



Reporting oppression: mapping racial prejudice in *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity*, 1888–1895

Caroline Bressey

Department of Geography, University College London, Pearson Building, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, UK

Abstract

This paper presents a close reading of the reports of racial oppression that appeared in issues of two periodicals, *Anti-Caste* and its successor *Fraternity*, between 1888 and 1895. Edited in Street, Somerset, these periodicals created an extensive political geographical imagination by mapping international cases of racial prejudice. Although critical of the British empire, neither *Anti-Caste* nor *Fraternity* demanded the destruction of the British empire. In a tactic similar to that used by early Pan-Africanists, the papers' narratives desired an end to the expansion of the British empire and an increase in the respect for and conditions of those who were ruled 'under the British Flag'. However, *Anti-Caste's* focus upon racial inequality across the United States as well as the British empire enabled it to create a distinctive critique of racial prejudice across the English-speaking world. Its criticism of the imperial project combined with support for human brotherhood allowed the paper to develop a framework for debates on racial prejudice that drew together criticisms of labour laws in India, the removal of people from their lands in Southern Africa, the racial segregation of public transport in the United States and the restriction of Chinese labour in Australia.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Race; Racial prejudice; Imperialism; Empire; Nineteenth century; Publishing

It is pitiful to see how by this system of *caste* the careers of many of our fellow creatures are straitened, their cultivation and growth in civilisation checked, their most honourable aspirations thwarted, their liberties in a thousand ways abridged.

Anti-Caste, 1888¹

It is as though the British Empire is not large enough; our conduct in Africa is one perpetual series of war and bloodshed. First West, then East and now South Africans fall prey to our insatiable greed.

Fraternity, 1893²

Anti-Caste was a small magazine first published in England in March 1888 by the English activist Catherine Impey. Appearing monthly, the periodical explored and debated geographies of racial prejudice in order to articulate an early form of the politics of anti-racism. With increasing support for *Anti-Caste's* campaign work, stimulated by public tours of England and Scotland by the African-

American journalist Ida B. Wells in 1893, *Anti-Caste* changed its name and scope, becoming *Fraternity*. Both papers focused on the cruelties and violence of racial prejudice, what *Anti-Caste's* editor described as 'colour caste', across the British Empire and in the United States. Debates on the 'right relations' between people divided by ideologies of race were not begun by *Anti-Caste*. Long preceding its publication, the abolition movement had debated ideas of 'brotherhood' from its inception in the eighteenth century. *Anti-Caste* sought to promote a new narrative on issues of equality. The magazine acknowledged its inheritance from the anti-slavery movement and intended to include notices and brief summaries of the proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Society. However, as Midgley has emphasised, the anti-slavery movement was not an anti-imperial movement.³ In any case, *Anti-Caste's* primary concern was not with slavery nor 'legalised oppression', but with 'social oppression', a form of prejudice that could 'sanction cruelties and disabilities' beyond the reach of legal redress and was able to re-

E-mail address: c.bressey@ucl.ac.uk

¹ *Anti-Caste* (March 1888) 1.

² *Fraternity* (December 1893) 1.

³ C. Midgley, Bringing the empire home: women activists in imperial Britain, 1790s–1930s, 230–250, in: C. Hall, S. Rose (Eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge, 2006.

establish and maintain 'legislative encroachments on the primary rights of citizenship'.⁴

Building on Porter's 1968 account of *Critics of Empire*, numerous historians have sought to examine the nature of imperial critiques and their authors' relationship to 'anti-imperialist' sentiment and movements.⁵ As both Burton and Claeys have noted, many authors mark the Anglo-Boer conflict between 1899 and 1902 as the moment reformers began to develop more systematic critical engagements with imperialism.⁶ Yet there is a 'back story about empire and progressive politics that remains to be told'.⁷ Although they may not strictly meet definitions of anti-imperialism applied to radicals of the twentieth century, a wide variety of Victorian liberals, socialists, positivists and nationalists engaged in critical discussions about the existence and expansion of the British empire from within the United Kingdom.⁸ These men and women wrestled with debates over 'race' and imperial expansion and their discussions reflected a variety of opinions and policies on how British imperial power might be curtailed. Many of these ideas came from collaborative politics, though not all sought to redefine social or political equality. For example, Lynch argues that between 1840 and 1875 anti-imperialism became an important theme within Irish nationalism, but admits this form of anti-imperialism had a complex relationship with anti-racism.⁹ While Thomas Davis argued that imperialists were driven by a lust for blood, power and plunder (arguments later to be stressed in *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity*) and that justice and pity knew 'no distinctions of clime, or race' (for an article in his paper *The Nation* in 1842), his ideas were formed through ideas of nationhood.¹⁰ Although criticised for it by other Irish nationalists, John Mitchel was able to argue for Irish nationalism and against British imperialism, yet remain a staunch supporter of slavery in the United States.¹¹

Later in the nineteenth century Indian nationalists were often sympathetic to Irish Home Rule and O'Malley illustrates moments of collaboration between the two groups during this and subsequent periods.¹² The work undertaken by activists Alfred Webb and Dadabhai Naoroji who formed a close friendship and maintained political ties of 'cosmopolitan nationalism' illustrates how effective these connections proved in the 1890s.¹³ It is within this context of early progressive politics that *Anti-Caste* was established. In the same year that *Anti-Caste* began publication, William Digby founded the Indian and Political General Agency in London in

collaboration with the Indian National Congress in order to raise grievances from India in the British press and Parliament.¹⁴ Through *Anti-Caste* Impey sought to challenge the 'Colour Line' that was being drawn out in both the United States and the 'settler colonies'. However, though critical of imperial expansion, neither *Anti-Caste* nor *Fraternity* demanded the immediate dismantling of the British empire. In a tactic similar to that used by early Pan-Africanists, the papers' narrative desired an end to the expansion of the British empire, and an increase in the respect for and conditions of those who were unfortunate enough to be ruled 'Under the British Flag'.¹⁵

The politics of *Anti-Caste* were created and maintained through its monthly publication, and like the periodicals of the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines' Protection Society (APS), *Anti-Caste* was the main vehicle used to disseminate Impey's distinctive contribution to what Mitcham identifies as a 'humanitarian complex'.¹⁶ Mitcham presents the Anti-Slavery society and the APS as two nodes within a larger network of organisations formed in the course of the nineteenth century to 'protect' or speak for particular social groups. Organisations within the 'humanitarian complex' were linked through overlapping memberships, flows of people and correspondence. *Anti-Caste* was linked to both the Anti-Slavery Society and the APS, but differed in one key respect: it did not seek to 'protect' or 'speak for' a particular social group. Impey aimed for *Anti-Caste* not to act as a space of mediation between 'native' people and imperial power, but to be a place where a conversation 'with the Negro rather than talking about the Negro' could take place.¹⁷

However, as Mitcham argues, emphasising the overlapping connections between social movements can illuminate interconnections between black and white activists. Impey insisted, as outlined below, that an international 'anti-caste' or 'emancipation' movement that united Indian, African, European and American activists across national and 'racial' boundaries was required to combat rising racism. Examining interconnections can also reveal where theoretical and practical politics between groups within the 'humanitarian complex' diverged. Impey took a keen interest in the work of the APS and her family were committed subscribers of an organisation whose members placed themselves at odds with mainstream opinion.¹⁸ Over time, however, Impey did not find the kind of political reflection she thought was needed in the *Aborigines' Friend*. She established *Anti-Caste* because 'no one else was

⁴ *Appeal Concerning the Treatment of Coloured Races*, MSS Brit Emp S. 20 E5/8, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House, University of Oxford (hereafter RHO).

⁵ B. Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radicals and the Imperial Challenge*, London, 2008 (first published 1968). An overview of contributions to the field can be found in S. Howe (Ed.), *New Imperial History Reader*, London, 2008.

⁶ A. Burton, New narratives of imperial politics in the nineteenth century, in: C. Hall, S. Rose (Eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge, 2006, 212–229; G. Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850–1920*, Cambridge, 2010.

⁷ Burton, New narratives of imperial politics in the nineteenth century (note 6), 120.

⁸ For an examination of this historiography and examples of actors from the Peace Society and Irish nationalists see Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics* (note 6).

⁹ N. Lynch, Defining Irish nationalist anti-imperialism: Thomas Davis and John Mitchel, *Éire-Ireland* 42:1 & 2 (2007) 82–107.

¹⁰ Lynch, Defining Irish nationalist anti-imperialism (note 9), 91.

¹¹ Lynch, Defining Irish nationalist anti-imperialism (note 9).

¹² K. O'Malley, Metropolitan resistance: Indo-Irish connections in the Inter-war period, in: R. Ahmed, S. Mukherjee (Eds), *South Asian Resistances in Britain 1858–1947*, London, 2012, 125–139.

¹³ J. Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism in the Victorian Empire: Ireland, India and the Politics of Alfred Webb*, Basingstoke, 2009.

¹⁴ N. Owen, *The British Left in India: Metropolitan Anti-Imperialism 1885–1947*, Oxford, 2007.

¹⁵ For example, the African Association, formed by members of the African diaspora living in London in 1897 sought to promote and protect the interests of subjects of African descent who lived 'in British colonies and other places' through 'appeals to British and the colonial governments to redress their wrongs': quoted in O. Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869–1911*, London, 45. This narrow focus on British imperial rule was broadened out for the Pan-African conference hosted by the association in London, 1900 see J. Schmeer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, London, 1999.

¹⁶ R. Mitcham, *Geographies of Global Humanitarianism: The Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society, 1884–1933*, PhD, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2001.

¹⁷ *Anti-Caste Supplement to Anti-Caste* (January 1891) 1.

¹⁸ J. Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836–1909*, London, 2011; Impey to Chesson, March 1885, Brit Empire s18 C138, RHO.

saying what I wanted said – or not saying it to the people I felt I might reach.¹⁹

Through a detailed reading of the contents of *Anti-Caste* and its successor *Fraternity*, this paper maps the reports of racial oppression which appeared in issues between 1888 and 1895.²⁰ The paper follows Miles Ogborn's lead in presenting a close examination of the geographies of reading and writing in order to draw out understandings of racialised power and oppression at the end of the nineteenth century.²¹ This examination, told through examples of the content, distribution and consumption of *Anti-Caste* seeks to illustrate how the production and reading of a single, relatively marginal, journal can enable greater access to the ideas of progressive politics in the late nineteenth century. This reading illustrates that *Anti-Caste's* focus upon racial inequality within the United States and the British empire enabled it to create a powerful critique of racial prejudice across the (mostly) English-speaking world. *Anti-Caste's* criticism of the imperial project, combined with its support for human brotherhood, allowed the periodical to develop a framework for interpreting racial prejudice that drew together criticisms of labour laws in India, the removal of people from their lands in Southern Africa, the racial segregation of public transport in the United States and the restriction of Chinese labour in Australia. Following an introduction to the structure of *Anti-Caste* and its readership, the paper focuses particularly upon debates on racial segregation in the United States, a topic that was regularly discussed in both *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity*, and the actions of Cecil Rhodes and his South Africa Company.

Geographies of a new community

Anti-Caste, a small four-page, densely printed monthly magazine, was founded and edited by a white Englishwoman, Catherine Impey. Born into a Quaker family in Street, Somerset, Impey edited and distributed the paper from the small west country town that remained her home from her birth in 1847 until her death in 1923. Despite her contribution to radical politics, articulated through her distinctive and politically challenging imaginative geographies, Impey remains a relatively little-known figure. This is perhaps in part because, despite the extensive archive she must have created in connection to the production and distribution of *Anti-Caste*, few of her personal papers have survived. Vron Ware noted in 1992 that Impey seemed to have been forgotten by British commentators, the only substantial record of her activism provided in the autobiography of the African-American journalist Ida B. Wells (1862–1931).²² A few other authors have since looked at different aspects of Impey's philanthropic work, particularly examining her role in developing international humanitarian networks.²³ Of particular interest has been her high-profile anti-lynching campaign which brought Wells to Britain in 1893 and 1894.²⁴

In 1893 Impey passed the editorship of *Anti-Caste* to Celestine Edwards. Edwards' parents were a poor French-speaking couple from Dominica, and he was the youngest of their nine children. According to Fryer's account, when he was twelve Edwards stowed away on a French ship and began his adult life as a seaman. Sometime during the 1870s he settled in Britain, firstly living in Edinburgh, where he developed his lecturing career on behalf of the temperance movement, speaking in the city and elsewhere in Scotland. Around 1880 he moved to Sunderland and then down to London's East End. Here he worked as a casual building worker and earned a reputation as a public speaker in Victoria Park. In 1892 he became the editor of *Lux*, 'a Christian Evidence Newspaper', allowing Fryer to identify him as Britain's first black editor.²⁵

In Street, Impey was part of a strong Quaker community. This commitment to the principles of the Society of Friends, including social activism, had a profound influence on her life. As an obituary for Impey in *The Friend* reflected in 1924, 'she lived her religion – it was not part of her life but the whole of it – it dominated all of her actions.'²⁶ Impey's personal and political Quaker networks in Street and throughout Britain supported her 'anti-caste' work, both in the foundations of the *Anti-Caste* readership and the theoretical underpinnings of her writings. As Heartfield has recently observed, the Anti-Slavery Society campaigns had created a broad organisational structure that included an extensive Quaker network. The APS drew on this Quaker network for its campaigning, as did Impey when she established *Anti-Caste*.²⁷ As part of her Quaker activism Impey was a committed temperance worker for the Grand Lodge of England. Impey served on the Negro Mission Committee for the IOGT (International Order of Good Templars), and represented the Grand Lodge at the Right Worthy Grand Lodge held in Stockholm in 1885.²⁸ Her work with the temperance movement also supported visits to the United States where she encountered extreme racial prejudice and segregation first hand for the first time. Although Impey came to be critical of both the APS and the organisational structures of the temperance movement, they provided her with an introduction to and a working knowledge of the maintenance of international networks that she would use and develop for *Anti-Caste*.

The first issue of *Anti-Caste* included a lengthy introductory editorial. There were no advertisements, but on the back page notices were carried for the Indian Association, the Anti-Slavery Society and the APS. Impey's audience did include APS subscribers. Initially Impey's cousin wrote to Frederick Chesson, Secretary of the APS with whom Impey had collaborated in the past, asking him if a circular about the new *Anti-Caste* publication could be sent out to APS members. A letter from Impey to Chesson in March 1888 indicated that she had not yet heard from the APS on how their subscribers might be directly informed of her new publication.²⁹ The publication of details of subscriptions and donations received by the

¹⁹ Impey to Booker T. Washington, March 1890, *The Booker T Washington Papers*, 3, 33, Illinois, 1974.

²⁰ *Fraternity* continued publication until 1897. A split in the 'anti-caste movement' in 1894 meant its editorial control was not connected to Impey after Edwards' death, aspects of the split are discussed below.

²¹ M. Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company*, Chicago, 2007.

²² V. Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*, London, 1992.

²³ For example D. Lorimer, 'Reconstructing Victorian racial discourse: images of race, the language of race relations and the context of black resistance' in: G. Gretchen, (Ed.), *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana*. New Brunswick, NJ, 2003, 187–208; S. Holton, 'Segregation, racism and white women reformers: a transnational analysis 1840–1912', *Women's History Review* 10:1 (2001) 5–26; C. Bressey, 'Early anti-racism and feminism in Britain', *Women: A Cultural Review* 21 (2010) 279–291.

²⁴ For example, C. Kercher, 'Ida B. Wells and her allies against lynching: a transnational perspective', *Comparative American Studies* 3 (2005) 131–151; S. Silkey, 'Redirecting the tide of white imperialism: the impact of Ida B. Wells's transatlantic antilynching campaign on British conceptions of American race relations', in: A. Boswell, J. McArthur, (Eds), *Women Shaping the South*, London, 2006, 97–119.

²⁵ P. Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, London, 1984.

²⁶ *The Friend* (January 4 1924) 19, original emphasis.

²⁷ Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society* (note 18); S. Holton, 'Kinship and friendship: Quaker women's networks and the women's movement', *Women's History Review* 14 (2005) 365–384.

²⁸ *The Good Templars Watchword* (April 20 1885) 253.

²⁹ Impey to Chesson, March 1888, Brit Empire s18 C138, RHO. Chesson died in April 1888.

APS between April 1890 and March 1891 allows for a comparison of the supporters of the APS and subscribers to *Anti-Caste* in 1890. Of the named APS supporters 6% also appear on the *Anti-Caste* list, including the Quakers Joseph Rowntree, William Rowntree, Hannah Joseph Sturge and Walter Sturge. It is likely that there was greater interchange between the two groups through household subscriptions, for example Catherine's older sister Ellen maintained the Impey's APS subscription.³⁰ Impey was more successful in attracting overseas readers to *Anti-Caste*. The 1890/91 APS list identifies only 3 out of 215 supporters as based overseas compared to 35 of *Anti-Caste*'s 315 subscribers (see Table 1), among them the civil rights activist Frederick Douglass (then US Minister to Haiti), A. S. Dillet in the Bahamas and Harriet Colenso (an activist from Natal who, despite the success of their collaboration on the Zulu Defence Committee, was often at odds with the society).³¹

Impey had written to Douglass in 1883 outlining her ideas for an 'Anti-Caste Society to take up the work where the Anti-Slavery Society dropped it' and the pair may have met when Douglass was in London in 1887.³² Certainly Douglass supported the paper and told Impey that 'Anything you can do to expose this foul spirit [caste] and enlighten the moral sentiment of your countrymen on this subject excites our gratitude and increases our hopes of a better future.'³³ Like Impey, Douglass opposed 'coloured Americans making themselves a separate class any more than they are compelled by circumstances to do.'³⁴ Douglass' comment illustrates that Impey's use of the term 'caste' spoke to evolving debates among African-Americans as to whether they should develop their communities within a segregated society. Douglass was a strong opponent of segregation or separatist movements unlike Booker T. Washington whose 'colored' technical institutes and acceptance of segregation as a means to eventual integration would be openly criticised by W. E. B. Du Bois.³⁵ The presence of Douglass and Colenso on Impey's list suggests that although members of the APS saw themselves as actively engaged in challenging mainstream attitudes to racial prejudice and colonial expansion, those with more radical intent took greater interest in *Anti-Caste*'s content and political aims. On the other hand *Anti-Caste* was not connected into power-making structures in the same way as the APS. Supporters of the APS included a network of M.P.s which kept them linked to official power.³⁶ The Liberal MP Henry Joseph Wilson did subscribe to *Anti-Caste* for a time but there is no record of him asking questions in the House of Commons on lynching, the Assam tea gardens, or other issues directly linked to the content of the paper.³⁷

Although the majority of *Anti-Caste* subscribers continued to be based in Britain (see Table 1), copies were sent to individual

subscribers in the United States, the Caribbean, Australia and West Africa. In addition subscribers supported the distribution of free copies of the magazine through their regular subscriptions and additional donations. With these funds Impey posted issues of *Anti-Caste* and later *Fraternity* for free distribution to readers in India and the United States. In January 1890 Impey reported that 150 copies of *Anti-Caste* were sent monthly to an elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for distribution in South Carolina.³⁸ Finances permitting, Impey aimed for a distribution circulation of around 3000 copies a month, and on at least one occasion, in June 1893, this rose to 7000. These figures seem to compare favourably with the *Aborigines' Friend* which had its circulation reduced to 1500 copies a month in 1899.³⁹ With the launch of *Fraternity* in 1893 Edwards' declared his intention to maintain circulation numbers at 7000 and hopefully increase them.⁴⁰

Edwards announced the new format of the magazine in July 1893. Although renamed *Fraternity*, it was closely related to *Anti-Caste*, at first using the same page settings. *Fraternity* was a far larger paper and consequently more expensive to produce.⁴¹ Edwards introduced space for advertisements, but as these were often closely related to the causes of the paper and published by Lux Newspaper and publishing it is hard to determine if they contributed to the new costs being incurred. Impey was asked to tap into her Quaker networks and seems to have had some success as Fry's Cocoa also placed advertisements. *Fraternity*'s larger format allowed for more articles, longer editorials and greater comment. The heavy workload contributed to Edwards' untimely passing in July 1894. After his death two newspapers, *Fraternity* and a new publication the *Bond of Brotherhood*, competed for his former readers. Dissatisfied with their editorial focus, Impey re-launched *Anti-Caste* in 1895, but this new volume lasted only three issues. Its cessation marked the decline of the *Anti-Caste* movement.⁴²

Imaginative geographies and the language of 'race'

The aim of *Anti-Caste* was to challenge the increasing segregation or 'colour line' that was being drawn throughout the world, particularly in the United States and white 'settler colonies'. In their recent assessment of the evolution of white supremacist ideology at the end of the nineteenth century, Lake and Reynolds highlight an increasing conflict within the British Empire between the self-governing white dominions and India, as one outcome of the political mobilisation of white men.⁴³ Seeking to challenge these hardening divisions, Impey attempted to mobilise a counter-network which would unite 'people of any country

³⁰ Subscriptions and Donations received, *The Aborigines' Friend*, April 1891, 178–180. Catherine and Ellen lived together in Street for their entire lives. Ellen died in 1921.

³¹ On Colenso see Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society* (note 18).

³² Impey to Douglass, February 1883, *The Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress*, Washington.

³³ A private letter from Douglass to Impey published in *Anti-Caste* (August 1889) 4.

³⁴ *Anti-Caste* (August 1889) 4.

³⁵ J. Tyner, *The Geography of Malcolm X: Black Radicalism and the Remaking of American Space*, London, 2006.

³⁶ Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society* (note 18).

³⁷ Wilson did raise related issues, e.g. questions on excessive deaths in Bengal prisons (Hansard HC Debates 02 March 1896 Vol. 37 cc1481–2); Departmental appointments in India (Hansard HC Debates 25 June 1897 Vol. 50 c559).

³⁸ Overseas distributors were reported in the annual reports published in *Anti-Caste*. Following the establishment of *Fraternity* and the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man Impey reported on behalf of the West of England Branch that their principal work had been to fund the free distribution of *Fraternity* and about 18,000 copies had been sent to India, China, South and West Africa, Europe and to some hundreds of persons in the United States and the West Indies. Brit Emp S. 20/8, RHO.

³⁹ On the circulation of *Aborigines' Friend* see Mitcham, *Geographies of Global Humanitarianism* (note 16).

⁴⁰ *Fraternity* (July 1893) 1.

⁴¹ The circulation costs of 1200 copies of *Fraternity* were equal to about 4000 of *Anti-Caste*, Brit Emp S. 20 E5/7, RHO.

⁴² *Fraternity* continued until 1897, the *Bond of Brotherhood* was established in parallel and read by supporters of Impey until she re-launched *Anti-Caste*. To judge from what has been located in UK archives to date, all three papers ceased publication by the end of 1897. The term 'Anti-Caste movement' was used on the inside cover of a reproduction of *Why is the Negro Lynched*, by Frederick Douglass, which was edited and republished by *Anti-Caste* following his death.

⁴³ M. Lake and H. Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, Cambridge, 2008.

Table 1*Anti-Caste*: data on monthly subscriptions and circulation, 1888–1894.

Year	Total subscribers	Overseas subscribers	Monthly circulation	Sources
1888	189	–	–	<i>Anti-Caste</i> Jan 1890 Supplement
1889	248	16	–	<i>Anti-Caste</i> Jan 1890 Supplement
1890	315	35	Up to 3500	<i>Anti-Caste</i> Jan 1891 Supplement, Feb–March 1892
1891	302	44	3500	<i>Anti-Caste</i> Feb–March 1892, Jan 1893
1892	313	25	–	<i>Anti-Caste</i> Jan 1893
1893	–	–	Up to 7000	<i>Fraternity</i> July 1893
1894	300	25	–	<i>Anti-Caste</i> March 1895

Note. Details of the location of subscribers within the UK were not given, apart from those in Ireland (included here within 'overseas'). The numbers are perhaps better thought of as household subscriptions rather than individual subscribers. For example, the subscription entry for 'Ferris, Maria and Gulieima Smith' (1892) has been counted as a single subscription as has 'Saffron Waldon School, Girls 2nd Class' (1890).

blacks + whites + Indians Africans Americans Europeans all in one roll'.⁴⁴ She resisted particular support for nationally-based organisations, arguing that a broad based, integrated international organisation was needed one 'that was as truly English as it was American as truly Indian as English'.⁴⁵ This was the vision that Impey projected in *Anti-Caste*, by presenting the voices of 'people of colour' from across the world in the same space, Impey produced a space that challenged conventional interpretations of international race relations. Aware that the large majority of her readership was based in Britain, Impey sought to create an imaginative geography that would connect them to this international collective and the individuals whose plight they read about in her paper. Through articles critical of life 'Under the British Flag' she perhaps hoped that readers would take some personal responsibility for their fellow subjects and turn sympathy into action.

... we the English are, as it were, but an inner cluster of the big crowd of British subjects, the masses of whom live in lands other than ours, and have been brought under British rule sometimes voluntarily but more often, we fear, by force and fraud, and for ends not purely disinterested. Now they, like us, press round the same British Government, with its mighty and cumbrous machinery of State, looking to it, as we look to it – though almost despairingly at times – for the administration of justice, for power to carry out necessary reforms, for the redress of public grievances. To hold the power for weal or woe over tens of millions of human families is indeed an appalling responsibility. One is led to wonder how long the slender fabric of the empire shall hold together? Especially does this thought press when the bitter cry of suffering and oppression reaches us from some outer part of the great crowd.⁴⁶

Although a sense of distance is central to this imaginary, Impey was aware that 'by setting people off at a distance from us' it was easy to 'imagine differences which have no existence in fact' and she was adamant that 'No matter what colour people are – yellow, brown, black, olive, white – all of them are *just men and women like ourselves*'.⁴⁷ Despite her emphasis on international connections, this inclusion of whiteness was a rare reference to the complex

prejudices in operation against white people, particularly members of the Irish and Jewish diaspora. This absence may have been because Impey saw these groups as being part of the migrants who took on racist views as they travelled to take advantage of new opportunities in Africa, India and the Australian 'Working Man's Paradise'.⁴⁸ References to Russia's treatment of political prisoners, and the report of the refusal to admit a 'Hebrew man, mainly it is charged owing to racial prejudices' to a social club in New York were made. Their atypical presence suggests that although aware of forms of oppression encountered by white people Impey chose not to regularly include these issues in *Anti-Caste*.⁴⁹

This is not to say that Impey ignored the complex ideas of race based on normalised constructions of whiteness, as can be seen in her struggle to conceptualise a language of 'anti-racism'. In addition to ideas of 'caste', various terms were used to describe ethnic identities and oppression in article headlines: 'The proposed Afro-American league', the 'New York Coloured Mission', 'Mr Moody and the Colour-line', 'Women's suffrage movement and caste', the 'Australian native races', 'White Men not Hung in Georgia', 'Race Prejudice in India', 'Is there Caste in the Bahamas?', 'Black and White', 'The Racial War in America', 'Black Firemen' and 'Official favouritism in India' are a few examples.⁵⁰ Beneath the headlines Impey would sometimes highlight the racial prejudice present in language by using grammatical markings particularly by placing words in italics or between inverted commas.

Readers were told that *Anti-Caste* expected to deal mainly with 'colour caste' because Impey had personal knowledge of its workings especially in the United States where she enjoyed 'the friendship and acquaintance of many of those known as "coloured" people'.⁵¹ Telling readers about one of her visits to the United States in 1892 Impey described her attendance at a drawing room meeting in Philadelphia where an 'elderly white gentleman ... and the Editor of *Anti-Caste*, were the only "white" persons present in the company though some were but little darker – if at all'.⁵² When discussing prejudice faced by the Chinese it was argued that '... legislating against particular races *as such* – each "race" composed as it is of caste numbers of individuals each different in attainments and capacity – is both unsafe and unjust'.⁵³

⁴⁴ Impey to Albion Tourgée, 25 March 1893, *The Albion W. Tourgée Papers in the Chautauqua County Historical Society*, Westfield, New York, original format.

⁴⁵ Impey to Albion Tourgée, 25 March 1893, *The Albion W. Tourgée Papers*.

⁴⁶ *Anti-Caste* (December 1889) 2–3.

⁴⁷ *Anti-Caste* (April 1888) 2, original emphasis.

⁴⁸ See N. Kirk, *Comrades and Cousins: Globalization, Workers and Labour Movements in Britain, the USA and Australia from the 1880s to 1914*, London, 2003.

⁴⁹ Blackballing of a Hebrew gentleman, from *Toronto Empire* (March 1889), *Anti-Caste* (May 1889) 4.

⁵⁰ 'The proposed Afro-American league', *Anti-Caste* (March 1888) 2; the 'New York Coloured Mission', *Anti-Caste* (April 1888) 1; 'Mr Moody and the Colour-line', *Fraternity* (January 1894) 13; 'Women's suffrage movement and caste' and 'Australian native races' both *Anti-Caste* (May 1888) 1; 'White Men not Hung in Georgia' and 'Race Prejudice in India' both *Anti-Caste* (June 1888) 1; 'Is there Caste in the Bahamas?', *Anti-Caste* (October 1888) 1; 'Black and White', *Anti-Caste* (July 1888) 3; 'The Racial War in America' *Fraternity* (September 1893) 15; 'Black firemen', *Fraternity* (June 1894) 9; 'Official favouritism in India', *Anti-Caste* (March 1889) 2–3.

⁵¹ *Anti-Caste* (March 1888) 1.

⁵² *Anti-Caste* (October 1892) 4.

⁵³ *Anti-Caste* (November 1888) 2, original emphasis.

Aware that in order to challenge this injustice there was a need to talk ‘with the Negro rather than *talking about* the Negro’, Impey’s original intention was for *Anti-Caste* to serve as a new space for the publication of original material by black authors, but she found contacting potential contributors beyond her US based contacts difficult.⁵⁴ Conscious of the dominance of the United States in the first issue, Impey wrote to the APS asking to be put in touch with potential contributors for future editions as she needed ‘a larger number of African and other names – not for it to be so largely American.’⁵⁵ Although Impey failed to assemble the diversity of original contributors she hoped for, *Anti-Caste* was a space in which readers, through letters to the editor, could express views that were not found in other sections of the British media. However, there was little regular discussion of racial prejudice within the British Isles in *Anti-Caste*. An exception occurred in January 1889 when Impey commented upon a speech made by the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, ‘in which he sneered at our fellow subjects in India as “Black Men.”’ Speaking in November 1888, Salisbury was referring to the election campaign of the Indian nationalist Dadabhai Naoroji who had unsuccessfully stood for Parliament in Holborn in 1886. Reflecting on Naoroji’s defeat, Salisbury had argued that ‘however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, he doubted if we have come to that point when any British constituency would elect a black man.’⁵⁶ His remarks caused uproar and were seen by some to have contributed to Naoroji’s successful election for Finsbury Central, London in 1892.⁵⁷ *Anti-Caste* saw Salisbury’s openly racialised comments as a rare opportunity to discuss prejudice at home. This was not a claim that racial prejudice was absent in Britain, but an observation that in Britain caste lurked behind the political scenery, ‘the prompter of so many a cowardly and bloody act on the part of our rulers – for once allowed his face to be openly seen.’⁵⁸

As outlined in the papers’ first editorial, *Anti-Caste* dealt mainly with issues of ‘colour caste’ – the politics of racial segregation and the racial prejudice it supported and encouraged.

It is our own belief that all arbitrary distinctions (or disabilities) based on differences of social rank, are “contrary to the mind of Christ” and that of all such distinctions the meanest and most cruelly irritating to the victims are those which are based purely on *physical* characteristics – sex, race, complexion, nationality – in fact form or deformity of any kind.⁵⁹

Over the life of the journal debates over wider social oppressions were subsumed within discussions of racial discrimination. Deliberations in editorial columns reflect how difficult it was to capture in words the politics of racial prejudice. Impey wanted to ‘shun that word “races” wherever I can – It implies in itself a distinction that is unreal. We are really one “race” – the “human race” the world over though of different varieties’.⁶⁰ Instead Impey employed ‘caste’ but she continued to struggle with the paradox of

finding a language with which to discuss race without reinforcing its divisions.

As Horton illustrates, from the mid-1860s into the mid-1880s what she defines as ‘anti-caste liberalism’ represented an important strand of radical thought and activism for those opposed to segregation and racial discrimination in the United States.⁶¹ Charles Sumner, a Bostonian who had been a leading anti-slavery senator, delivered a lecture on *The Question of Caste* in 1869. In this he outlined his hope for a future where man would subdue his pride of birth, prejudice of class, and pretension of caste. Following an outline of caste in India, he argued that in the United States white people claimed the place of the Brahmin while the Africans and Chinese were treated as if Pariahs.

The caste claiming hereditary rank and privilege is white; the caste doomed to hereditary degradation and disability is black or yellow, and it is gravely asserted that this difference of color marks difference of race which itself justifies the discrimination.⁶²

An *American Missionary* article in 1882 used the term to discuss institutionalised forms of racial discrimination in the United States including increasing racial segregation on trains. An article on ‘Caste in America’ the following year turned its attention to racial segregation in churches. The article directly contrasted the Indian caste system with a two tiered American caste system. The United States’ ‘two castes are simply the white and the colored races... this proscription of the coloured races includes the Indian and the Chinaman.’⁶³ Although there is no evidence that Impey directly engaged with these particular works, it was from US discussions of caste that Impey took her meaning reflecting that ‘I had only known of the American question when I began to publish *Anti-Caste*. The Indian religious caste I had heard of, but not the caste feeling of her rulers towards to Indians’.⁶⁴

Exactly what was or could be understood by the concept of caste was problematic, as the editor of *Anti-Caste* made clear:

Caste, What is it? We would give a great deal for a good searching definition of Caste, so expressed as to indicate wherein lies its mighty power of evil. Caste is an arbitrary and systematic restriction of persons to particular ranks of life on grounds other than those of individual merit and fitness. But this is still too vague.⁶⁵

Attempts to be more specific about what it meant to be against race prejudice, that is how to distinguish the politics and principles of *Anti-Caste*, were reflected in the changing straplines that appeared on the papers’ masthead. The first issue of *Anti-Caste* declared itself ‘DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF COLOURED RACES’, but in August 1889 this changed to ‘ADVOCATES THE BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND IRRESPECTIVE OF COLOUR OR DESCENT’. The change was an attempt to reflect more accurately the need for action as well as sympathy. When the final volume of *Anti-Caste* was published in 1895 the strapline was

⁵⁴ *Anti-Caste* Supplement to *Anti-Caste* (January 1891) 1.

⁵⁵ Impey to F. Chesson, March 1888, Brit Empire s18 C138/163-174, RHO (note 29).

⁵⁶ *Pall Mall Gazette* (December 1 1888) 4.

⁵⁷ A. Duster (Ed.), *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B Wells*, Chicago, 1972; R. Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History*, London, 2002. For examples of the ensuing debate see the *Pall Mall Gazette* (December 4 1888) (note 56), 11.

⁵⁸ *Anti-Caste* (January 1889) 1.

⁵⁹ *Anti-Caste* (March 1888) 1, original emphasis.

⁶⁰ Impey to Albion Tourgée, June 16 1890, the Albion W. Tourgée Papers in the Chautauqua County Historical Society, Westfield, New York, original emphasis.

⁶¹ C. Horton, *Race and the Making of American Liberalism*, New York, 2005.

⁶² C. Sumner, *The Question of Caste: Lecture*, Boston, 1869, 10.

⁶³ Editorial: Caste on the cars in *The American Missionary* 36, 9, 259–260; Secretary Strieby, Caste in America in *The American Missionary* 37, 12, 376–382: 376.

⁶⁴ Impey to Judge Albion Tourgée, June 1890, *The Albion W. Tourgée Papers in the Chautauqua County Historical Society*, Westfield, New York.

⁶⁵ *Anti-Caste* (April 1891) 2 original emphasis.

greatly extended to: 'Assumes the Brotherhood of the entire Human Family, and claims for them their equal right to PROTECTION, PERSONAL LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND HUMAN FELLOWSHIP'.

Impey's commitment to an international brotherhood of man was directly linked to her Christian belief in an innate equality between all God's children. As such, *Anti-Caste's* critique was not a secularist one, and Impey's struggle with the language of race remained couched in a critical Christian vernacular. She argued that to allow oneself to be 'influenced in our conduct towards any person on the mere ground of colour' was irrational, unjust and contrary to the spirit of religion.⁶⁶ The originality of her critical analysis was not constrained by her faith-based interpretations as can be illustrated by setting *Anti-Caste* in the context of papers with similarly radical intent such as the secularist *Our Corner*. Founded by Annie Besant in 1883 *Our Corner* was a publication for 'freethought'. A mouthpiece for Besant's socialist and labour propagandist work, as McKay has observed, *Our Corner* moved into and then beyond socialism in search of answers to broad questions of inequality.⁶⁷ The paper regularly reported on conditions in Ireland and commissioned articles on Egypt, India and Afghanistan. In *Our Corner* the oppression of the Irish and Jewish communities across Europe were placed alongside, but appeared rather more regularly than discussions of bloodshed in Zululand and voting rights in Jamaica.

Although *Our Corner* did 'recognise in theory the brotherhood of the whole human race', it rarely presented the perspectives of people of colour on colonial exploitation.⁶⁸ Comment usually took the form of critiques of colonial policy – the misuse of British power or Britons overstepping the boundaries of their liberal sensibilities. Columns produced by Charles Bradlaugh for the paper's Political Corner were routinely critical of the British government although he was not uncompromisingly supportive of anti-imperial movements. In December 1883 he argued that two explosions on the Underground had done much to serve the worst enemies of Ireland.⁶⁹ Critiques of imperial expansion in Africa also featured in Bradlaugh's column: an expedition to Bechuanaland was highlighted as a precursor to stealing more African territory; the annexation of the Transvaal an action which the British had no right to carry out. Yet descriptions of the 'natives' on the West Coast of Africa, 'Negroes' in Jamaica and 'half-breeds' in Canada were used without comment or reflection.⁷⁰

The absence of discussions of oppression experienced by white people in *Anti-Caste* may have been due, in part at least, to the compact nature of the paper and thus reflect a strategic decision by its editor. Impey knew that the small size of the paper made it difficult 'to boil down good articles efficiently.'⁷¹ Edwards' physical expansion of the paper in 1893 supported a broader geography of reporting including political geographies of whiteness. In addition a more critical reflection upon experiences and debates about race at home was present. November 1893 marked the beginning of an essay on 'Islam and the Brotherhood of Man' by Hajre A. Browne.

Published over three issues, it sought to speak to an interest in Islam sparked by the recent establishment of Islamic missions in London, Liverpool and New York. Browne was pleased to note that the received wisdom in Europe that Islam was a religion of blood which preached death to all infidels, was slowly being undermined. Furthermore, the folly that had in the past prevented any reasonable discussion of Islam had largely been replaced by a desire to learn about the ancient religion.⁷²

In *Fraternity* the mistreatment and oppression of white minorities was given more space than the occasional illustrative sentence. It was perhaps the physical expansion of the paper that allowed Edwards to develop an editorial line that returned to broader issues of social oppression. The restrictions upon Jewish life in Siberia and the massacre of Catholics in Russian Poland were denounced.⁷³ The condition of Armenia, and Kurdish raids in Russian Armenia were highlighted as was the persecution of Russian Stundists (dissenters from the Greek Orthodox Church), and the practice of flogging them and declaring them to be insane condemned. The fact that their leaders were often imprisoned without trial was compared to the experience of African-Americans.⁷⁴ The arrest of anarchists in Paris and Nice and the resulting expulsion of fifteen Italians was reported in January 1894, but the Irish were still absent.⁷⁵

Reporting oppression

Despite Impey's intention to support a diverse range of contributions, opinion pieces or original essays from black authors' were rarely produced. Most items for discussion came from reports in international newspapers. By keeping in touch with African-American, Indian and African newspapers such as the *Freeman*, *India* and *Imvo Zabantsundu* ('Native Opinion'), Impey presented *Anti-Caste* readers with voices that challenged white oppression. *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 'the first African newspaper of significance in the Cape Colony', was founded by John Tengo Jabavu (1859–1921).⁷⁶ *Anti-Caste* initially received a copy of *Imvo Zabantsundu* from the secretary of the APS, but it seems Impey was able to regularly obtain overseas papers directly from their editors.

Imvo Zabantsundu was highlighted in December 1890, when 'The Editor thankfully acknowledge[d] the receipt week by week from foreign lands, of numerous newspapers, etc, evidently often sent by those who themselves suffer by caste.'⁷⁷ Impey was especially indebted to the 'Editors of the *Virginia Planet*, *Boston Courant*, *Philadelphia Sentinel*, and the *AME Church Quarterly Review* (all Afro-American publications), and of the *Freeman* (Bahamas) ... whose papers have been supplied her gratis every week.'⁷⁸ These systems of periodical exchange formed an important source of content and contextual information for editors. In November 1894, *Imvo Zabantsundu* acknowledged receiving 'the Statesman, "an organ of the Coloured People in Colorado" We presume it comes as an "exchange" and are glad to have it on our list.'⁷⁹

⁶⁶ *Anti-Caste* Supplement (January 1890).

⁶⁷ C. McKay, A Journal of Her own: the rise and fall of Annie Besant's *Our Corner*, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 42 (2009) 324–358.

⁶⁸ McKay, A Journal of Her own (note 67), 322.

⁶⁹ *Our Corner* (December 1 1883) 359.

⁷⁰ For example see *Our Corner* (September 1885) (note 69), 178.

⁷¹ Impey to Chesson, December 23 1887, Brit Empire s18 C138, RHO.

⁷² *Fraternity* (November 1893) 8.

⁷³ *Fraternity* (October 1893) 12, (January 1894), 9.

⁷⁴ *Fraternity* (August 1893) 9.

⁷⁵ *Fraternity* Kurdish raids (August 1893) 10; *Anarchists* (9 January 1894) 9.

⁷⁶ C. Saunders, Ngcongco, Jabavu, and the South African War, *PULA Journal of South African Studies* 11 (1997) 63–69, 63.

⁷⁷ *Anti-Caste* (December 1890) 2.

⁷⁸ *Anti-Caste* (January 1891) 2.

⁷⁹ *Imvo* (November 28 1894) 3.

These international exchanges of print culture continued under Edwards' editorship. Not all articles in *Fraternity* were sourced, but many of them were presumably drawn from the international papers *Fraternity* received including *Freeman*, *Richmond Planet*, *The Monitor*, *New York Age*, *Boston Courant*, *Cleveland Gazette*, *Barbados Tax-payer*, *Demerara Daily Chronicle*, *Asia* and the *Johannesburg Star*.⁸⁰ Some articles and comment referencing the *Colored American*, (Chicago) *Inter-Ocean*, *San Francisco Call* and the *Nashville Citizen* did appear, alongside British newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily News*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Sheffield Independent* and the *Liverpool Post*.⁸¹ Edwards also introduced a new column 'Concerning Ourselves in the Magazines' which directed readers to items presumed of interest available in recently published periodicals.⁸² As an example, the column in May 1894 referenced articles in *Nineteenth Century*, the *Forum*, *Contemporary Review*, *Review of Reviews*, *Fireside Magazine*, *Home Words*, the *Indian Magazine*, the *Leisure Hour*, *World Travel* and the *British Medical Journal*.⁸³

Through their international networks *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity* became spaces in which readers were informed about oppression in other places and could thus place their own experiences in a global context. Under the heading 'Men and Negroes', the *Indian Messenger* commented upon an article that had appeared in *Anti-Caste* about the treatment of 'coloured persons of position in Bermuda'. The racism they faced was directly compared to the experience of Indian men travelling on their own railways where a 'gentlemen' on the railways always meant a European. More offensive the author argued was its use as a counter-word to 'Natives', as if an Indian, no matter how exalted his position, could never be fit for the title of gentleman.⁸⁴

Reporting on the exploitation of workers in the Empire for the benefit of British consumers was an effective way for *Anti-Caste* to demonstrate the everyday links between the British centre and the oppressed margins of the imperial crowd. The consumption of tea was one of the most obvious examples of this relationship. Joanna de Groot has illustrated that an essential aspect of the new chains of popular teashops founded in the 1880s relied upon an attractive ambience and affordable menus. The tea they served came from packets decorated with images of elegant sari clad workers picking tea in orderly plantations, which could conceal the character of labour conditions for workers.⁸⁵ The harsh realities of working life on tea plantations were an aspect of consumer culture that *Anti-Caste* sought to expose. In January 1889 details from a report on the imprisonment of an assistant manager of a tea plantation for 'assault on coolies' and 'outraging female modesty' were reprinted as part of the regular column, Under the British Flag.

The 'Cost of Cheap Tea', published in January 1890, brought the 'comfortable tea-drinking public' before the real 'cost of human

lives' with which their cheap tea was procured.⁸⁶ At the centre of the article were the workers who laboured in the tea gardens of Assam. Impey described the purchase of the labourers who were gathered from the poorest of the poor in the villages, who then found their contracts sold on to the tea planters until the expiration of the term contracted for the workers meant they were practically their slaves.⁸⁷ This exploitative system was legal and supposedly under government control and supervision, but this served as little protection for the workers. Impey compared their experiences of flogging, imprisonment and lack of control over their labour to the slave systems of the Americas. To bring the injustice of the workers' home to her readers Impey additionally compared their plight to those of factory workers in Britain. What would readers say, she asked, if there was a factory in England where half, or even a quarter of the workers died every year? Moreover what would they say to a government that forced the dying remnant of employees to fulfil the full term of a contract which they had entered into while they were ignorant of the nature of the work?⁸⁸ Four months later *Anti-Caste* returned to the Assam tea gardens, reprinting notes from a *Despatch on Inland Emigration* published the previous year in Calcutta. The report contained horrifying revelations about the tea workers' conditions including that on one plantation the chances of leaving the gardens alive were barely fifty–fifty.⁸⁹

Although *Anti-Caste* drew uncomfortable connections between British consumers and imperial workers there was no suggestion as to how consumers might use their patterns of consumption to develop their political aspirations. *Anti-Caste* made no call, for example, for a boycott of tea grown in the Assam gardens as had occurred around West Indian slave grown sugar during the abolition movement of the 1780s and early 1800s.⁹⁰ Impey herself was involved in such ethical consumption. She was a temperance supporter and had become a vegetarian, arguing that a meat diet was a cruel and needless practice.⁹¹ Impey did not publicly associate her decision to become a vegetarian with dissident politics. In the minds of many, however, her decision would have been seen as a challenge to the norms of Victorian Society and other radicals were attracted to *Anti-Caste*, for example Josiah Oldfield, editor of *The Vegetarian* was a subscriber.⁹² Despite her own moral codes of living, Impey did not seek to impose nor, it would seem, even suggest such practical activism in her readers.

Reporting on Rhodes

In her critical analysis of the age of imperialism, Hannah Arendt argued that some of the 'fundamental aspects of this time appear so close to totalitarian phenomena of the twentieth century that it

⁸⁰ Papers Received, *Fraternity* (May 1894) 7.

⁸¹ For example see, Reported Massacre in a Russian Church, from the *Daily News* and Boycotting Russian Jews at Hamburg from the *Leeds Mercury* in *Fraternity* (December 1893) 8 and 9; Anti-Christian riots in Japan, from the *Sheffield Independent*, *Fraternity* (December 1893) 9; Death of French Wilberforce from the *Liverpool Post*, *Fraternity* (January 1894) 6.

⁸² Based on the scope and tone of this column Lindy Moore argues that it was likely that this section of the paper was written by the Scottish writer Isabella Mayo, L. Moore, The reputation of Isabella Fyvie Mayo: interpretations of a life, *Women's History Review* 19 (2010) 71–88.

⁸³ *Fraternity* (May 1894) 2–3.

⁸⁴ *Anti-Caste* (September 1891) 3.

⁸⁵ J. de Groot, Metropolitan desires and colonial connections: reflections on consumption and empire, in: C. Hall, S. Rose, (Eds), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge, 2006, 166–190.

⁸⁶ *Anti-Caste* (January 1890) 2.

⁸⁷ *Anti-Caste* (January 1890) 2.

⁸⁸ *Anti-Caste* (January 1890) 2–3.

⁸⁹ *Anti-Caste* (May 1890) 1.

⁹⁰ See C. Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790–1865*, London, 2007.

⁹¹ *Village Album* 32, 1879, the Clark Archive, Street, Somerset.

⁹² L. Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*, Durham, North Carolina, 2006, especially chapter 4; G. James, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, London, 2007.

may be justifiable to consider the whole period a preparatory stage for coming catastrophes.⁹³ Among the key figures during this period of change Arendt highlights Cecil Rhodes, who sought expansion for expansion's sake, and who managed to convince the British government that the 'expansion and export of the instruments of violence was necessary to protect investments.'⁹⁴ Such criticisms of imperial politics were made by a number of commentators who witnessed the period of late-Victorian expansion. As Claeys reminds us, for example, a number of 'imperial sceptics' protested against the invasion of Egypt as a shameless rescue of British financial interests.⁹⁵

Similar arguments were to be found in *Anti-Caste* and *Fraternity*. The injustices of British protection for capitalist investment through imperial expansion were condemned in both papers, as were organisations that had failed to criticise Rhodes. In July 1892, *Anti-Caste* noted that

it was painful to those who have long trusted the right instincts of the Aborigines Protection Society to find that even their honoured body can in some instances fail to detect the cloven hoof, and we fear that in too many cases such lies concealed beneath the fair clothes of Chartered African Companies, and other well sounding schemes for the advancement of the trade, colonization and exploration of poor Africa.⁹⁶

Under the early tenure of Henry Fox Bourne the APS was encouraged to support the intervention of Chartered Companies in Africa.⁹⁷ Impey's comment was likely a reference to the public support given to them in the *Aborigines' Friend* in the late 1880s and early 1890s.⁹⁸ By January 1894, however, the APS had retracted their support and reported that the 'most important and painful business in 1893, as regards English dealings with native races in Africa, has been the war with Lobengula and his Matabele followers, which has been entered upon by the British South Africa Company.'⁹⁹

As part of the APS' protests against the resulting violence in Mashonaland, the Colonial Secretary, the Marquis of Ripon, was asked to receive a deputation at the Colonial Office. The group who visited him on December 14 1893 included a number of M.P.s (including Arnold-Forster, Atherley-Jones and Alfred Webb), along with the Rev Wardlaw Thompson (Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society), the APS Secretary Henry Fox Bourne and Celestine Edwards.¹⁰⁰ The delegation did not speak with a cohesive voice. Although Wardlaw Thompson accepted that white settlers could not really protect the rights of Africans as they were there for their own interests, he also believed that the Matabele were 'really savages' and that it would be 'Un-English' to judge Rhodes' company without careful consideration.¹⁰¹ Alfred Webb argued that the concession of equal rights to all was the necessary outcome of the violence. According to the published report of the meeting Edwards did not speak and he was probably highly frustrated by its content

and outcome. Ripon deflected responsibility from himself and gave support to his 'friend Mr Rhodes' arguing that South African opinion (presumably meaning white South African opinion) could not be ignored.¹⁰² Despite their failure to elicit a condemnation of Rhodes or a change of policy towards the Company, a report of the meeting in the *Aborigines' Friend* remained calm and measured. Edwards' had published an editorial in December 1893, highly critical of the Government's policy towards the Company and of the peoples of Africa, whose humanity was seemed to be placed below political considerations.¹⁰³ The meeting with Ripon confirmed his concerns and the editorial he wrote in January 1894 was seething.

Cecil Rhodes and Company coveted Matabeleland, and little by little they goaded poor Lobengula into a row, called for the assistance of the British Government and got the press to poison the minds of the British public by depicting Lobengula and the Matabeles as the worst of savages, and then seized their country. ... Since the war has been conducted by the British Government for the British people, we, in the name of justice and humanity, ask that the Matabeles be not handed over to the tender mercies of Cecil Rhodes and his Dutch Boer allies Whatever injustice they inflicted upon the Mashonas is no justification for the wholesale slaughter of the people with Maxim guns; the stealing of their cattle, and the free division of their land by semi-civilised savages.¹⁰⁴

Edwards also had little time for South African opinion noting that on Rhodes' return from Mashonaland he had been honoured at a banquet hosted by the Mayor and Citizens of Cape Town. Edwards reflected that it was

By a curious coincidence in human nature, some murderers are hanged, others escape being hanged on the ground of provocation but there are others who kill so many that, either through fear or favour, they are neither hanged nor transported, but are feasted by the compatriots as heroes.¹⁰⁵

However, Edwards was aware that white opinion in southern Africa was not homogenous. The greater space available in *Fraternity* allowed for articles from international contributors. When *Fraternity* was established Edwards proposed that the paper send a correspondent to report from the United States. Instead it was agreed that it would be better to rely upon authorised correspondents and local agents who, it was believed, would be more able to get reliable information.¹⁰⁶ It seems likely that J. M. Cole, described by *Fraternity* as 'our own correspondent', was such a contact. Cole wrote reflectively about the treatment of Africans from Johannesburg and (presumably) his place as a white man in the city.

Cole presumed the miserable continuation in the lack of rights for 'natives'. In the Transvaal no 'native' was allowed to own property, and it was considered a crime for 'coloured men' to eat in

⁹³ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, 2004, 167.

⁹⁴ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (note 93), 264.

⁹⁵ For example, Frederic Harrison (1882) who argued that Britain invaded Egypt 'at first in the interest of bond-holders, for whom not a penny of our taxes should have been expended': quoted in Claeys, *Imperial Sceptics* (note 6), 82.

⁹⁶ *Anti-Caste* (July 1892) 1.

⁹⁷ Heartfield, *The Aborigines' Protection Society* (note 18).

⁹⁸ *The Aborigines' Friend*, The Annual Report May 1891 V, IV, 187–188.

⁹⁹ *The Aborigines' Friend*, January 1894, 378. For more on Fox Bourne's writings and change in attitude, see Mitcham, *Geographies of Global Humanitarianism* (note 16), esp chapter 5.

¹⁰⁰ *The Aborigines' Friend*, 1894 (note 99), 386.

¹⁰¹ *The Aborigines' Friend*, 1894 (note 99), 391.

¹⁰² *The Aborigines' Friend*, Affairs in Matabeleland, January 1894 (note 99), 378–394.

¹⁰³ *Fraternity* (December 1893) 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Fraternity* (January 1894) 1.

¹⁰⁵ *Fraternity* (January 1894) 1.

¹⁰⁶ Impey et al, Notes on London conference, August 1893, MSS Brit Emp s 20 E5/7, RHO.

the same dining room as the white population. 'Native' men and women were not allowed to walk through the streets after 9 pm without permission and a pass from their employers and before being able to even get a job they had to purchase a pass which cost them 1s a month. The Johannesburg Sanitary Board had recently declared that no 'native' man or woman would be able to walk along the pavement, and that their punishment for refusing to walk in the road would be imprisonment, or a flogging of ten lashes. Despite the establishment of these racist structures Cole was still proud to be an Englishman; 'but when I see my coloured brother walking in the road ankle deep in mud while I walk on the path, I am ashamed of my white face, and of the unfairness that robs a man of his country, and then flogs him for daring to walk on the footpath.'¹⁰⁷

The American caste system

Discussions around racial politics and violence in the United States were usually framed around the hardening lines of segregation, both metaphorical and real.¹⁰⁸ In October 1891 *Anti-Caste* reported on the legal action taken by the Afro-American League on behalf of a black clergyman who was ejected from a sleeping-car.¹⁰⁹ This was followed in May by an extract from *National Pilot*, a Virginian magazine, that commented on the debate around separate cars on the American railway system.¹¹⁰ As prevalent as these forms of discrimination were throughout the Southern United States, this was not simply a 'Southern Problem'. As Frederick Douglass explained in a letter to Impey; 'The American people are talking of a "Southern problem", a "negro problem" forgetting that the real problem is whether American civilisation and the American people and government are capable of protecting the negro in the rights of human nature.'¹¹¹ The casual nature of violence and the injustice and extreme violence of lynching hinted at in Douglass' letter, were of serious concern to African-Americans.

Impey published statistics from the Virginian *Richmond Planet*, which registered the number of African-Americans lynched each week. The number of deaths between July 26 1887 and July 26 1888 stood at 109; between then and December a further 56 bodies had been added to the count.¹¹² Details of the Barnwell Outrage, taken from the *Charleston News and Courier* was one example of the lynchings recorded by the *Richmond Planet*. In this case eight men were tied to a tree and shot outside the Barnwell Court House. In the summer of 1890 Impey printed a letter from 'A Negro professor of a Southern University' who had seen the report on the Barnwell outrage in the February issue. He wrote to inform *Anti-Caste* readers that not one of the lynchers had been brought to trial. This was not unexpected, but the Professor added, 'People may read of the south and think they know all about it, but they know nothing of the grievances we have to suffer.'¹¹³

Although she no doubt knew of many, Impey did not usually print details of sadistic lynchings in the United States. In 1892 she did comment on one case that had also caught the attention of the national press in Britain.¹¹⁴ In February 1892 a mob at Texarkana had burnt to death a young man called Ed Coy. He died after the most excruciating agony before a crowd reportedly between 5000 and 6000. Although the *New York Times* report of the incident argued that the 'good people of Texarkana deplore[d] the necessity of mob law', that night popular opinion espoused that 'Coy had been rightly served.'¹¹⁵ Impey's editorial comment was far more critical. She argued that it was not because Coy had been charged with (rather than convicted of) injuring a woman that had enraged the mob, for if it had been the case of a white man assaulting a black woman the public would not have been so appalled. It was because 'the man being of the despised colour and the woman white, he had defied the white man's law, and broken through the lines of Caste.'¹¹⁶

In response to these violent accounts *Anti-Caste* invited the African-American journalist Ida B. Wells to tour Britain in 1893. Wells and Edwards worked together on the tour circuit and also edited a special issue of *Anti-Caste* with Impey.¹¹⁷ Although Wells' campaigns can be downplayed as publicity events that generated attention but did little to end lynching, Silkey has strongly argued that Wells' campaigns in Britain initiated a dynamic and lasting transatlantic debate on lynching by redefining the way in which British public understood violence and race relations in the United States.¹¹⁸ The interest in Wells' tour enabled Impey to turn *Anti-Caste*'s readership into a movement. Although Impey had originally imagined an 'Anti-Caste movement' or an 'Emancipation Society', the collective now operating around *Anti-Caste* eventually settled on calling themselves the Society for the Recognition of the Brotherhood of Man (SRBM). As Wells toured around Britain she encouraged people to sign up to new local branches of the SRBM. These branches were to be the foundation of a new movement and an extended readership and distribution network for *Fraternity*, which Edwards began editing in July 1893.

Splinterings in the movement

Fraternity was an ambitious paper with greater geographical coverage and political critique. It was also a lot of work, and throughout Edwards had also continued to edit *Lux*. By the spring of 1894 he was seriously ill and in May returned to the Caribbean to recuperate, but he died in July. Editorship of *Fraternity* passed to Helen Sillitoe who had previously worked with Edwards. She was supported by a high-profile member of the SRBM, the Aberdeen-based writer Isabella Mayo. Unfortunately for the movement Impey and Mayo had fallen out the year before and their personal rift became an institutional split.¹¹⁹ *Fraternity* continued under the control of Mayo's 'Scottish branches' of the SRBM and developed

¹⁰⁷ *Fraternity* (March 1894) 15.

¹⁰⁸ Mr Moody and the Colour Line in *Fraternity* (January 1894) 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Anti-Caste* (October 1891) 1.

¹¹⁰ *Anti-Caste* (May 1892) 6.

¹¹¹ *Anti-Caste* (August 1889) 3.

¹¹² *Anti-Caste* (January 1889) 2.

¹¹³ *Anti-Caste* (July and August 1890) 4.

¹¹⁴ The case was also reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, *The Leeds Mercury*, and *The Pall Mall Gazette*, all on 22 February 1892. Also *Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express* and the *Newcastle Weekly Courant* both 27 February 1892.

¹¹⁵ *New York Times* (February 21 1892) 6.

¹¹⁶ *Anti-Caste* (February and March 1892) 4, original emphasis.

¹¹⁷ Duster, *Crusade for Justice* (note 57).

¹¹⁸ S. Silkey, Redirecting the tide of white imperialism (note 24).

¹¹⁹ The dispute was over Mayo's disapproval of Catherine's proposal of marriage to a Ceylonese man George Ferdinands, one of Mayo's lodgers. Wells reflected upon the events in her autobiography, see Duster, *Crusade for Justice* (note 57), 103–105. It is also discussed by Holton, Segregation, racism and white women (note 23), and V. Ware, *Beyond the Pale* (note 22). Moore has written about the dispute from Mayo's perspective and comes to different conclusions: Moore, *The Reputation of Isabella Fyvie Mayo* (note 82).

close links with the politics of labour.¹²⁰ Supporters of Impey established a new journal the *Bond of Brotherhood*, edited by W Evans Darby (Secretary of the Peace Society). However, Darby's support for Joseph Malins – the head of a temperance order that had allowed for the racial segregation of the movement in the United States – was unfathomable to Impey. She had split with Malins, left the temperance movement and established *Anti-Caste* because of the issue of segregated temperance lodges in the United States.¹²¹ She felt that any endorsement of Malins undermined the principles of the movement. She and a number of women left the collective bound by the *Bond of Brotherhood* and re-launched *Anti-Caste*.¹²²

The first number of the seventh volume of *Anti-Caste* was published for free distribution in March 1895. Issues of colour caste remained its focus, the editorial address reflecting on the continuing power of the system. Impey argued that caste separation existed because of the will of two kinds of people – those who openly or secretly demanded it, and those who, whether from apathy or policy, yielded to their unjust demand. The following number became a special memorial double issue marking the death of Frederick Douglass.¹²³ The next issue was another bi-monthly with a report of the Annual India Congress held in Madras the previous December in addition to reports of kidnappings in the South Sea Islands and Australia. Florence Balfour was praised for her work with the English Anti-Lynching Committee, set up in the final days of Ida B. Wells' tour in 1894. The paper also welcomed the announcement of a new newspaper, *The Basis*, to be devoted to the cause of 'Equal Rights as between white and coloured races in America.'¹²⁴ A note that an account of the continuing sufferings of Aborigines in Australia had to be held over implies that another issue was being planned, but the summer issue appears to be the final publication of *Anti-Caste*. The fledgling movement Impey had established was unable to support three newspapers. By 1897 it seems both the *Bond of Brotherhood* and *Fraternity* had ceased publication.¹²⁵

Conclusion

In their journals Impey and Edwards developed a geographical imagination that connected racial inequalities beyond the constraints of Empire. Underpinned by a consciousness of broader social oppression, their readers were presented with a geographical imagination that connected a critical examination of racial segregation and the violence of racial oppression in the United States with white Dominions and imperial spaces old and new in India, Africa and the Caribbean. By drawing together experiences of racial prejudice and violence against people of colour, the editors drew attention and on occasion were able to give voice, although still a mediated one, to the racially oppressed, be they African-American Professors or Ceylonese migrant workers. Their publications

illustrate the kinds of debates that were in operation among those who sought to criticise racial prejudice. Although the aim of the editors was clear – racial prejudice had to be combated in order to realise human equality – the kind of activism required for this to become a reality was not really discussed in either paper.

To judge from the contents of *Anti-Caste*, Impey was confident that once people knew of the hardship racial prejudice inflicted and were made aware of their role in these networks of inequality they would simply not stand for it. How they would or should give voice to their inevitable anger was never spelt out. Although Impey personally boycotted societies that did not uphold her views of equality, demands to engage in organised forms of action, for example the boycotting of teashops or products made with United States cotton were not promoted in the pages of *Fraternity* or *Anti-Caste*. Nor, despite the expansion of the geographical reach of reporting introduced by Edwards in 1893, did 'people of colour' regularly include white Jewish or Irish people. Early discussions that presented racial prejudice as one of many different corporeal injustices did not result in the development of a geographical imagination that consistently included a politics of whiteness. This absence, particularly geographies of prejudice 'at home', meant that an opportunity to create a broader narrative of anti-racism, one that included anti-Semitism and other forms of faith-based racism was not developed.

Yet, by placing the rights of the oppressed at the centre of their reports Impey and Edwards developed the scope of their readers' geographical imaginaries of equality beyond that of many contemporary socialists, positivists and anti-imperial nationalists. If they were not the most radical, they were among the most idealistically demanding of the early contributors to progressive politics in Britain. A number of the themes they raised remain familiar to this day, including the need for a greater understanding of Islam, our role as consumers in networks of consumption and exploitation, the opaque links between British military foreign interventions and capitalism, the importance of giving voice to the oppressed and how to do it effectively, and how to create a language of anti-racism that encapsulates the theoretical folly and real violence of race thinking.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank James Kneale, Jennifer Robinson, Felix Driver and the three reviewers for their comments on previous drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank the archivists who assisted my research at the Society of Friends, London; National Library, Cape Town; Clark Archive, Somerset; Rhodes House, Oxford and Chautauqua County Historical Society, Westfield, New York. Also, thanks to the Leverhulme Trust and the ESRC (RES-22-0522) who supported travel to these archives and other aspects of the research.

¹²⁰ Carolyn Martyn and the final editor Frank Smith were important figures in the early socialist movement and the establishment of the Labour Party, see C. Cowman 'With a lofty moral purpose': Caroline Martyn, Enid Stacy, Margaret McMillan, Katherine St John Conway and the cult of the good woman socialist, 212–224, in: G. Cubitt, A. Warren, (Eds), *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, Manchester, 2001; E. Champness, *Frank Smith, M.P. Pioneer and Modern Mystic*, London, 1943.

¹²¹ D. Fahey, *Temperance and Racism: John Bull, Johnny Reb, and the Good Templars*, Kentucky, 1996.

¹²² Editor's Address, AC March 1895, 1.

¹²³ *Anti-Caste* (April–May 1895).

¹²⁴ *Anti-Caste* (June–July 1895). *The Basis* ceased publication in April 1896, see M. Elliot, *Color-Blind Justice: Albion Tourgée and the Quest for Racial Equality from the Civil War to Plessy V. Ferguson*, Oxford, 2006.

¹²⁵ These are the final issues recovered to date. Although notices of thanks were published from libraries in Bristol and Dublin for issues from 1895, no copies of *Fraternity* from this year have yet been traced.