2 *Secret-Keepers and Mythmakers*

In late August 1961, Robert Rotberg traveled to Nairobi with the hopes of conducting archival research. Upon arrival in Nairobi, he called on Assistant Chief Secretary Thomas Neil at Government House in order to request access to some confidential papers.[1] Then associated with Harvard University's Department of History and Center for International Affairs, Rotberg's research was of interest to the US government and was tracked by the International Educational Exchange Program. The exchange program's objectives, according to the US Congress, were "to enable the Government of the United States to promote a better understanding of the [U.S.] in other countries" in order to support US foreign policy abroad by creating personal contacts.[2] The program was established in 1948 to revitalize US propaganda initiatives that supported foreign policy objectives which countered international Soviet influence in the "war of ideas."[3] Based on the nature of the publication which followed this period of travel and study, Rotberg's interests at the time dealt with African nationalism, and records in Nairobi related to the Mau Mau Uprising would have been highly relevant.[4] After internal deliberation within the central government, Neil informed him that it would not be possible to consult classified materials and instead referred him to the

[1] TNA, FCO 141/6971, File note, T. Neil to Chief Secretary, October 5, 1961.
[2] *US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948*, Public Law 80–402, 62 Stat. 6, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (1948).
[3] See Toby Rider, *Cold War Games: Propaganda, the Olympics, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016), p. 19.
[4] This chapter makes a distinction between the Mau Mau Uprising, the anticolonial campaign waged by a wide range of individuals and organized factions (such as trade unions, the Land and Freedom Army, forest fighters, and people who appropriated the "Mau Mau" moniker) in the period 1952–60, and the Emergency, the counterinsurgency by the British government. This difference enables a recognition of the anticolonial movement as being situated in, but distinct from, the British counterinsurgency tactics.

Government's library and open archives.[5] Neil's decision to deny Rotberg access to classified archival records was based on tight control over who could access what was regarded as the most sensitive record of government activity. Neil considered internal archival access an asset for an administration that relied on documentation in the creation of order and reference to intelligence but access by the public as a threat.

The question of access to government records had occupied the colonial administration in Kenya since before the onset of the Emergency. The decade leading up to Rotberg's request was characterized by debate, inconsistency, and anxieties among the administrators closest to colonial recordkeeping in Nairobi. In 1948, Secretary of State for the Colonies Arthur Creech Jones informed British colonial governments of his decision to extend the period of public access to UK Colonial Office records held at the Public Record Office (PRO) in London to 1902.[6] Creech Jones instructed that colonial record access permissions within the colonies should adjust accordingly but noted that through his post as the Secretary of State, he had authority to grant access to colonial documents at his own discretion.[7] As scholar Richard Aldrich argues regarding such extensions, the UK government was "keen to characterize periodic concessions as part of a benign policy of liberalization [. . .] but behind the scenes, the process [had] been troublesome, combative, and, at times, accompanied by something bordering on panic."[8] This was certainly the case in Kenya, where those who guarded British colonial records did so in order to protect secrets that they understood as their own to keep. Civil servants and political appointees assumed the role of gatekeeper, so that the matter of granting access was in the hands of those whose loyalties lay with government. It was a job not without challenges. In the wake of the Second World War, anticolonial activists across the globe advocated the free flow of information in order to "prevent totalitarian

[5] TNA, FCO 141/6971, File note, T. Neil to Chief Secretary, October 5, 1961.
[6] From 1838 to 2003 the Public Record Office (PRO) was the "guardian" of the national archives of the United Kingdom until it was merged to create the National Archives in 2003.
[7] KNA, KNA 1/128, Arthur Creech Jones, Circular 1316/48 "Public Access to Colonial Office Records," August 30, 1948. 8
[8] R. J. Aldrich, "Policing the Past: Official History, Secrecy and British Intelligence since 1945," *The English Historical Review* 119, no. 483 (2004): 922.

regimes using misinformation to secure their rule and foment international conflict."[9] In the same year as Creech Jones's decision, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights asserted the right to "receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" in a significant gesture toward the freedom of information.[10] The success of anticolonial activists in and outside of Kenya to publish their accounts of colonial rule, including the brutality of Britain's Emergency, placed further pressure on the UK to cover up records that critics of empire saw as evidence of abuse, but that the British colonial government understood to document the legality of their administration's activities. The International Council on Archives (ICA) also formed in 1948 to promote international awareness of and access to archives. In this complex historical context, the following chapter chronicles and analyzes the development of archival policy in Kenya in the period leading up to the systematic destruction and removal of sensitive records prior to independence by examining administrative secrecy and state-sponsored research.

Colonial archives were configured to preserve colonial state structures, which were racially defined and based upon a system of subjugation. Quoting Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration*, Kenya's colonial archivist Clare Bwye stated that the colonial archive should "serve the practical purposes of administration by providing precedents and historical background to government business."[11] This was the colonial archive's original purpose: to serve the interests of its administration. The key feature of colonial bureaucracy in service of domination was that the ends could justify the means only if both were concealable. Hiding archives, through classification schema that prevented access, physical destruction, or keeping their existence secret, was a way of hiding the contradiction between the promises and practices of colonial rule. However, scholarly curiosity, such as Rotberg's, applied regular pressure to open up the archives.

[9] Mark Reeves, "Manila, 1918: The Freedom of Information," Online Atlas on the History of Humanitarianism and Human Rights, http://hhr-atlas.ieg-mainz.de/articles/reeves-manila [accessed July 12, 2019].

[10] UN General Assembly, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, 217 (III) A, 1948, Paris, art. 19, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ [accessed February 2, 2019].

[11] KNA, VP 2/1, Letter, C. Bwye to R. Charman, September 9, 1963.

This chapter historicizes and analyzes the organization of the Kenya colonial archives in the mid-to-late 1950s with special attention to their access. In doing so, it argues that the British colonial government regarded its archives as an internal reference repository for the future work of government. It was not known at the time of its establishment that it would be a late-stage colonial institution. In other words, those involved with the development of administrative archives in Kenya began their work before knowing that political independence would render their efforts futile. Rather, it offered the British colonial government a way in which to try and manage the bulk of sensitive, controversial, and secret documents created during the Emergency. The first half of this chapter examines the negotiations between the Colonial Office in London and the British colonial government in Nairobi over how best to deal with managing and securing secret records and in doing so emphasizes the autonomy and reach of individual perspectives on the matter. The second half proceeds to analyze the only instance in which a "researcher" has *ever* been granted full and unconditional access to the secret records of the Emergency. In doing so, it argues that the British colonial government was interested not only in barring access to sensitive documents but also in enabling their use in highly controlled settings so that official documents could serve as evidence supporting sympathetic "research," or propaganda, which vindicated the government at a time of growing critique. The process of curating such research resulted in the initial identification, collation, and indexing of files that would go on to form the basis of what would later be known as the "migrated archives."

The Development of Kenya's Central Government Archives

The question of public access to administrative records gained more relevance within the Kenyan government upon the Emergency and the consequential interest of the British colonial government to hold intelligence tight and documentation of their own activities tighter. In July 1953, Clare Bwye, the Registry Superintendent of Kenya Government Secretariat Offices, provided the Acting Chief Secretary with a rationale that would empower the Colonial Government to categorically prohibit access to all administrative files. Bwye explained that because all government files contained correspondence that had passed through an administrative office, all of which were answerable

to the Governor's office, that permission to communicate such correspondence lay with the governor himself according to Number 38 in the administration's governing text, the Code of Regulations. Bwye went further in elaborating the power of individuals within the administration to withhold sensitive government records from view of the public and unofficial members of the legislative council. Bwye argued that the Official Secrets Act, to which every Civil Servant was accountable, stipulated those officers only disclose official information to "authorized persons." Authorized persons, Bwye stated, "means a person of European descent who is a British subject by birth and has been authorized by the Head of his/her department to see and handle Secret and Top Secret material."[12] Bwye's rationale provided a logic that enabled comprehensive discretionary powers to the governor to decide who could be privy to administrative documents. He therefore personified government into a single ruler and racialized the right to access information. His approach was of course accepted by Central Government, as it was in line with the European outlook in Kenya at the time.

Having proven himself useful in the eyes of government, Bwye was sent to Ceylon by a "former Chief Secretary" in 1954 for a "short period of 'grooming' in the Archives Department there" in order to return and formalize the central archives in Nairobi, which were in poor shape.[13] Professional training for archivists was a relatively young field in the United Kingdom and thus also in the colonies. Following the Second World War, formalizing the study of archives was taken up in the UK by Hilary Jenkinson at University College London, Geoffrey Barraclough at Liverpool University and a committee of the Bodleian Library and History Faculty at Oxford. Previously, the Public Record Office required the civil service examination of its employees and historian Elizabeth Shepherd suggests that the archivist role was seen to be more scholarly than a profession in its own right.[14] The early profession formed according to the experience and opinions of its founders. For example, Hilary Jenkinson's *A Manual of Archive Administration* argued that an archivist was primarily beholden to the

[12] KNA, KNA 1/128, Letter, C. Bwye to Acting Chief Secretary, July 30, 1953.
[13] KNA, VP 2/1, Letter, C. Bwye to R. Charman, September 9, 1963.
[14] Elizabeth Shepherd, "From Scholarly Preoccupations towards Professionalism: Historical and Scholarly Associations, 1880–1945," *Archives and Archivists in 20th Century England* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), pp. 129–42.

needs of the administration to which they served and secondarily to a research community.[15] The relationship between a government and its archives was therefore framed as co-constitutive. Before 1955, Kenyan administrative archival files were "stacked in the darkest cellars of the Law Courts Building" or held in "departmental dumps all over the Colony."[16] A fire in 1939 had destroyed most of the older Secretariat Files of the colonial administration and was considered a major disaster at the time. Bwye described the Central Government archival situation as a "good example of untidy hoarding and preservation by neglect."[17] Through his experience in Ceylon and studying Jenkinson's publications, Bwye approached his task with the authority of a newly minted professional.

Upon his return to Nairobi, Bwye demonstrated a strong commitment to his burgeoning profession. Echoing Jenkinson's conception of archives, Bwye stated that they should function primarily to service the needs of government and only later, in a distant future, furnish historians with sources. At the time of Bwye's work, the British colonial government was committed to concealing classified records as a security concern within the broader project of counterinsurgency (Chapter 2). Bwye relied on Hilary Jenkinson to express the function of Kenya's colonial archive:

> Archives have a threefold importance: first, while they are still current, for the immediate purposes of administration, a little later because they furnish precedents and give the historical background of the business of the office and finally for long-term purposes – the interests (many of them unpredictable) of historians and research workers and other students.[18]

Bwye thus mapped colonial archives onto a chronology that would follow the arc of empire, unbeknownst to him. The first purpose addressed the needs of an active colonial administration. The second alluded to the relevance of colonial archives in maintaining certain structures and functions of the government apparatus upon independence and the advent of a new regime. The final purpose identified archives as potentially relevant to scholarship. This neat ordering of archival functions did not reflect the convergence of different interests

[15] As summarized by Terry Cook, '"What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,'" *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17–63.

[16] KNA, KNA 1/128, File note, Bwye, October 3, 1955. [17] Ibid. [18] Ibid.

in administrative archives in the period leading up to Kenya's independence, an outcome likely not on Bwye's mind in 1955. In itself, the creation and formalization of a centralized archive in Nairobi at this time demonstrated an investment in the British colonial government's future within the colony, wherein reference to the past would be useful.

In order to transform the mess of the colony's files into a useful resource for government as described above, Bwye advocated provisions for archival storage of administrative records in Nairobi, support for District and Provincial Records Offices across the colony, and the formal regulation of records management. In February 1955, Acting Chief Secretary C. H. Hartwell wrote to all ministers and heads of department across Kenya announcing the imminent archives service. He explained, "In the past there have been no systematic arrangements in Kenya for the housing and registration of closed files, and it seems to me important that the matter should now be put on a proper basis for the future."[19] After a year of archival planning with the office of the Chief Secretary, Bwye assumed charge of the Archives Section on April 1, 1956 with a staff of five, including three African and two Asian trainees: Mr. K. D. Chaudry, Mr. Nasar Ali, Mr. J. Othieno, Mr. M. Ofuana, and Mr. F. Dongi. The administration allocated the basement of Government House as the storage facilities for state records and provided space for 75,000 files from a variety of ministries.[20] This spatial location, in the literal seat of administrative governance, was indicative of the British colonial government's emergent strategy of archival suppression and control.

Chief Secretary Hartwell was not alone with his concern about the preservation of historical documents in Kenya. In September 1955, James B. Place, head of the Kenya History Society, wrote to his office regarding access to and safety of classified records.[21] Place warned of

[19] KNA, DC/Lamu/2/12/6, Letter, C. H. Hartwell to all ministers, all heads of department, February 16, 1955.

[20] Ibid.

[21] The Kenya Historical Society was founded the same year in July 1955. It adopted a constitution at its inaugural meeting in Nairobi that stated among its objectives, "the collection and preservation of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, deeds, engravings, drawings, coins, antiquities and any objects relating to the history of the country and its inhabitants, and the cataloguing of any such not in the possession of the Society" in order to support "the publication of papers on subjects of historical and antiquarian interest to Kenya, [. . .]." James B. Place, "The Kenya History Society," *African Affairs* 54 (1955):

the risk of loss or destruction of official documents by "natural" and "unnatural agencies" and appealed to the administration to take action by declassifying and duplicating government files that were more than twenty years old.[22] Place emphasized that government officers were members of the society and couldn't access records as researchers that they used within their administrative duties. Place's suggestion that downgrading the classification of files could reduce the risk of their disappearance demonstrated a link between the desire to obtain documents and their security grading, inferring a higher classification increased a document's value. Place almost certainly used "natural" and "unnatural" as an innuendo to describe the difference between passive neglect and active interference in the loss or destruction of the British colonial government's classified files. The office of the Chief Secretary responded that "no officer, except with my express permission, may contribute articles to a newspaper nor publish in any manner anything which may be properly regarded as of a political or administrative nature." However, the letter clarified, if members of the Society wished to publish "non-political" articles, "the required facilities [would] be arranged through this office, providing that the Government is satisfied as to the propriety of the research and the bona fide nature of the work proposed."[23] What is not made explicit in the exchange is that the Chief Secretary, Richard Turnbull, was not just a member but vice-president of the Kenya History Society. Thus, Turnbull could, in his official capacity, grant himself and his colleagues, privileged access to records as researchers. Equally, he could deny it. In either event, only European or, as in Rotberg's case, US-American researchers were recorded requesting access to government files.

Generally, Europeans in Kenya were suspicious of all Kikuyu-speaking peoples. In that vein, Place might have been warning that the administration's classified archives were at risk of seizure by African Kenyans, and this was, according to the Historical Society, against the interests not only of government, but of historical research. The

291–92. See Christine Stephanie Nicholls, who discusses the society's relevance to white settlers and their "sense of white history going unrecorded" in *Red Strangers: The White Tribe of Kenya* (London: Timewell Press, 2005), p. 253.

[22] KNA, KNA 1/128, Letter, Kenya Historical Society to Chief Secretary, September 25, 1955.

[23] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/29, Letter (Draft), Chief Secretary to Place, n.d.

colonial production of racialized difference was accomplished not only through documenting and enforcing categories difference but also through regulating access to information regarding the workings of government. Systems of racialized prejudice permeated the British colonial government overall. So much so that Bwye enforced a racial hierarchy at Government House's basement by prohibiting the three African clerks on his staff from compiling a master index of the files, an exercise which would have given them an overview of the archive's holdings and thus an insight into the structure and workings of central government, instead instructing two Asian clerks to do so.[24] Bwye also enforced supervision of the African clerks on his archival team whenever their work came near secret files. The British colonial government was already hyperfocused on keeping their classified files out of the view of Africans, but the point to downgrade classified materials generated extensive discussion not only between Bwye and the office of the Chief Secretary but also between the metropole and all other British colonies.

In March 1955 Secretary of State for the Colonies Alan Lennox Boyd, Lyttelton's successor, addressed all British colonial governments with a circular on the "Regrading and Destruction of Classified Documents."[25] In his circular, Lennox Boyd addressed the issue of the accumulation of classified documents and the limited space to securely store them. Intelligence systems, which were employed across the colonies as a means of governance and counterinsurgency, produced huge amounts of documents that strained storage capacities. As a result of the common problem across colonial administrations, Lennox Boyd had ordered a Working Party set up by the Cabinet Office Committee on General Security Procedure to come up with a "uniform procedure for the regrading of classified documents" to be applied by all UK governmental departments "both at home and overseas."[26] The Working Party proposed an automatic downgrading system whereby after the passage of four to five years of a classified

[24] KNA, KNA 1/128, Indexing Instructions compiled by C. Bwye, November 10, 1955.

[25] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/6, Circular 322/55 addressed to "all Colonies, (including the Federation of Nigeria and the Regional Governments), Protectorates and Regional Organisations … [and] the High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya," March 30, 1955.

[26] Ibid.

file's opening it would be downgraded and then destroyed. Lennox Boyd rejected the plan on the grounds that "a system of automatic downgrading could be dangerous, especially where intelligence sources were concerned."[27] He went on to grant British colonial governments the autonomy to apply their own methods with the view that a document's originator is "in the best position to know all the factors to be taken into account."[28] Instead of instruction, Lennox Boyd offered guidance for colonial administrations in handling their classified documents. He offered the following points:

A. The destruction of records as far as possible would appear to offer the best solution from both security and storage aspects [. . .] There is no objection to your destroying, by fire, any classified documents now regarded as redundant irrespective of where they originated, provided that every precaution is taken to preserve any document which can reasonably be considered to be of historical importance [. . .] It would, however, be necessary to keep a record locally of documents so destroyed [. . .]
B. There is no objection to the downgrading of any files or documents where the security classification originated locally and where it is now considered that the classification need no longer be retained
C. When downgrading telegrams, no cypher security precautions are necessary in respect of telegrams dated prior to the 1st January, 1944. Telegrams dated 1st January 1944, however, fall into two categories:
    i. Those for which it is unnecessary to take precautions for safeguarding the cyphers [. . .]
    ii. Those sent in general recyphering tables such as the Colonial Defence [. . .] for which precautions are necessary [. . .] such telegrams may be downgraded to the lowest security classification which carries with it the obligation to keep under lock and key papers so marked.
D. If it is desired to downgrade any documents not originated locally, the originator should first be contacted. Reference should therefore be made to me before downgrading documents issued from the Colonial Office [. . .] The process of consulting the parent

[27] Ibid. [28] Ibid.

> Department on a variety of [. . .] subjects would [. . .] be an unduly laborious matter, and I hope, therefore, that requests for downgrading can be kept to the minimum with the resort to the destruction of records wherever possible.[29]

Lennox Boyd's circular emphasized the authority of "document originators," meaning the individual authors of records, their administrative departments, and the colonial government that headed them. The Secretary of State for the Colonies thus gave his official permission for government officers to decide for themselves which classified documents to destroy according to their own logics, except for documents which originated from his own office whereby his permission would be required for downgrading. Lennox Boyd's final point makes clear his preference for destruction of classified government records over the "unduly laborious matter" of thorough document review. In organizing official censorship at the level of record destruction, Lennox Boyd at once decentralized the authority to destroy sensitive colonial documents to individual colonial administrators and reaffirmed his office's central authority in determining the fates of all records which passed through metropolitan communication channels. Norwegian archivist Ole Kolsrud suggests that there is a "traditional tendency in England to stress the destruction of the worthless more than the preservation of the valuable."[30] In this case it was not only the destruction of the worthless with which Lennox Boyd concerned himself, but the destruction of the potentially incriminating.

Two weeks after Lennox Boyd's Circular was dispatched, Assistant Chief Secretary Thomas Neil wrote to Bwye asking for his opinion on how to apply the instructions to the storage of secret papers in Nairobi's archives. Bwye first clarified the situation of "closed" secret files stating that they were largely retained in the originating government department's Secret Registries except for some 1,000–1,500 secret files held in the Strong Room of the Government House basement. Bwye explained that the secret files at Government House

[29] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/6, Circular 322/55 addressed to "all Colonies, (including the Federation of Nigeria and the Regional Governments), Protectorates and Regional Organisations . . . [and] the High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya," March 30, 1955.

[30] Ole Kolsrud, "The Evolution of Basic Appraisal Principles – Some Comparative Observations," *The American Archivist* 55, no. 1 (1992): 27.

concerned Government House itself, Defense, Research, the Legislative Council, and the Executive Council. This range of departments illustrates a particular relationship between law, administration, military action, and research as governmental functions bound by secrecy. In contrast to Lennox Boyd, Bwye argued that it was clearly "inadvisable" to destroy any of the files until they were reviewed by himself as archivist in accordance with Kenya's security instructions, to which Neil agreed.[31] Further, Bwye stated that in the likely event that the number of "closed" secret files increased as the archives service continued to develop, that "the assistance of a European female clerk for Secret Archives will have to be added to the cadre of the Archivist."[32] Bwye's wife later joined him working at the archive as a typist. It is unclear if his suggestion that a "European female clerk" join his staff was a general presumption about gendered and racialized roles within the archive or a tactic to pave the way for his wife's employment.[33]

In response to Lennox Boyd's circular, Bwye offered his own strategy for handling archival secrets, in which he placed himself squarely in the middle. By July of 1955, he suggested two administrative directives be issued as a "precaution against indiscriminate destruction" of governmental documents: (1) That departmental heads record their authorization for record destruction in writing and (2) that he as archivist should be consulted before any secret file was destroyed *and* whenever there was need for secure storage space for classified documents "considered to be of historical importance" and should therefore be "preserved as Archives."[34] Bwye's opinion challenged the guidance set by Lennox Boyd in three major ways. Firstly, he was unwilling to implement a policy of destruction without thorough review. Secondly, Bwye's first suggestion added to the workload of government offices in document destruction by requiring a written permission for each document destroyed. This directly contrasted Lennox Boyd's notion that destruction offered a less labor-intensive solution to departments and was intended to discourage destruction based on the appeal of its ease. Lastly, Bwye argued that the government archivist should play an instrumental role in mediating the fates

[31] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/6, Letter, Bwye to Neil, April 18, 1955. [32] Ibid.
[33] Chapter 3 will elaborate further on the role of female secretaries in Kenya in the systematic destruction, removal, and redaction of administrative files prior to political independence.
[34] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/6, Note, C. Bwye, July 1, 1955.

of classified documents in addition to their "originator." Bwye advocated an archivist's decisive and complete authority.

Bwye's second suggestion made a distinction between "Archives" and classified documents. This distinction became clearer in Bwye's *Draft of Rules and Regulations for the Management and Control of all Archives of the Central Government* distributed to all government departments in a 1956 circular.[35] The first sentence of the *Rules and Regulations* states that they "do not apply to CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS which should be dealt with strictly in accordance with existing directives regarding the REGRADING AND DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS and other SECURITY REGULATIONS."[36] The circular went on to define "archives" as such:

> The word "archives" is used in these Rules to cover all written matter (whether written by hand or mechanically produced), of whatever date, together with annexures thereto, in whatever form (rolls, volumes, files, single leaves or pieces) and upon whatever material (parchment, paper, cards, waxed surfaces, metal) provided that such material has accumulated naturally in the course of the conduct of affairs; and has been preserved for reference, either in the office where the accumulation occurred or some other place appointed for the purpose, by the persons responsible for the administration of the affairs in question.[37]

The definition aimed to be comprehensive and suggested a clear trajectory of administrative archives: Records are produced during the course of government administration, they accumulate, and they should be preserved as archives if they assist as reference in the future work of government. In his correspondence with Neil, however, Bwye touched on a grey area: classified documents which were of "historical importance" and thus *could be* slotted for archival preservation. Bwye suggested that he, as the government archivist, retain authority over such records, but this ambivalence was not resolved upon his suggestion and would endure in the decades that followed. At no point were criteria developed for what constituted "historical importance."

Though Bwye referred to the possibility of archival research, it was clear that he did not consider it to be an immediate concern in the early development of the service in Kenya. Presumably this was because of a vague sense of time lapse that would distinguish between the active use

[35] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/12, Archives Circular No. 1, February 6, 1956.
[36] Ibid. [37] Ibid.

by an administration of its archives and the much later act of historical research. Due to a fire at the Secretariat Office in 1939, much of the older administrative files had been destroyed. Bwye's work dealt with more current records. As Philip Curtin would go on to report in his 1960 "The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance," Kenya's Central Government Archives were "essentially concerned with preserving documents in current use."[38] As such, Bwye formulated a clear inaccessibility policy in his archival *Rules and Regulations* in stating, "the archives constitute the official records of the Central Government and, as such, are not open to public inspection."[39] In his work, Bwye drew on developments in archival management elsewhere. For example, he recommended the integration of the archives and the Central Government Library in order to standardize classification schema. He corresponded with the East African Literature Bureau regarding the implementation of the Dewey Decimal System in cataloguing the library and archives collections.[40] He drafted the *Rules and Regulations* in Kenya based on the UK's own Public Record Office's *Principles Governing the Elimination of Ephemeral or Unimportant Documents in Public or Private Archives* (1950) which had also closely informed the regulations in place in Ceylon, where Bwye had trained.[41] Further, Bwye kept up to date regarding the developments of the emergent profession and UK regulatory frameworks for government archives. In 1952, a committee formed in England under the leadership of James Grigg, Britain's Secretary of State for War 1942–45, in order to design an archival appraisal system to deal with the mass of paperwork produced by the two world wars.[42] The system stated how a body of records should be evaluated for preservation and under what circumstances they could be accessed by the public. Bwye followed the Grigg Committee as closely as was possible from Nairobi. In doing so, the questions surrounding access became harder to ignore.

[38] Philip Curtin, "The Archives of Tropical Africa: A Reconnaissance," *The Journal of African History* 1, no. 1 (1960): 139.
[39] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/12, Archives Circular No. 1, No. 8 "Inspection of Records," February 6, 1956.
[40] KNA, CG Lib 6, Correspondence between C. Bwye and Leslie Fox, November 1956.
[41] Public Record Office (UK), *Principles Governing the Elimination of Ephemeral or Unimportant Documents in Public or Private Archives* (London: PRO, 1950).
[42] Shepherd, *Archives and Archivists*, pp. 43–64.

The Grigg Committee and their publication, "Report of the Committee on Departmental Records" (1954), responded to the issue of British administrations cramped with paperwork.[43] The postwar period saw not only a boom in paperwork but also a refining of the UK government's commitment to secrecy. UK Cabinet Secretary during the Second World War, Sir Edward Bridges, advised the Prime Minister in May 1946 that "information whose disclosure would be injurious to us in our relations with other nations, including information which would be of value to a potential enemy" should be restricted.[44] The protection of information in wartime paired with what historian David Vincent describes as a UK governmental "tendency to regard openness as an issue of efficiency and the avoidance of embarrassment rather than democracy and the interests of citizens" provided a consequential context for the Grigg Committee's final report.[45] Beyond providing a schedule for the review and destruction and/or preservation of governmental documents, the Grigg Report stipulated how and when government departments would be required to release their documents to the Public Record Office, where they would be accessible to a general public.

The report resulted in the Public Records Act of 1958, the key piece of twentieth-century legislation codifying the, albeit limited, right of the UK public to access government records. Its limitations were powerful. Guided by a policy whereby departmental records slotted for preservation should enter the public after the passage of fifty years, the act allowed for exceptions "if it was deemed to breach undertakings to confidentiality, if it was thought likely to cause distress to private individuals, or if it merely seemed against the public interest to do so."[46] Documents related to intelligence or defense matters were also exempt from publication. Vincent emphasizes that secrecy in this case was motivated not only by so-called security concerns but also in order to avoid the humiliation of confidential matters exposed to the public for scrutiny. The Grigg Committee carried a different tune about their work, proclaiming, "We believe that the making of

[43] See Rupert Jarvis, "The Grigg Report," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 1, no. 1 (1955): 10–13.
[44] As quoted in Cobain, *History Thieves*, p. xi.
[45] David Vincent, *The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832–1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 217.
[46] Ibid., p. 217.

adequate arrangements for the preservation of its records is an inescapable duty of the government of a civilised state."[47] It was not the first time that British officials invoked civilization and recordkeeping. In 1952, in the opening remarks of the trial against those who the British colonial government and White settlers identified as the political leadership of the anticolonial movement in Kenya, Deputy Public Prosecutor Anthony Somerhough opened the case on behalf of the Crown: "the Crown cannot bind themselves to any particular place in the Colony where this society was managed. The Society is Mau Mau. It is a Society which has no records."[48] It was therefore not just the written word and its correspondence to a benevolent form of rule by law that Britain claimed justified its empire, but it was the ability to meaningfully organize and provide access to its own documents that made a state civilized, in what Christopher Bayly calls the "information order."[49] By this measure, the story which ensued in Kenya and across other British colonies shows how the UK government contradicted its civilizing claim.

In contrast to Bwye, a civil servant who identified with the young archival profession, the members of Grigg's committee had military, administrative, legal, and scholarly backgrounds. Yet, the committee was authorized in setting the course for UK governmental records' fate and assigning the significance of doing so. Though an attachment to official secrecy was maintained through the exceptions available to administrative departments to withhold records according to flexible criteria, the Public Records Act was the first piece of legislation which announced a legal requirement and commitment to provide a UK general public view into the past work of government. Derek Charman, an English archivist who would later be stationed in Nairobi, summarized the tension between official secrecy and archival access as follows:

[47] Jarvis, "The Grigg Report," p. 10.
[48] As quoted in Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p. 41.
[49] Bayly offers "information order" as a field of investigation in order to examine systems of information collection and distribution and specifically applies it in the case of British India to draw attention to the ways in which colonial states struggled to establish intelligence systems in societies they were both ignorant of and trying to conquer. Christopher Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1790–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

it is also necessary to recognize the element of 'privilege' which is an [*sic*] essential to the work of a Civil Servant, which entitles him to speak his mind freely on the problems of the day – even on paper and, indeed, without such freedom of expression, government would hardly be an effective force. The solution to the problem therefore lies in a compromise between these two points of view which are bound, to some extent, to be in conflict.[50]

The Kenyan Colonial Government solved this problem by gatekeeping access to their archives on an ad hoc basis. Though Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox Boyd, informed colonial governments that they should, wherever possible, "conform to the general rules governing access to Colonial Office records in the United Kingdom," he left room for the chance that some colonial governments might find it "not possible [...] to bring the 'fifty year rule' into force."[51] However, Lennox Boyd went further to remind colonial governments that his express permission was required before members of the public view any official documents less than fifty years old. The colonial commitment to the Public Records Act's motion toward opening up accessibility was flimsy in contrast to Lennox Boyd's firm commitment to his office's control over colonial records.

Accessing Kenya's Archives

Scholarly interest in using colonial archives grew alongside the internal debates concerning their access. In July 1957, the Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences distributed a questionnaire, prepared by Central African Archives to be discussed in August at a meeting of the Scientific Council for Africa in Salisbury.[52] The arrangements were enabled by the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara. The questionnaire was addressed to twenty-seven

[50] KNA, KNA 1/128, Memo, Charman to P.S./P.M.O. "Access to Government Records," October 21, 1963.
[51] KNA, KNA 1/128, Alan Lennox Boyd, Circular No. 1345, December 12, 1958.
[52] The Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences, based in Paris, held its first meeting in 1955 and cooperated with the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara and the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara in order to organize meetings of specialists, create inter-African centers, and to issue an annual bulletin. Its purpose was to promote "the application of science to the solution of Africa's problems." N.N., "Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences," *International Social Science Bulletin* 8, no. 3 (1956): 515–16.

archival services across Africa. The questionnaire asked about the hierarchical structure of archival services and their relations to government. It asked questions related to the materials collected at the archives, including what languages they were in and what dates they covered. It had a section regarding access policies and restrictions for research. Finally, the questionnaire raised the idea of inter-African exchange among archival services such as joint-publications and sharing technical facilities such as photographic and repairs units. The questionnaire demonstrates the global reach of interest by European researchers in the organization and accessibility of administrative archives across Africa and their desire to formalize a research and archives network on the continent.[53]

The Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences was situated in the prism of rationalizing European conquest in the African continent. In addition to surveying archival services, it coordinated, at times in direct cooperation with colonial governments, awareness and support of cartography projects, demography research, and archaeological study.[54] Their London meetings contributed to the ways in which the "colonial state imagined its dominion."[55] Benedict Anderson argues that mapping and demography were the "paradigm which both administrative and military operations worked within and served."[56] The intentions of individual scholars are partially unknowable, and there are important differences between commissioned and independent scholarship.[57] Here, however, it is important to show how British colonial governments used research to explain and justify their administration, especially during the Emergency. For example, the Emergency Committee requested J. C. Carothers, a psychiatrist residing in Portsmouth who had previously directed Nairobi's Mathare Hospital, to write a report on Mau Mau.[58] In the request, Carothers

[53] KNA, ARC (CGO) 1/31, Questionnaire on Archival Resources in Africa South of the Sahara, July 6, 1957.
[54] "Fifth Meeting of the Inter-African Committee on Social Sciences 31 March 1 April 1958," *Africa* 28, no. 3 July (1958): 272–73.
[55] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016), p. 164.
[56] Ibid., 174.
[57] Elements of independent historical scholarship will be discussed in Chapter 3.
[58] Governor Baring set up the Emergency Committee as the central decision-making body during the Emergency under his chairmanship and including the chief secretary, members for finance and agriculture, the East Africa Command,

was cautioned against making his visit to and research in Kenya publicly known.[59] Of Carothers's eventual report "The Psychology of Mau Mau" (1954), Jock McCulloch writes it is "the only study of its kind commissioned by a colonial government to be written by a psychiatrist, [it] represented something of a landmark in the history of ethnopsychiatry."[60] The British colonial government, through commissioned studies, sought to establish a body of reference to legitimize its Emergency. Eventually, this resulted in the only instance in which a "researcher," in this case a British colonial government propagandist, had unfettered access to the records that would later form the "migrated archives." Somewhat paradoxically, these studies produced records of their own, some of which were also evacuated to London prior to independence, creating a clear trail of the lengths to which the colonial administration went in order to justify its dirty war.

In addition to Carother's report, Chief Secretary Turnbull oversaw the commissioning of several other pseudo-scientific endeavors in the course of the Emergency. For example, in 1954 a Sociological Committee formed under the Commissioner for Community Development in order to further explain the Mau Mau phenomenon according to a colonial ethos. The original officer tasked with carrying out the committee's work, Mr. F. R. Wilson was shortly after assigned as Staff Officer for the planning of Operation Anvil, an "ambitious operation to reclaim full colonial control over Nairobi by purging the city of nearly all Kikuyu living within its limits."[61] Nairobi was sealed during the operation, prohibiting movement in or out of the city. The colonial government oversaw the detention/relocation of at least 50,000 people in the weeks of the action. The double function of Wilson's research was to construct a typology explaining who the anticolonial enemies to the British colonial government were and then to use the typology to design military action. In this way, research was an instrument in the efforts to discipline Kenyan populations to

the GOC, Director of Operations, and Michael Blundell, a farmer and member of the Legislative Council.

[59] Jock McCulloch, *Colonial Psychiatry and "The African Mind"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 67.

[60] Ibid., p. 67.

[61] TNA, FCO 141/6579, Memo, "Inquiry Into the Causes and Methods of Mau Mau," from "S/D" to Chief Secretary, Minister of African Affairs, Minister of Defence, December 7, 1954; Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, p. 121.

eliminate resistance to colonial rule. To this point, Turnbull's office ordered a statistical analysis of the background of Mau Mau detainees, such us where they were born, elements of their upbringing, and their criminal records. The Special Branch was instructed to collect information on all detained peoples as well as those of higher interest.[62] The police were also charged with considering what were the root causes and methods of Mau Mau as a part of their Emergency duties. As critiques against the Kenyan Colonial Government accumulated, the administration grew more and more interested in providing an explanation of the Emergency that diluted their own culpability.[63]

As a result of his participation in the sociological inquiry in 1954, Sidney Fazan, former Kiambu District Commissioner, proposed a more extensive project to be put before the War Council or Secretary of State to conclusively explain the Mau Mau problem. His proposal, heard and discussed by Turnbull's office and the Ministries for African Affairs and Defense, aimed to synthesize all previous reports and "fill in any gaps there might be." He offered himself to Turnbull as the man for the job on account of his "flair for patient analysis and a wide background of experience." Historian David Anderson describes Fazan as "among the more academically inclined of Kenya's colonial officers."[64] However, Turnbull had his reservations. Fazan was known within the upper echelon of administration to be "somewhat inflexible," and the administration feared that his industrious approach to research, or his "unrelenting ... pursuit of information," would interfere with the work of other, busier officers.[65]

As valuable as such a report would be to the administration, Turnbull was still in the center of orchestrating the active military and intelligence operations of the Emergency. By way of solution, Turnbull suggested that Fazan's work be limited to documentary evidence rather than informational interviews and as such that he be

[62] TNA, FCO 141/6579, Memo, "Inquiry into the Causes and Methods of Mau Mau," from "S/D" to Chief Secretary, Minister of African Affairs, Minister of Defence, December 7, 1954.

[63] These critiques spanned different political circles across the globe, but the debates within British Parliament, spurred especially by Labour MPs Barbara Castle and Fenner Brockway, placed a great deal of pressure on the British colonial government in Kenya to justify/conceal its use of violence and detention.

[64] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, p. 143.

[65] TNA, FCO 141/6579, Memo, "S/D" to Chief Secretary, Ministry of African Affairs, Ministry of Defence, December 7, 1954.

granted privileged access to secret documents. Fazan would prepare two reports — one fit for distribution among the Legislative Council and another secret report accessible only to the governor. Turnbull suggested that no one within the Kenyan administration should be aware of the extent of Fazan's task except for the governor and ministers for African Affairs and Defence. In something of an informational short-circuit, Fazan was meant to use intelligence reports to piece together an explanation of Mau Mau. This meant repurposing colonial misperceptions to explain the advent of Mau Mau. Without naming it as such, Fazan's report should have functioned to exonerate the British colonial government. Should the British colonial government have truly wished to understand the causes of Mau Mau, they might only have noted the name many so-called Mau Mau organized themselves under, the Land and Freedom Army. However, to do that would mean directing analysis at the White Highlands, the heartland of colonial expropriation. Sometime between December 1954 and October 1955, Turnbull changed his mind that it was "not the opportune time for such an inquiry," perhaps out of fear that Fazan's presence would disturb the work of an administration in the throes of war and certainly out of fear that such a report could be "most embarrassing to the Government."[66] These aims, controlling secrecy and avoiding "embarrassment," help to explain the background to the logic that would guide the record removal exercise a few years following, wherein the strategic withdrawal of certain evidence formed a broader propaganda strategy that served both reputational and political ends for the UK.

Fazan's proposed research had several consequences, even though his report never materialized. For example, it prompted the Minister for Defence to address other ministries across the colony regarding the preservation of their files. In April 1955, E. W. M. Magor, Secretary of Defence, wrote that "all those collecting material on Mau Mau, or sifting facts, including G. H. Q. Intelligence, should be asked to continue to do so … [and] to preserve the material."[67] Additionally, the concerns of settlers and their demands for an explanation from

[66] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Legislative Council, "Colony and Protectorate of Kenya – Questions: Legislative Council," October 20, 1955.

[67] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Letter, Magor to Secretary for African Affairs, Secretary for Community Development, and the Director of Intelligence & Security, April 5, 1955.

government about what they perceived as a neglectful response persisted. Some settlers felt that such an inquiry "would help our name abroad" and that its absence would indicate to those back in England that the British colonial government in Kenya "had something to hide."[68] However, Governor Baring wrote to Turnbull in May 1956 that "most of the [settlers] were … 'scared stiff' of the whole idea" of the inquiry because "they foresaw great embarrassment and difficulty in the future if the investigation indicated that one of the chief causes of Mau Mau was the White Highlands."[69] The Government could not afford silence. In November 1955, Barbara Castle of the Labour Party had visited Kenya and publicly accused the British colonial government of torture.[70] Six months later, Eileen Fletcher's accusations of torture in detention centers in Kenya were published.[71] As historian Joanna Lewis demonstrates, the popular press in Britain ran stories on the Emergency in Kenya that critiqued the use of "strong-arm tactics in the face of a crisis that had political and economic roots."[72] The British colonial government faced a crisis of legitimacy from almost all sides. Only some in colonial governments and a critical number of settlers seemed unmoved by the accusations of malpractice. For some, the Kenyan case was even exemplary. For example, the Secretary of State for the Colonies encouraged the idea of an inquiry into Mau Mau in order to "review the more important aspects of the Emergency in Kenya, so that consideration maybe given to the manner in which this experience can most usefully be communicated to other Colonial territories."[73] The South African government requested "expert witness" statements from the Kenyan colonial government regarding the manifestation of Mau Mau in order to assist in their own campaigns against

[68] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Note, "H" to Chief Secretary, October 26, 1955.
[69] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Note, Acting Governor to Chief Secretary, May 17, 1956.
[70] Castle's trip was funded by *The Daily Mirror*, which published reports of her observations. See Robert Gildea, *Empires of the Mind: The Colonial Past and the Politics of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 68–96.
[71] Fletcher, *Truth about Kenya*.
[72] Joanna Lewis, "Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Mau Mau: The British Popular Press and the Demoralization of Empire," in *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, p. 246.
[73] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Letter from Magor to Chief of Staff, East Africa Command, "Review of the Emergency in Kenya," December 12, 1957.

trade union activism.[74] Amid these various European concerns and interests, Turnbull attempted to compromise.

Rather than launch a public inquiry under the official Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance, which would fall beyond colonial governmental control and invite outside scrutiny, Turnbull's administration settled on a government-sponsored study.[75] Turnbull was able to convince the more boisterous members of the Legislative Council, such as the group captain L. R. Briggs, that an inquiry involving an external reviewer from the UK might reveal that "a prime cause of discontent leading to Mau Mau was the existence of White Settlement."[76] In 1956, Turnbull oversaw a discussion on designing an inquiry into the origin, methods, and growth of Mau Mau in order to "consider if deficiencies in the Government machine permitted the movement to develop, and, if so, whether these have been remedied."[77] The governor would appoint a "suitably qualified" person to conduct a "factual historical examination."[78] The point of the study, Turnbull clarified, would not be to "allocate responsibility for anything done, or not done, before the Emergency, or during the Emergency." Finally, Turnbull explained that it was "the intention of the Government that the report should be in a form which could properly be published," but that if the appointed author had access to secret documents then, "in the public interest, part of the report would have to be witheld [*sic*] from publication."[79] In contrast to the stated aim of the report, to examine the "deficiencies in the Government machine," Turnbull listed seventeen considerations the report should address.[80] All but two regarded so-called Mau Mau activity rather than the work of the colonial government. For example, Turnbull ordered that the report explain the "terrorist methods," "extent of casualties inflicted by Mau Mau," and the "relationship between the terrorist organization and the passive

[74] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Letter to Chief Secretary from A. S.1., January 25, 1958.
[75] For example, a secret note to the Governor regarding who should be responsible for the enquiry stated, "We have not consulted the [Colonial Office] and, in my opinion, we should be ill advised to do so. The Secretary of State's nominee might well be quite unsuitable, and it would be difficult for us to refuse to accept him." TNA, FCO 141/6415, File note to Governor, May 25, 1956.
[76] TNA, FCO 141/6415, "Inquiry into the Origin etc., of Mau Mau – Memorandum by the Minister for Defence," February 27, 1956.
[77] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Memorandum, "Inquiry into the Origins, Methods and Growth of Mau Mau," Richard Turnbull, June 1957.
[78] Ibid. [79] Ibid. [80] Ibid.

wing."[81] Such an official history was aimed to hide secrets from a public audience and instead provide them with a heavily curated account of the Emergency. To borrow from Aldrich, this form of historical writing was a "mixture of concession and control."[82]

The question of authorship remained. Who could be trusted with this narrative exercise in contradictions? The challenge required the mental agility to protect White settlers from any implication of culpability and demonstrate the sufficiency of the colonial government on the one hand, and on the other explain an anticolonial movement that denounced both land dispossession and the inhumane treatment by and political exclusion from the government. Turnbull avoided involving the Colonial Office in London with the matter, suggesting that "the Secretary of State's nominee might well be quite unsuitable, and it would be difficult for us to refuse to accept him."[83] By June 1957, Turnbull had decided on the man for the job. Thomas Neil, co-architect of the Central Government Archives and assistant to Turnbull, was tasked with coordinating the appointment of Franklin D. Corfield to the role of official inquirer into the origins and growth of Mau Mau. Educated at Cranleigh School and Exeter College, Oxford, Corfield joined the Sudan Political Service in 1925. He worked in Palestine (1938–40) and Ethiopia, then Abyssinia (1940–41), had a brief stint in Nairobi on the staff of Occupied Enemy Territory Administration before returning to Sudan in 1942 where he served as governor of Upper Nile and Khartoum Provinces. He relocated to Kenya in 1954.[84] Corfield understood the contradiction he was meant to explain. He intended to stress

> the very great disabilities under which all Colonial Governments had to function in an age which had become "obsessed" with human rights [... while] Colonial Governments [had] been 'caught in the ever present struggle ... to resolve the dilemma of being autocratic abroad and democratic at home.[85]

[81] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Memorandum, "Inquiry into the Origins, Methods and Growth of Mau Mau," Richard Turnbull, June 1957.
[82] Aldrich, "Policing the Past," p. 923.
[83] TNA, FCO 141/6415, File note, Turnbull to "Y.E. – Ref: Y.E.'s minutes at (63) and (64)," May 25, 1956.
[84] TNA, FCO 141/6415, untitled biography of Mr. F. D. Corfield signed by P. M. Renison (Governor), April 11, 1960.
[85] TNA, FCO 141/6577, Letter, Corfield to Baring, January 19, 1959.

He stated the aim of the study "to restore public confidence which was so badly shaken."[86] Corfield passed the bona fide test. Within his remit as author of the Mau Mau study, he was "given full access to Government documents."[87] Corfield is the only person to have ever had such complete access to Kenya's classified colonial records. In June 1957, Turnbull clarified that Corfield should have access to "all Government records bearing on the subject." These included Administration and Police reports, Ministry records, Executive Council papers, the records of Special Branch, intelligence reports, and Government House records.[88] Furthermore, Corfield's use of such documents resulted in their collation and organization. Combined, the sensitivity of the records he viewed and their organization as a result of his use, Corfield's report formed its own archive that was later specifically referred to by the UK Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in instructions to remove dangerous, yet historically significant, documents from Kenya before independence (Chapter 5).

Corfield framed his report in ways that discredited anticolonial agitators, excused the colonial government from the accusations of excessive force, and developed a conspiratorial narrative on the structure and aims of Mau Mau. Corfield's narrative of Mau Mau's past was tightly linked to the political needs of his administration. Like Carothers, Corfield framed the period of anticolonial violence as an epidemic. He wrote, "the disease of Mau Mau broke out with devastating suddenness, the cure has had to be most drastic [. . .] the history of the cure is well documented by an immense volume of factual reports [. . .] the important point is to ensure that this disease does not break out again."[89] This form of propaganda pathologized anticolonial insurrection rather than acknowledge the terms of its dissent (restoration of lands and political emancipation). By doing so, Corfield could excuse the systematic use of violence, population controls, forced labor, and detention camps as the necessary measures to combat an irrational, bestial disease.

Thomas Neil was responsible for coordinating the particulars of Corfield's project, including overseeing the collation of relevant

[86] TNA, FCO 141/6576, Department of Information, Draft Press Office Handout, "Government Enquiry into Origin and Growth of Mau Mau," April 1958.
[87] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Memorandum, "Inquiry into the Origins, Methods and Growth of Mau Mau," Richard Turnbull, June 1957.
[88] Ibid. [89] Ibid.

administrative files across the colony for his perusal. In 1957, Neil informed the Ministry of African Affairs that they should "get on with the collation of material without delay."[90] In addition to compiling all recorded data on the Emergency, Neil ordered that "such papers [. . .] be listed, with a brief note of their contents for Mr. Corfield's information."[91] The instructions were archival in their effect, producing a descriptive index of all known records across Kenyan administration, at every level of classification, that had to do with government activity during the Emergency period. Corfield used these documents to piece together statistical representations of fatal violence during the Emergency. These figures, as pointed out by Josiah Kariuki in his memoir, "excluded those who were executed in prisons or died in detention camps."[92] Corfield had many critics at the time of his research. For example, Mr. Travadi, a member of the Kenya Legislative Council, argued that Corfield's inquiry was "like a white man producing a white document, defending white men and whitewashing everything for the white men."[93]

Travadi's remarks pointed to a fundamental feature of the colonial government's information order: racialized cover-ups. Narrative control was at the core of Britain's "end of empire" political strategy. Focused on avoiding embarrassment, which was determined according to the success of anticolonial resistance and the ways it laid bare both the hypocrisies and fragilities of the British Empire, the Colonial Office embraced secrecy and propaganda in an attempt to reassure the hearts and minds of Parliament, British voters, and the international order that the nation and its empire were not slipping from supremacy. Covering up the extent of the Emergency period in Kenya became a dominant concern for the administration. Corfield's report was punctuated by the 1959 Hola massacre and the elaborate attempts by the colonial government, detention camp officers, and medical officials to downplay and camouflage the event as an accident. So-called "hard-core" Mau Mau were imprisoned at Hola camp, where British officials ordered, and African guards supervised, punitive manual labor. As a form of resistance, many detainees refused or sabotaged their work.

[90] TNA, FCO 141/6576, Letter, C. F. Atikins to Provincial Commissioners, July 11, 1957.
[91] Ibid. [92] Kariuki, *"Mau Mau" Detainee*, p. 65.
[93] TNA, FCO 141/6540, Kenya Legislative Council, Debate on the Corfield Report, p. 724, June 10, 1960.

Enraged by the success of detainees' "idleness," the commanding officer of Hola designed and executed an attack in order to enforce "immediate obedience," explicitly taking the "risk of someone getting hurt or killed."[94] On March 3, 1959, guards clubbed detainees resulting in the deaths of eleven people and serious, permanent injuries of at least seventy-seven others. Two days later, the Kenya government issued a statement that "the deaths occurred after they had drunk water from a water cart which was used by all members of the working party and by their guards."[95] The emphasis on water consumption continued in local reporting over the next week, presumably to pave the way for a cause of death explanation. The District Officer at Kiamba went so far as to suggest that a detainee was responsible for the carnage, stating that the individual was "considered to be a person who would take any opportunity of causing embarrassment to Government."[96] The British colonial government, however, was well aware that the camp commandant was guilty.

On March 13, 1959, Governor Baring wrote a secret note to the several ministers, including those of African Affairs and Defense, stating that it appeared that "methods adopted to control [Hola detainees] on the 3rd of March were at fault."[97] The attempts to cover up the Hola massacre could not conceal evidence of wrongdoing in court, nor could they stymie the growing renouncement by the British public of the colonial presence in Kenya.[98] Soon after, the British colonial government would go to great lengths to remove and conceal all evidence of their activity in the Emergency so that neither a Kenyan

[94] TNA, FCO 141/5658, Note, Commissioner for Prisons to Ministry of Defence, February 17, 1959. Exactly this note was raised by Mr. Dingle Foot (MP Ipswich) in the House of Commons, illustrating a more harrowing point that while the documentation has been made less available through the concealment of the "migrated archives," it was well known at the time, raising the issue that the scandal of the "migrated archives" is not in what they reveal for the first time but the slowness of justice.

[95] As reported in "Ten Die at Tana River Camp," *East African Standard*, March 5, 1959.

[96] TNA, FCO 141/5658, Letter, Newton to District Commissioner (Kiambu), March 6, 1959.

[97] FCO 141/5658, Letter, Baring to M.D., M.A.A., M.A.R.W., and M.F.D., March 13, 1959.

[98] Kate Bruce-Lockhart, "The 'Truth' about Kenya: Connection and Contestation in the 1956 Kamiti Controversy," *Journal of World History* 26, no. 4 (2015): 838.

nor a UK public could obtain documentary support for allegations against the British colonial government during the Emergency. By 1961, Clare Bwye was removed from his post as archivist. Instead, Thomas Neil, who had developed an unparalleled expertise in the extent, location, and contents of confidential administrative records that dealt with the Emergency through his coordination of Corfield's research, assumed responsibility for government documents. Specifically, Neil was responsible for coordinating the "security" of secret records facing impending independence. This included the consolidation of secret documents from across the colony to the Governor's office in Nairobi for a review process to determine if they would be destroyed or evacuated to London. By September 1961, Neil commenced the comprehensive destruction process of secret records in Nairobi, which was meant to be a secret in and of itself. However, it received attention in local and international press.[99] One such article, "Bonfire of Documents: Kenya Burning Secret Papers," commented, "the extent of the destruction is causing concern ... partly based on a feeling among some historians [...] that Mr. F. D. Corfield, the only writer to have been given a free run of all these documents may not have made the best historical use of them."[100] The article featured in *The Guardian*, drumming up further concern by historians and politicians abroad. Sanger, the article's author, had been tipped off by Robert Rotberg during their overlap in Nairobi.[101]

Controlling access to administrative records was an important concern to the Kenyan colonial government on the eve of independence. Restricting the use of official records was a way, albeit a futile one, to curtail critique of either the White settlers or the government in the colonial situation at the peak of anticolonial resistance to avoid

[99] For example: Clyde Sanger, "Bonfire of Documents: Kenya Burning Secret Papers," *The Guardian*, September 3, 1961 and in the *East African Standard*, September 7, 1961 as quoted by Musila Musembi, *Archives Management: The Kenyan Experience*, 1985.

[100] Sanger, "Bonfire of Documents," September 4, 1961

[101] According to Tom Neil in TNA, FCO 141/6971, File note to Chief Secretary, October 5, 1961. In 1965, Rotberg published *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia 1873–1964* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) wherein he wrote, "when the British withdrew from their African colonies they characteristically destroyed a vast array of historically valuable material. In Kenya, sources on the emergency, and on recent history in general, fueled bonfires." pp. 325–26.

embarrassment. By looking at the ways in which archival access was organized and regulated, this chapter has historicized the production of *official* historical narrative as a process of both secret-keeping and mythmaking. As the Colonial Office in London provided instructions to the British colonial government in Kenya regarding which records to ship back, special attention was paid to all those that Corfield consulted for their "historical value." By April 1960, four months after the official end to the Emergency, Kenya's governor and UK Secretary of State corresponded whether the publication of Corfield's propaganda was wise, especially due to the governor's "great emphasis on the need to forget the past and build for the future."[102] This strategy, to discard the Emergency into a past not spoken of, corresponded with the forthcoming exercise of record removal. The hesitation to publish Corfield's report, and if so, to what extent, was also due to British uncertainty over how politics would unfold in Kenya upon independence. The Corfield report discredited Kenyatta, who by May 1960 had been nominated president of the Kenya African National Union while in exile at Lodwar. The British colonial government's pause over publishing the Corfield report was in part due to its indecision whether to release Kenyatta from detention, which had become a cause of international concern. The British colonial government pursued curation vis-à-vis strategic publication and concealment as a way to control not only the rendering of the recent colonial past but also the unfolding of the imminent political future.

[102] TNA, FCO 141/6415, Decyphered telegram, Secretary of State to Renison (Governor), April 14, 1960. The hesitation to publish Corfield's report, and if so, to what extent, was due to the British colonial government's uncertainty whether Kenyatta and the Kenya Africa Union were, in fact, the leadership of Mau Mau, as had been charged upon Kenyatta's detention order. This uncertainty was of particular relevance since the colonial administration in Kenya and the Colonial Office at Whitehall were in the midst of constitutional negotiations.