonial subjects - both settler

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<sup>24</sup> The Aborigines protection Society, 'The Third Annual Report of the Aborigines' Protection Society,' 1899, *University of Chicago Anti-Slavery Collection*, retrieved from [https://books.google.com/books?id=7EJOAQAAMAAJ&dq=third+annual+report+aborigine+protection+society&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.com/books?id=7EJOAQAAMAAJ&dq=third+annual+report+aborigine+protection+society&source=gbs_navlinks_s).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> H. R. Fox Bourne, 'The claims of uncivilized races,' p12.

<sup>27</sup> *British Bechuanaland (Crown Colony). Correspondence Relative to the Transfer of British Bechuanaland to the Cape Colony*, 1896, C7932, Vol. LIX.1, pp1-40. Chamberlain reiterated this claim in a letter to Sir Alfred Milner on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1897, where he also referenced the need to "limit" or "withdraw" the jurisdiction of certain indigenous chiefs. TNA; DO 119/330, 'The Langeberg Native Rebellion and Treatment of the Rebels after surrender,' 6 May 1897.

<sup>28</sup> Porter, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism,' p213.

and indigenous – to uphold the, “older humanitarian traditions of anti-slavery.”<sup>29</sup> The mantra of the APS thus came to embody imperialist discourse on the protection of inherently helpless races. A, “uniform, liberal ‘native policy,’” based upon federation, gave way to increased calls for the establishment of protectorates, and an opposition to chartered company administration. Both measures, argues Porter, not only fed into the imperial policy of ‘trusteeship,’ but also institutionalized humanitarian organisations, confirming the reality of the “white man’s burden.”<sup>30</sup> In doing so, a theoretical skeleton invaluable to this dissertation is created. By suggesting that the APS promulgated and typified imperial values, Porter alludes to the intrinsic link between the society and the British government, subtly suggesting the agency was emblematic of Empire itself. It is crucial to keep this paradigm of imperial and humanitarian coalescence in mind when tracing the APS’s actions within Bechuanaland.

The innate link between the APS and the British Empire can be split into three sections. Firstly, by talking on behalf of the “ignorant” Bechuana, and in defence of the, “honour and dignity of the crown,” the APS not only acknowledge contemporary racial prejudices, but also substantiate the legitimacy, authority, and power of the state.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, by disproportionately elevating the British over the settlers within the Cape, deriding the inhabitants for, “tarnishing” the British reputation, the APS feed into the jingoistic culture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. By portraying an imperial/colonial power dynamic built upon the inherent superiority of the metropole, the APS establish a precursor for Joseph Chamberlain’s own discourse on British suzerainty within the region - a justification ironically used for the purpose of imperial expansion.<sup>32</sup> Finally, by zealously embellishing the depiction of a “lawless” Cape, incapable of self-governance, the APS reflect British attitudes towards colonial settlers, relegating the Empire’s colonial wards to a state of barbarism.<sup>33</sup> This section will prove, therefore, that in their response to the indenturing of Bechuana rebels, the APS embodied the power of the state and the principles of Empire.

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew Porter, “Trusteeship, Anti-Savery, and Humanitarianism,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*, 198-221 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Porter, ‘Trusteeship,’ p213.

<sup>31</sup> *Cape of Good Hope. Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances in Bechuanaland*, 1898, C.8797, Vol. LX.17, pp1-67.

<sup>32</sup> HC Deb 19 October 1899, Vol. 77, cc254-271.

<sup>33</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p47.

David Long has suggested that paternalism was used by imperial powers to, “legitimize coercive control,” and justify colonial expansion. Defining paternalism as the suspension of “equality, representiveness, and fairness,” Long likens the relationship between imperial powers and indigenous populations to that of a parent and child, with the former assuming the role of an oppressive custodian.<sup>34</sup> Infusing paternalist principles into its doctrine, the APS can thus be viewed as an emblem of imperial rule, a ubiquitous reminder of the British commitment to, “coercive control.”<sup>35</sup> In their appeal “on behalf of the natives in that province,” this notion is first brought to the fore. Establishing themselves as delegate of the displaced Bechuana, the society fulfil their role as guardian, or, in an ironic imitation of the *raison d’être* for colonial expansion, ‘trustee.’<sup>36</sup> The appropriation of the Bechuana’s voice acts as a pacifying force, feeding into Long’s paradigm of a parent/child relationship while fortifying the power imbalance between those who provide and those who receive humanitarian aid. The ‘child,’ in this instance the Bechuana rebel, is stripped of his/her capacity to protest, curbed and infantilized by a populace “more intelligent and capable.”<sup>37</sup> Playing upon the imperialist doctrine of providing “protection and safety” for indigenous peoples, a supposed obligation of “foreign civilized powers,” the APS cement their status as the benevolent ‘parent.’<sup>38</sup> Stating the patent need for the “judicious education” of the Empire’s indigenous populace, Fox Bourne likens the “ignorant and barbaric communities” of the Empire to “undisciplined or perverse children.”<sup>39</sup> Vocally declaring in favour of a rigidly paternalist policy, what surfaces from the secretary’s words is a commitment to the pacification, coercion, and restraint of the displaced Bechuana. This, in turn, sheds light on the disposition of the society, specifically on the way in which natives and their rights are defined, establishing a parallel with the imperial justification for imperial expansion, a framework pivotal to this dissertation’s overall argument.

The appropriation of the Bechuana’s voice exposes a further link with the imperial tropes of control and imperial consolidation, symbolising the act of colonisation itself. Drawing upon Richard Huzzey’s suggestion that humanitarian agencies enjoyed a

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<sup>34</sup> David Long, “: J.A. Hobson on the International Government of “Lower Races,” in *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations*, 71-92 (New York: SUNY Press, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Long, ‘J.A. Hobson on the International Government of “Lower Races,”’ p88

<sup>36</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, pp17; Penelope Hetherington, *British Paternalism and Africa: 1920-1940* (London: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1978).

<sup>37</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Claims of Uncivilised Races,’ p9.

<sup>38</sup> HC Deb 06 February 1884, Vol. 284, cc123-55.

<sup>39</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Claims of Uncivilised Races,’ p9.

dual identity “of philanthropic restraint and imperial chauvinism,” this symbolic link between the APS and the Empire is made clear.<sup>40</sup> Taking the reference to a dissociative persona literally, the APS’s response to the Bechuana crisis is shown to subvert the mantra of protection, placing the society at the centre of the “vast extension of European control;” the “abuses and dangers” of which it professed to contain.<sup>41</sup> Seizing the rebels’ ability to protest, the society’s consent to marauding chauvinism is exposed, allegorically castrating the natives of their liberty in an act of colonial displacement.<sup>42</sup> The act serves as an eerie ode to Long’s definition of, “coercive control,” blurring the lines between humanitarianism and colonial administration and domination. The demand for the, “restoration of their country,” takes this further, enforcing the Eurocentric value of nation-hood – and the nation state - upon the indigenous peoples.<sup>43</sup> Once more pursuing the adoption of “such measures on behalf of the Bechuana,” the APS suspend the autonomy of the indigenous populace, governing through a set of westernized norms in favour of the “backward” or “lower” races.<sup>44</sup> On a fundamental level, the society’s dialect appears to mirror the language of Empire, viewed forensically, however, it conveys a more conclusive link to imperial expansion, mirroring the act of colonisation itself.

Evident in the society’s embrace of paternalistic governance is a belief in the plurality of race. The characterization of an intelligent and trustworthy parental figure alludes to the innate superiority of European governing races, a notion in line with contemporary thought.<sup>45</sup> Imperial psyches were governed by – or at least justified colonial expansion in terms of – polygenesis, stipulating that intrinsic scientific differences validated the conquest of indigenous lands. Bernard Semmel has argued that the theory of polygenesis, and specifically social Darwinism, formed “one of the ideological foundations of imperialism;” a cornerstone of pro-colonial discourse.<sup>46</sup>

Taking this framework and applying it to the APS, the society’s actions appear to echo contemporary standards of racial classification and bigotry, reaffirming the

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Huzzey, “Minding Civilisation and Humanity in 1867: A Case Study in British Imperial Culture and Victorian Anti-Savery,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2012: 807-825.

<sup>41</sup> The Aborigines Protection Society, ‘The Aborigines Protection Society,’ 1897, *Wilson Anti-Slavery Collection*. Retrieved from, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60238924>.

<sup>42</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Claims of Uncivilised Races,’ p12.

<sup>43</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p41.

<sup>44</sup> Long, ‘J.A. Hobson on the International Government of "Lower Races,"’ p88.

<sup>45</sup> Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes Towards Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).

<sup>46</sup> Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-imperial Thought 1895-1914* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1960).

existent parallels between agency and expansionist rhetoric. Consequently, the APS buttress their status as a beacon of imperial values and an ‘agent of imperialism.’ The regurgitation of the words of the activist Elizabeth Hepburn clarifies this link, as the society lament the “cheerful resignation” of the Bechuana in the wake of their indenturing.<sup>47</sup> The remark posits the rebels as passive protagonists within their own downfall, attaching to them notions of intellectual incompetence, simplicity, and gullibility, while placing them within the confines of a distinct racial category. Unduly accompanying the portrayal of the disenfranchised Bechuana with a reference to their benign impotence, the APS play upon contemporary beliefs regarding the “infantile condition” of native races.<sup>48</sup> The depiction of the rebels as susceptible to being, “bribed” and “misguided,” by the Cape exacerbates this.<sup>49</sup> Intimating the Bechuana had been *deceived*, as opposed to *forced*, the society present a dichotomous relationship between the intelligence of white and black races. The suggestion that the Cape may capably mislead the Bechuana “under the pretence of befriending them” erodes any suggestion of intellectual equality, elevating the cerebral gravitas, and cunning, of the white settlers.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, by repeatedly prefixing depictions of the rebels with adjectives suggestive of naivety and ineptitude, the term “ignorant” is recurrent, the society willingly engage in a promulgation of racial stereotypes.<sup>51</sup>

Evident within the APS’s assignment of distinct characteristics to the indigenous inhabitants of the Empire is a fundamental belief in their innate inferiority. The society suggest the “cheerful resignation” of the Bechuana, marked “one of the characteristics of their race,” an indication of the agency’s belief in the scientific divergence of race.<sup>52</sup> Placing the rebels within the pre-determined mould of “their race,” the APS expose a blasé acceptance of strict racial categories, concurrent with the imperial suggestion that natives *en masse* lagged by centuries in the, “process of

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<sup>47</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p41. The original quote by Hepburn, on behalf of a, “Committee of Women of Cape Town,” can be found at, TNA; DO 119/329, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion and Treatment of the Rebels After Surrender,’ 13 October 1897.

<sup>48</sup> Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes Towards Race*, p27.

<sup>49</sup> TNA; DO 119/328, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion and Treatment of the Rebels After Surrender,’ 28 January 1898.

<sup>50</sup> H.R. Fox Bourne, ‘The Case for the Bechuana Rebels,’ *Fortnightly Review*, May 1865-June 1934, 1897, Vol. 62(371), pp708-717. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2466764?accountid=9730>.

<sup>51</sup> Aborigines’ Protection Society, ‘The Aborigines’ Protection Society: Chapters in its History,’ pp1, 7; Fox Bourne, ‘The Claims of Uncivilized Races,’ pp7, 9, 10; Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p8.

<sup>52</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p41.

national evolution.”<sup>53</sup> The impassive reference to “their race,” in this instance, definitively establishes the Bechuana as the “other,” transforming them from individuals requiring care to “objects requiring study.”<sup>54</sup> In doing so, the Bechuana are dehumanized; categorized on grounds of colour that echo the imperialist Rudyard Kipling’s reference to the “half-devil... half-child,” indigenous populations of Empire.<sup>55</sup> The links with Social Darwinism are explicit, with the suggestion being that the Bechuana not only experience disparate sensual impulses on account of their racial difference, “cheerful” as opposed to indignant, but are also innately inferior or, in this instance, sub-human. Fox Bourne himself compounds this notion in his Address at the Universal Peace Conference of 1890. Remarking that, “the great natural law of the, ‘survival of the fittest’ ... applies to human beings no less than to the rest of animal creation,” the society’s mouthpiece defiantly advocates Darwinist principles, exposing a proclivity towards defining natives in rigid racial categories.<sup>56</sup> Discernible from this is a candid acceptance of the ingrained prejudices of the 1890’s. The society construct the myth of the aboriginal around these, reciprocating the embedded racism of the metropole while acknowledging the perceived superiority of its white rulers.

The society’s definition and depiction of the Bechuana infuses an imperialist edge to their response. The tropes of trusteeship, paternalism, and racial variation – synonymous with the development of Empire – are exposed as being central to the society’s mandate for protection. However, it would be one-dimensional to focus exclusively on the society’s outlook on indigenous peoples. The APS also engage in a construction of Boer identity, refracting their depiction of a repressive Cape government through the lens of late 19<sup>th</sup> century jingoism. In doing so, the society not only champion the rapacious spirit of the 1890s, but also establish a platform through which to undermine the nascent autonomy of the Cape Colony, a notion integral to Section II of this dissertation. Once more, a concurrence with imperial belief is exposed, fortifying the suggestion that the society ‘carried’ Empire.

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<sup>53</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, ‘Recent Developments of Policy in the United States,’ *Scribner’s Magazine*, 1898, Vol. 24, pp674-682, cited in, David Paul Crook, *Darwin’s Coat-tails: Essays on Social Darwinism* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> Laura Callanan, *Deciphering Race: White Anxiety, Racial Conflict, and the Turn to Fiction in Mid-Victorian English Prose* (Ohio: Ohio State university Press, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 1998: 311-312.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Address to the Universal Peace Conference,’ 1890, in the *Aborigines’ Friend*, April 1891, pp170, cited in, Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society*, p76.

On a fundamental level, the APS bolster the imperialist, in this case the Colonial Secretary's, belief that the British race constituted "the greatest of governing races," establishing parallels with the official rhetoric of imperial expansion.<sup>57</sup> Creating rigid indicators of colonial incompetence, the society echo the imperial doctrine of maintaining, "authority and influence" within the region.<sup>58</sup> Labelling the Cape government a "tyranny that refuses to recognise the force of law," this notion is made clear.<sup>59</sup> The society publically profess the ineptitude of Cape governance, feeding into contemporary vistas on the Empire's "surplus population," while establishing the region's white inhabitants as subsidiary to those of the metropole.<sup>60</sup> The suggestion that the Boer hierarchy are incapable of governing democratically, perpetrating a form of "lawless" despotism at odds with British discipline, exacerbates this, acquiescing to Chamberlain's own reference to the pre-eminence of British governance.<sup>61</sup> These notions of incompetence and despotism are recurrent throughout the pamphlet, with the society adopting the motif of political fallibility as a mechanism through which to affirm the professed inferiority of the Empire's white settlers. The accusation that the Cape had threatened the Bechuana "with starvation," compounds this, completing the exposé of colonial corruption while offering a stark warning to the British public of the pitfalls associated with alleviating imperial governance.<sup>62</sup>

Viewed with more scrutiny, however, the APS's depiction of the lawless Cape places its Boer inhabitants within the paradigm of barbarism conventionally applied to the Bechuana natives. By drawing upon preconceptions of Boer political and moral inferiority, the society not only expose a concurrence with imperial thought, but also establish a pretext for the appropriation of Cape liberty, paralleling their seizure of Bechuana autonomy. Echoing the classification of the rebels upon strictly racial lines, the APS extend existing prejudices to the "magnificent white savages" of the Cape, once more applying imperialist stereotypes to the Empire's wards.<sup>63</sup> Evocatively labelling the indenturing of the rebels as "nigger-hunting" the society relegate Boer

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<sup>57</sup> 'Mr Chamberlain on the Australian Colonies,' *The Times* (London), 12 Nov. 1895.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, Speech to the House of Commons, 8 May 1896 (Hansard, Fourth Series, vol. XL [1896]), cols. 907-917.

<sup>59</sup> Fox Bourne, 'The Bechuana Troubles,' p40-43.

<sup>60</sup> Ernest Belfort Bax, 'The True Aims of "Imperial Extension" and "Colonial Enterprise,"' *Justice*, 1 May 1867, p7-8.

<sup>61</sup> Fox Bourne, 'The Bechuana Troubles,' p41.

<sup>62</sup> Fox Bourne, 'The Bechuana troubles,' p38.

<sup>63</sup> H.H. Johnston, 'The Boer Question,' *Fortnightly Review*, May 1865-June 1934, 1894, Vol. 56(332), 161-169. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2438111?accountid=9730>.



civility, culture, and tradition to a primitive state, establishing the Dutch settlers as degenerate brutes.<sup>64</sup> The links with imperial discourse are patent, with the suggestion that the subjugation of the Bechuana amounts to sport for the Boers, establishing a parallel with the perceived savagery of the regions white settlers. The society's assertion that the indenturing of the Bechuana rebels had been "applauded by the majority of the white population," takes this notion further.<sup>65</sup> Lauding the return of slavery to the region, the APS portray the Cape Colonists, and specifically the Boers, as craven opportunists, languishing in the prospect of cheap, guilt-free labour. The apparent joy of perpetuating a form of pseudo-slavery renders the white settlers archaic in their disposition, placing the Cape Dutch within the contemporary framework of "Boer cruelty and Boer dishonesty."<sup>66</sup> What surfaces from the APS's depiction of the Cape's inhabitants is an allegiance to imperial stereotypes. Despite the region being gifted self-governance in 1872, APS, and indeed imperialist, rhetoric mocks the professed capacity of the Boers to govern effectively. In turn, the dynamics of power are subverted, establishing the Boers as savages, incapable of ruling over their Bechuana peers.

The pamphlets distributed by the APS, alongside their private correspondence with the Colonial Office, betray an imperial disposition. What becomes clear through an examination of these is a conformity to a racial hierarchy based on the scientific inferiority of indigenous peoples, and a harmony with the "subordination of these millions."<sup>67</sup> The promotion of a binary between those who administer aid and those who receive it exacerbates this, leading the society to embody a power imbalance emblematic of Empire. Their discourse on race, society, and civilization coalesce with the new liberal imperialist stance on the cultivation of Empire and the patronage of indigenous peoples, establishing a link between the psyche of the APS and the Colonial Office. Notions of inferiority are also manifest in the society's depiction of the Cape settlers, most notably the Boer inhabitants, where the imperial doctrine of British political supremacy comes to the fore of the agency's rhetoric. By investigating the ideology and philosophy of the society, one can see how the APS reflected the beliefs and principles upon which the Empire was built and now rested,

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<sup>64</sup> Fox Bourne, 'The Case for the Bechuana Rebels,' p714.

<sup>65</sup> Fox Bourne, 'The Bechuana Troubles,' p48.

<sup>66</sup> Anon, 'The Boers at Home: Jottings from the Transvaal,' 1881, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 130(794), pp753-770. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/6559591?accountid=9730>.

<sup>67</sup> Martin J. Wiener, *An Empire on Trial: Race, Murder, and Justice under British Rule, 1870–1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

and begin to uncover the imperialist agenda that underpinned its response to the Bechuana crisis.

## Section II – ‘The Authority of the Crown’

In its constitution, psyche, and disposition, the APS symbolised the British Empire. In its response to the Bechuana crisis, it championed the extension of imperial authority and suzerainty in the southern subcontinent. Rooting their case against the Cape in legal jargon, the society zealously engaged in the diffusion of British hegemonic values, conforming to D.J.B. Trim’s assertion that the objectives of humanitarian organisations could “overlie, or blur into, those of imperialist and expansionist lobbies.”<sup>68</sup> By reminding the metropole of the colonial obligation to “conform to the laws applicable to Great Britain,” the society sought to subvert Cape autonomy, establishing a rigid framework in which British governance was both crucial and dominant.<sup>69</sup> This proposed implementation of British civil and legislative jurisdiction not only aimed to invalidate colonial autonomy, but also subjugate the region’s autonomous settlers. Indeed, notions of subservience are manifest throughout the society’s response, placing the APS within the template of an oppressive imperial agency, intent on deploying the rule of law as a “core institution of control and domination.”<sup>70</sup> The society fortified this link by juxtaposing the barbarity of a “Cape Town Slave Mart” with the “prosperity” of the Bechuana under British rule, fostering an image of Anglophone civility and stability in the process.<sup>71</sup> The proposed reversal of indenture thus severs the prospect of Boer influence within the Cape, marking a symbolic return to British custom, civility, and hegemony. Relating analysis of the society’s expansionist intentions to social and political theory, Section II will demonstrate how the APS lobbied for both the literal and metaphorical seizure of southern Africa. In doing so, it will ground the essential argument of this dissertation; that while actively pursuing the extension of British imperial rule, the APS acted as an ‘agent of imperialism.’

To fully unearth the instruments of imperial expansion employed by the APS, it is critical to first recognize the broader aims of the society in relation to Bechuanaland.

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<sup>68</sup> D.J.B. Trim, “Conclusion: Humanitarian Intervention in Historical Perspective,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: A History*, 381-401 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Trim’s assessment is linked to theories relating to 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as more recent, humanitarian interference, aligning with Michael Ignatieff’s estimation that, “humanitarian action is not unmasked if it is shown to be the instrument of imperial power.” Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite : Nation Building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (London: Vintage, 2003).

<sup>69</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p29.

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p39.

James Heartfield's model of society-driven protectorate formation, focussing on the, "control over white colonists in their relations with natives," establishes a paradigm for the conventional intervention of the APS.<sup>72</sup> Discernable from Heartfield's work is the illogical nature of the society's demand for both native welfare and the seizure of indigenous land, a paradox extant within the agency's response to the Bechuana crisis. However, the society's actions dispute Heartfield's insinuation that "more and more," land was drawn into the British Empire solely as a by-product of pro-native lobbying, suggesting instead that the resumption of direct imperial rule within the autonomous (and White) Cape was a key motive behind intervention.<sup>73</sup> This model of imperial conquest in the name of humanity has been widely adopted by scholars focussing on 20<sup>th</sup> century intervention, where humanitarianism has been viewed "as a means to secure imperial (which tends to mean British imperial) interests."<sup>74</sup> The APS's response to the Bechuana crisis thus sustains and contests historiographical theory; establishing the conquest of native lands as a corollary of humanitarian lobbying, while exposing an agenda driven by the imperial conquest of autonomous land. The actions of the society subsequently align with histories of neo-colonialism, and in this case neo-humanitarianism, where the intimacies between humanitarian agencies and the "very empires that it supposedly resists," are exposed.<sup>75</sup>

Michael Barnett has characterized neo-colonialism as the symbolic manifestation of imperialism in a post-colonial era. Barnett suggests that Western Powers retain "considerable privileges and mechanisms of power," over nascent sovereign states in the wake of independence, sustaining a form of pseudo-imperialism.<sup>76</sup> While the 1872 recognition of Cape self-governance merely donned the guise of independence, the actions of the APS mirror those of a neo-colonialist agent, with the society intent on upholding the 'mechanisms of power' characteristic of imperial rule. The society's forensic focus on the legality of the Cape's actions – the APS contend that British laws had been "violated" – offers the first example of this.<sup>77</sup> Although initially refraining from declaring in favour of the renewal of direct British governance, the society adopt the rule of law as a vehicle through which to promote

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<sup>72</sup> Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society*, p49. Heartfield suggests that the intended outcome of APS lobbying under Fox Bourne was the establishment of native protectorates under the authority of the Crown. In Bechuanaland, the re-establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate formed part of the society's proposed outcome for the crisis.

<sup>73</sup> Heartfield, *The Aborigines Protection Society*, p236.

<sup>74</sup> Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2012: 729-747.

<sup>75</sup> Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p222.

<sup>76</sup> Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p104.

<sup>77</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p21.

the instalment of British infrastructure, authority, and hegemony within the Cape, a precursor to “major domination.”<sup>78</sup>

Using Elizabeth Kolsky’s suggestion that law constituted a, “core institution of control and domination,” within the colonial setting, the society’s advocacy of imperial rule is exposed.<sup>79</sup> Calling for British jurisprudence to be “obeyed and enforced” within the region, the APS adopt the rubric of imperial expansion, their dialect evocative of Empire’s constrictive hold.<sup>80</sup> Employing the blunt imperative, the society’s language is given a predatory quality, underscoring its promulgation of a policy of legal imperialism.<sup>81</sup> The reference to a British law both “authoritative” and necessarily “operative” compounds this, revealing the society’s recognition, and overt commendation, of the pillars of imperial control.<sup>82</sup> Depicting the law as “authoritative,” the society not only denote the all-encompassing reach of the British Empire, but also offer a subtle suggestion to the British public. Published in pamphlet form, the APS’s words present a stark warning: failure on behalf of the Empire to enforce that which is “authoritative,” will ensure the contrary, in this instance, a substantiation of Cape authority. Evident within the APS’s opening case against the Cape are the seeds of an agenda centred upon the intensification of British rule. By championing the imposition of British law, the society promote British influence and authority within the Cape, adhering to Trim’s suggestion that the motivations of humanitarian and expansionist lobbies are often correlative.<sup>83</sup>

Reminding the British government of the Cape’s obligation to comply with the “laws of the realm,” the APS also establish an imperial/colonial power imbalance that rejects the notion of Cape autonomy.<sup>84</sup> Ruth Edgecome has described imperial control within the context of self-governing colonies as theoretical, stating that colonists enjoyed responsible government “over their internal affairs, including native policy.”<sup>85</sup> The society’s response to the crisis, in its very existence, thus marks a challenge to Cape authority and a call for an intensification of British influence within the colony. Calling for the, “opinion of Law Officers of the Crown,” in response to the

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<sup>78</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (London: Penguin, 1990).

<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India*, p13.

<sup>80</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p47.

<sup>81</sup> Legal Imperialism is in this case defined as; using law as an, ‘enabling factor for imperial activity.’ Zoe Laidlaw, “Breaking Britannia’s Bounds? Law, Settlers and Space in Britain’s Imperial Historiography,” *The Historical Journal*, 2012: 807-830.

<sup>82</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Bechuana Troubles,’ p47.

<sup>83</sup> Trim, ‘Conclusion: Humanitarian Intervention,’ p389.

<sup>84</sup> TNA; DO 119/328, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion,’ 28 January 1898.

<sup>85</sup> Edgecombe, ‘Sir Alfred Milner and the Bechuana (Langeberg) Rebellion,’ p57.

indenturing of the Bechuana rebels, the APS buttress this claim, validating imperial authority while concurrently challenging the integrity of Cape Courts, vitiating them of their power and dignity.<sup>86</sup> The act of bypassing the Cape Courts in this instance challenges the constitutional authority of the Cape Colony, questioning their ability, and even their right, to self-govern. Not only rejecting their authenticity but also suggesting they were susceptible to “uncertainty and probable mischief,” the APS exaggerate this suggestion.<sup>87</sup> The insinuation that trials within the Cape may be prejudiced, or at the very least “uncertain,” disputes the professed legitimacy of the colony, juxtaposing their disarray with the stoic authority of the metropole. In essence, the APS reject the ‘responsible government’ granted to the Cape in 1872 on the grounds of legal incompetence. The consequence of this abasement is clear: a profound affirmation of imperial authority.

What surfaces from the society’s forensic focus on the patronage of the Cape is a power dichotomy framed in flattened binary terms (colonizer/colonized, ruler/ruled).<sup>88</sup> The APS usurp the authority of the Cape by not only questioning their validity and integrity, but also by trying them through the metric of conventional British law, an acute reminder of the region’s ultimate subservience to the Crown. Examining the APS’s language of response, the society’s appetite for the pacification of settler autonomy is made clear, concluding their legal case against the Cape. The portrayal of British Law as “binding” is, in this instance, of particular intrigue, with the term not only denoting a restriction of independence and autonomy, but also fostering an image of colonial subjugation at the hands of an oppressive imperial overlord.<sup>89</sup> By celebrating the “binding” nature of British Law, the society thus betrays its consensus with the imperial tropes of coercion and control, calling for the renewed efforts of the government in rendering the Cape subservient. The APS’s curt reminder to the Imperial Government of her duty to “enforce the observance” of British Law, not only reaffirms the society’s aforementioned doctrine of imperial expansion, but also illustrates this advocacy of absolute imperial authority.<sup>90</sup> The term “enforce,” by definition, calls for the use of superior might in suppressing the will of another, elucidating the agency’s commitment to an imperial/colonial power dynamic rooted in the concept of subservience. By aggressively pursuing the imposition of British law

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<sup>86</sup> TNA; DO 119/327, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion,’ 4 October 1897.

<sup>87</sup> ‘TNA; DO 119/327, ‘The Langeberg Native Rebellion,’ 4 October 1897.

<sup>88</sup> Steven Seidman, *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2011).

<sup>89</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p29.

<sup>90</sup> *Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p29.

within the Cape, the APS reinforce existing notions of settler inferiority and subservience. Eroding the autonomy, influence, and dignity, of the Cape, the APS subvert the power hierarchy recognized by the establishment of self-governance, elevating British predominance in the process.

The dominant objective discernible from the APS's proposed intervention is the extension of British Law. Relating this to Martin Chanock's suggestion that law constituted one of the "most thorough, and most durable" legacies of British colonialism, it becomes evident that the society acted as a discreet expansionist lobby in their response to the Bechuana crisis.<sup>91</sup> By continually campaigning for the establishment of infrastructure geared towards social and political control, an adherence to colonial supremacy is revealed, echoing the colonial secretaries own call for "imperial assistance" in the cultivation of the Empire's "undeveloped Estates."<sup>92</sup> What one can draw from this is not only an intrinsic commitment to the greatest resource of the Empire, "its system of laws," but also an agenda directly geared towards the extension and consolidation of imperial rule.<sup>93</sup>

The society's proposed imposition of British law throughout the Cape thus marked a definitive attempt to impregnate the region with imperial values and subjugate colonial settlers. Its call for the reversal of indenture sought to extend this, ensuring the establishment of cultural hegemony over the region; a further "mechanism of power" integral to the maintenance of control in the wake of colonial autonomy. Antonio Gramsci has drawn distinctions between hegemony and domination, defining the hegemonic process as the coalition between "cultural and political leadership."<sup>94</sup> Control, argues Gramsci, stems from the ruling class's manipulation of culture, and the subsequent acceptance of this by the subaltern masses as the cultural norm. Applying this model to Bechuanaland, the APS's agenda of imperial expansion and control is, once more, exposed. By seeking the establishment of British cultural standards, the society "impose a direction on social life," within the Cape, undermining Boer cultural and political autonomy.<sup>95</sup> The frank assessment that the,

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<sup>91</sup> Martin Chanock, "The Law Market: The Legal Encounter in British East and Central Africa," in *European Expansion and Law, The Encounter of European and Indigenous Law in 19th- and 20th-Century Africa and Asia*, 279-306 (Oxford: Berg, 1992).

<sup>92</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, speech in the House of Commons, 22 August 1895, cited in, J.L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain: Empire and World Policy*, Vol. 3 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1934), p19.

<sup>93</sup> Wiener, *An Empire on Trial*, p1.

<sup>94</sup> Steve Jones, *Gramsci*, p41.

<sup>95</sup> T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review*, 1985: 567-593.

“principles of civilization and humanity,” will only be satisfied by a reversal of the Bechuana’s indenture contracts supports this, highlighting the society’s zealous juxtaposition of Boer barbarism and British sophistication. The insinuation that Boer society is subsequently *uncivilized* and *inhumane* is pivotal within this context, establishing the annulment of the contracts as a return to the “sound imperialism,” and enlightened culture of the metropole.<sup>96</sup> Calling for the “orderly existence” of the Bechuana in the wake of independence from Boer tyranny, the society bolster this claim.<sup>97</sup> By suggesting that life for the Bechuana, once “re-instated in their own country,” will be orderly and disciplined – as well as civilised and humane – the APS definitively remove the possibility of Boer influence within the region, instead applying pillars of British civility to Bechuanaland.<sup>98</sup> In this instance, the APS don the guise of the cultural imperialist, propagating both privately and publically the diffusion of British culture throughout southern Africa. Seeking more than the mere reversal of the indenture contracts, the APS pursue a mission of Anglophone conversion, embracing Gramsci’s model of hegemonic authority. The proposed reversal of indenture, and subsequent reversion to principles of British civility, thus acts as a mechanism of coercion and control, with the APS ardent in their endeavour to maintain British authority in the Cape.

In a study of British relief efforts during the South African War, Rebecca Gill has argued that humanitarian impulses were seldom altruistic, citing the glory of the “British nation, patriotism,” and a commitment to “imperial obligations,” as constituent factors in the impulses of relief workers.<sup>99</sup> Gill’s words echo the expansionist, nationalistic agenda of the society in its response to Bechuanaland, placing the APS within the template of a 19<sup>th</sup> century philanthropic enterprise, intent on expanding the reach of the British Empire. In fact, pursuing more than the enforcement of British authority within the Cape, the APS’s response to the crisis reveals territorial designs for Bechuanaland itself. By proposing the restoration of the rebels “to their own country,” the sole sphere in which they may act as “free men and women,” the APS discretely expose this expansionist agenda.<sup>100</sup> The reference to the Bechuana’s, “own country,” is in this case particularly edifying, with the society paradoxically characterizing British Bechuanaland – established as a Crown Colony in 1885 – as

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<sup>96</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘The Case for The Bechuana Rebels,’ p709.

<sup>97</sup> ‘*Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p39.

<sup>98</sup> ‘*Correspondence Relating to Native Disturbances*, p39.

<sup>99</sup> Gill, ‘Networks of Concern,’ p828.

<sup>100</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘Blacks and Whites,’ p31.



the homeland of the displaced rebels.<sup>101</sup> The repeated address to the Colonial Office to restore the country of the Bechuana thus acts as a device through which the society seek to secure the re-establishment of the Bechuanaland protectorate, restoring the yoke of imperialism to the region. The depiction of the province within the Annual Report of the society reaffirms this, with the society lauding the endurance of the rebels who had, “found their way back to British Bechuanaland.”<sup>102</sup> Characterising the protectorate as a haven of safety and prosperity, the APS make an evocative attempt to re-assert direct British governance within the region, further juxtaposing imperial and Cape governance in the process.<sup>103</sup> The act of restoring the rebels to their “own country” thus marries this particular strand of the society’s response to the work of James Heartfield, supporting his claim to the paradoxical mandate of agency.<sup>104</sup> Viewed in conjunction with the challenge to Cape self-governance, the APS’s agenda of imperial expansion is clarified.

The APS pursue two broad objectives within their response to the Bechuana crisis: the enforcement of British law and the imposition of British culture within the Cape. Both aims point towards a doctrine of imperial expansion and a restriction of colonial authority, a notion reinforced when viewed in conjunction with theories relating to political and social control. The society’s discourse on British legal predominance exposes a commitment to coercive restriction, with the twin themes of subjugation and subservience manifest throughout. The historical perception of law as a device of imperial consolidation and control maintains this theory, establishing the society as a pro-imperial expansionist lobby. Notions of territorial growth are compounded by the APS’s declaration in favour of restoring the Bechuana to their former homeland, an acute reminder of the society’s allegiance to the consolidation of Britain’s imperial property. By investigating the apparent objectives of the society’s proposed intervention, it is evident that the APS pursue a policy of imperial expansion. Charged with securing the welfare of the disenfranchised Bechuana, the APS target the embryonic sovereignty existent within the region, promoting the re-establishment of British rule in its place.

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<sup>101</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘Blacks and Whites,’ p31.

<sup>102</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, ‘The Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society: 1898,’ 1898, *Wilson Anti-Slavery Collection*, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60238870>.

<sup>103</sup> TNA: CO 50/9, ‘War and Colonial Department and Colonial Office: Cape of Good Hope Colony (Cape Colony), Acts: “Make Provision For Dealing With Certain Land in Bechuanaland,” 24 June 1897.

<sup>104</sup> Fox Bourne, ‘Blacks and Whites,’ p31.

## Conclusion

Analysis into the public and private rhetoric of the APS's response to the Bechuana crisis reveals important conclusions regarding the society's role in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>105</sup> Firstly, the society embodied contemporary ideals regarding race, civilisation, and enlightened British culture. As an organisation they 'carried' Empire, constructing Bechuana and Boer identity through the lens of British imperialism and conforming to contemporary racial and cultural stereotypes. Both Boer and Bechuana were treated akin to 'savages,' in need of the benevolent paternalism of British imperialism. Secondly, seeking to subvert the legitimacy of the Cape, the APS endeavoured, if unsuccessfully, to impregnate the southern subcontinent with British hegemonic influence. Employing mechanisms of imperial control, the society proposed the re-establishment of British legal predominance within the region, substantiating imperial authority and autonomy. This process ventured to project the leading hegemonic values of the metropole across the pseudo-independent Cape, diffusing Anglo-centric norms throughout the region. In turn, the APS acted as an, 'agent of imperialism;' a beacon of Empire.

At times the society actively pursued the extension of Britain's imperial property, advocating the renewal of Crown rule over the Bechuanaland Protectorate. More significantly, however, the APS staked a claim to the imperial conquest of the Cape. Fuelled by a fiercely imperialist stance, and an inherently anti-colonist disposition, the society's rhetoric blurred with that of an expansionist lobby, revealing an agenda complicit with imperial growth. Colonial autonomy and integrity were targeted in order to re-assert British pre-dominance; through their legal, civil, and social capability, the Cape inhabitants were exposed as unfit for self-governance. The juxtaposition between this ineptitude and the prudent governance offered by British rule thus acted as a mechanism through which the APS advocated imperial rule.

This dissertation, therefore, not only rejects current historiographical tropes relating to the role of the society, but also establishes a framework for future study into the marauding imperialism of the APS. Historical analysis of the society's response to the Bechuana crisis has proved that, far from inadvertently aiding in the process of imperial growth, the society actively pursued a policy of imperial consolidation and

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<sup>105</sup> The pamphlets cited throughout this dissertation were all published in the 1890's. As such, the society's response to the crisis reflects the broader disposition of the society, establishing the event as representative of APS intervention.

expansion. In doing so, the works of James Heartfield and Kenneth Nworah are disputed, and Charles Swaisland's suggestion that the society "took up a stance against imperialism" is rejected.<sup>106</sup> There exists, however, extensive scope for further investigation into the APS's relationship with the Empire and its growth. One of the key questions posed by this dissertation is whether the society's actions gave license to imperial expansion, or whether they drove the expansionist agenda themselves. It is crucial, therefore, that scholarship not only turn its attention to the Bechuana crisis as a captivating episode of colonial violence, but also to the APS's intimate romance with Empire.

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<sup>106</sup> Swaisland, 'The Aborigines Protection Society,' p277.

## Appendix: Timeline of Key Events

1872

- The Cape Colony is granted 'Responsible Government' under its first Prime Minister, John Molteno.

1885

- On September 30<sup>th</sup> Bechuanaland is proclaimed a Crown Colony.

1895

- On November 16<sup>th</sup> the Cape Colony annex the former Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland.
- On May 3<sup>rd</sup> the Bechuana chief Montiosa appeals to the Imperial Government not to sanction the proposed annexation.
- Proclamation No. 220 of the Bechuana Annexation Act declares African native reserves to be inalienable.

1896

- On November 27<sup>th</sup> the Langeberg rebellion begins in response to the killing of 17 Bechuana cattle by Cape Police officers.
- Roughly 50 Bechuana are killed over the course of 2 days fighting in December.

1897

- On January 15<sup>th</sup> Police and rebels clash, resulting in the death of around 50 Bechuana and an occupation of indigenous land.
- Over the course of August the rebels surrender, the leaders are killed, and the Bechuana are taken to Cape Town to be sold for indenture.
- 'The Case for the Bechuana Rebels' is published within the *Fortnightly Review*.
- 'The Aborigines' Protection Society,' a pamphlet advertising the objectives of the society is published.
- On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the APS begin their correspondence with the Colonial Office.

1898

- 'The Bechuana Troubles: A Story of Pledge-Breaking, Rebel-Making, and Slave-Making' is published by the APS. The 48-page pamphlet offers a comprehensive account of the Bechuana crisis to the British public.
- Jan 27<sup>th</sup> 1898, the APS conclude their correspondence with the Colonial Office.
- February 7<sup>th</sup> 1898, the Imperial Government issues a Preliminary Inspection Report into the conditions of indentured Bechuana rebels, concluding that they had received fair treatment.

1899

- 'The Aborigines' Protection Society: Chapters in its History,' is published in pamphlet form. The publication offers a comprehensive overview of the society's storied history, placing the Bechuana crisis within its relevant context.

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