In January 1949, the Dutch Senate discussed the recent military offensive against the Indonesian Republic, which had been halted by Resolution 63 of the United Nations Security Council. Communist member Jan Haken quoted letters sent by Dutch conscripts. One case concerned an act of revenge for the death of two Dutch soldiers, when the company burned down the nearest kampung and randomly shot at least ten local men. The soldier wrote, “If you tell the men this is just like the Huns had done, they answer that ‘these blackies’ are to blame themselves.” Nearly four years later, in the British House of Commons, the colonial secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, was pressed to explain military methods in Kenya. Labour Party member of Parliament Maurice Edelman asked whether the “sinister proportions” of killed to wounded Kenyans indicated the security forces were pursuing a “shoot to kill” policy, including executing the wounded. Lyttelton refused “to allow British soldiers . . . to have to fight entirely with their hands tied behind their backs.” In both the Dutch and British cases, attempts to hold ministers accountable for human rights violations signally failed. This chapter asks why such attempts failed, because accountability failure meant extreme violence could continue unchecked. We build on scholarship that analyzes the politics of international law to investigate how colonial powers attempted to bypass universal human rights standards. As Fabian Klose points out, European powers violated in the colonies the very same principles they championed at home. We argue that the politics of domestic governmental accountability must be understood to properly account for the success of this sustained hypocrisy.
In the spring of 1949 an unstable truce was reached after pressure in the United Nations, enabling negotiations to start between the governments of the Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands. The final settlement resulted in a “transfer of sovereignty” on 29 December 1949. The conflict cost at least one hundred thousand Indonesian lives and approximately five thousand lives of the Dutch military. From the early stages onward, tens of thousands of Dutch and Eurasian civilians were either killed or forced to migrate. Just across the Straits of Malacca another colonial conflict was in its early stages: the Malayan Emergency, declared by the British authorities on 16 June 1948. The Malayan Communist Party, supported mainly by ethnic Chinese, launched an armed bid for independence from a Britain severely weakened, in material and moral terms, by the wartime Japanese occupation. In October 1952 another “emergency” was declared. In Kenya the Mau Mau movement sought to achieve national liberation by building on widespread discontent over land distribution, primarily in the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru communities. Both British “emergencies” lasted until 1960, though the serious fighting was over earlier.4

Colonial wars were fought outside the field of vision of metropolitan peoples. Did imperialism in general “infuse . . . every organ of British life”? Or was public opinion apathetic to empire? Only a minority of Britons participated in the empire’s wars after 1945.5 In the Dutch case, society assumed the nation’s economy and international status depended on the empire.6 In all, 220,000 men were deployed as members of the Dutch armed forces in the effort to restore colonial rule, among them some 70,000 in the colonial army.7 Yet the war happened far away, and preconceived ideas may have mattered more than news about bad military conduct. If there was a prevailing detachment, this expanded the opportunities for manipulating information and framing interpretations in desirable directions. Decolonization occurred after the Second World War, when attributing the qualities of good and evil had become an instrument of mobilization. Such discourses lingered after the war, even though the European powers refused to apply the concept of “war” in colonial conflicts. As Europe demobilized after 1945, in the colonies formal and virtual states of war remained. Domestically the United Kingdom and the Netherlands returned to liberal democracy and political accountability; at the same time they restored authoritarian colonial structures. In the discussion quoted above, another member of the Dutch Senate, A. B. Roosjen of the conservative Protestant Party ARP, urged politicians “not to destroy what the military had accomplished: restoring law and order in our overseas territories.”8 Advocates of these policies felt they could compare their methods favorably to the uniquely harsh violence employed by Nazi Germany. Even the purposes underpinning these projects were contrasted: the Nazis
as selfish aggressors; the British and Dutch as enlightened powers, wisely guiding underdeveloped peoples.\textsuperscript{9}

In the opening section of this chapter, we explain why the British and Dutch cases are worth comparing, how the comparison is conducted, and reflect on several important similarities. The second section of the chapter argues that the general picture of limited accountability in these cases must be related to the transmission of information about the violence taking place in the colonies. We dissect the multiple official channels by which information passed from the local level in the colony up to regional centers and thence on to the metropole. At each point we analyze the ways in which violence was framed, to assess whether the information channels constituted a filtration system, whereby knowledge about transgressive violence became downplayed or even eliminated. If the process as a whole tended to sanitize violence, then we need to account for the times when this did not happen—during scandals about atrocities. In its third section, the chapter compares the thresholds for scandal: what constituted “scandalous” violence, who brought about the complaint, and how were these scandals inflamed in public discourse? Finally, in section four, the chapter examines scandal management. The techniques of evasion, denial and delay, and diversion were enacted to prevent senior leaders from taking responsibility for atrocities. The chapter comparatively analyzes the extent to which these methods were used in the case studies to evade accountability. To conclude, the chapter evaluates the extent to which successful information management contributed to the ongoing perpetration of transgressive violence.

\textbf{Comparing the Dutch and British Cases}

The Dutch and British cases share a central outcome, which shapes the comparison to follow: no government minister ever accepted responsibility for transgressive state violence, despite being formally accountable.\textsuperscript{10} Responsibility might have meant resignation from office or even conviction in a criminal court. We do not attempt to produce a replicable theory about accountability in wartime. Rather, the purpose is to understand the causal mechanisms involved in the Dutch and British cases.\textsuperscript{11} The literatures on both countries emphasize the national particularity involved in their responses to colonial disorder. The comparative method is well suited to problematizing this assumption.\textsuperscript{12} To ensure coherence between the cases, the analysis is structured around the phases of information management, scandal emergence, and scandal management. The comparison is focused by attending directly to these questions, avoiding a detailed narrative about
the conflicts in general. By disaggregating the cases into the phases whereby accountability was avoided, the chapter identifies the importance of timing in the causal mechanisms and allows for within-case comparisons about the relative causal weight to be accorded to each phase. Combining within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons in this manner can assist in drawing out the implications for future research.

Accountability exists only if elected representatives and the public can access accurate, timely information about government actions. In this section we analyze information management processes to demonstrate how knowledge about violence could be hidden, minimized, or lost. But first we describe an essential context for both cases: the prevalence of state propaganda. Measuring propaganda’s effectiveness is difficult. But the state’s efforts to influence thinking about the conflicts, in the war zone, at home, and internationally, is telling. In the Dutch case, the wartime trauma of occupation turned into a plea for restoring national strength after 1945. The government promoted volksweerbaarheid (“popular fighting spirit”) in its press policies to connect morale at home to the troops overseas. The domestic Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst (RVD–The Hague: National Information Service) coordinated relations with the press. The war also witnessed an intense interconnection in the colony between the propaganda organized by the civil Regeringsvoorlichtingsdienst (RVD-Batavia: Government Information Service) and the military information services. Officials and journalists circulated between the two spheres all the time. News was framed in “positive” ways: by claiming to restore order for “the peace-loving paddy-growers,” in pointing at the cruelty of the enemy, or by avoiding sensitive topics, like not showing pictures of casualties. Embedded journalists and documentary film makers were instrumental, and control over them was closely maintained.

Britain ended the Second World War with a highly sophisticated propaganda apparatus. Though the Ministry of Information was abolished, the emerging Cold War prompted the government to make propaganda a central element in foreign and colonial policy. The Information Research Department was created within the Foreign Office in January 1948 to counter the communist threat. From 1949 the IRD operated against “anti-British” elements (including those in the empire), alongside the information services run by the colonial authorities in each territory.

Civil servants in The Hague as well as in Batavia (Jakarta) received reports from administrators and military commanders in the field. They were able to steer reporting by speaking to editors and embedding journalists. Embedding happened under the aegis of the military information services, who provided as well as vetted information. Moreover, many media outlets were connected to their affiliated political parties. For example, the leader of the
Roman Catholic Political Party (KVP) in Parliament was the political editor of two leading Roman Catholic newspapers. The same applied to his counterpart in the previously mentioned ARP, while the editors of the Labor Party (PvdA) newspaper and the Socialist Broadcasting Society (VARA) were leading members in the Labor Party.\textsuperscript{21} The independent Dutch News Agency ANP (Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau) was closely connected to the government. An example pinpoints how positions in the chain of information might be blurred: W.A. van Goudoever, a former editor-in-chief of the Semarang newspaper \textit{De Locomotief}, was recruited by the RVD-Batavia and conducted fact-finding missions about military operations. He was part of a network that extended from the army commander’s headquarters and the lieutenant governor-general’s cabinet in Batavia to the Ministry of the Colonies at The Hague.\textsuperscript{22} Thus the line between “official” and “unofficial” information was difficult to distinguish. In the colonial context, small communities of decision makers, administrators, and ranking officers communicated all the time, sharing assumptions about “military necessity” and “responsible reporting.”

In the British case the government sought to restrict criticism by delegitimizing colonial opponents as mere criminals. These messages were essential to turn the populations in Malaya and Kenya against the insurgents and to convince domestic and international audiences that the violence was nothing worth bothering about. In a defining move on 12 November 1948 the Colonial Office decreed that those “engaged in acts of violence in Malaya should be referred to as ‘bandits.’ On no account should the term ‘insurgents,’ which might suggest a genuine popular uprising, be used.” The terminology mattered for economic reasons, too. Insurance companies only covered the lucrative rubber estates for losses in an emergency—not those incurred in war. By December 1949 the Foreign Office was pressing for official terminology to refer to “communist terrorists,” to align British and American Cold War strategy.\textsuperscript{23} In Kenya the dominant propaganda themes changed several times. At first, propaganda emphasized insurgent brutality, such as the Lari massacre in March 1953, when the Mau Mau killed 120 African loyalists. This presented the conflict as an intra-tribal dispute, rather than as anticolonial. After a new Department of Information was created in January 1954, a more “positive” tone came about. Kikuyu were told about the opportunities open to them as alternatives to joining the Mau Mau. A final shift occurred in 1955: officials removed any references to the Mau Mau in public discourse, instead focusing on the achievements made in colonial development programs, such as land reform. Vilification had given way to diversion, and then in turn to distraction. In the process a tremendous expansion took place. The personnel working on propaganda in the colony rose from 46 in 1952 to 331 by the end of 1954.\textsuperscript{24}
As in the Dutch experience, the British attempted to control understandings about colonial violence by influencing journalists. Officials went to great lengths to cultivate journalists covering colonial conflicts, keeping them supplied with information so that they were less likely to seek out sensational news of their own. In Nairobi the press received situation reports three times a day. Paradoxically, the media’s commitment to objectivity sometimes resulted in stories about atrocities being omitted. The *Times*’s archive, for example, contains several draft stories about abuses in Kenya, never to make it into print. In December 1952 and December 1953, officials confessed to correspondent Oliver Woods that police and military forces were torturing suspects. But Woods never wrote a story about these revelations, fearing the evidence was not reliable enough to meet the newspaper’s standards. The local *East African Standard* newspaper toed the government line throughout the emergency, and even produced the Swahili newspaper, *Baraza*, on the government’s behalf. In terms of the domestic audience, the British government benefited from the media taking little interest in Malaya. Most fighting took place in the jungle, making it difficult to report and not very interesting. The Colonial Office successfully countered critical stories in the *Daily Worker* and *Malayan Monitor* newspapers by cultivating the trade union movement, where concerns about British policy were being voiced. Trade unions received special information to correct the “misunderstandings.” Colonial Office lobbying exploited the emerging anticommunism on the British left to discredit the Malayan Communist Party. Kenya proved to be more visually rewarding for the media. But the frequent depictions in the press and in newsreels of mass roundup operations gave the security forces favorable treatment.

**Information Management from Colony to Metropole**

Political awareness about events in the colonies was not a neutral property resulting from the acquisition and interpretation of information and coming to tenable conclusions. Information flows from the battlefield to the nodes of responsibility were manipulated to serve the interests of those who compiled the reports and guided attention. Information is managed to produce desired results. In a liberal democratic polity, accountability is regulated along formal political lines, at the higher end of which parliament, government, and cabinet ministers share the ultimate responsibility. Although the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have different political systems, in principle accountability should function with the same logic. Neil Mitchell’s analysis proposes that leaders apply broad repertoires to evade accountability for acts of extreme violence.
committed by their armed forces. The “management of blame” is subject to “political gravity”: the highest responsible authorities generally manage to transfer the blame to the lowest possible level, such as troops in the field or local administrators. Doing so is only possible if leaders possess information that can be subjected to the “correct” presentation.

Accountability avoidance derived partly from structural factors common to both Dutch and British cases. In the first place, military information systems are geared toward achieving victory. Rapidly gathering, processing, and acting on a vast quantity of information can give an army a decisive edge in war. These information streams were derived from the general staff systems introduced in the 1890s, when political accountability for military atrocities was hardly a priority. A second factor concerns the military propensity for optimism. During military operations, positive news tends to be transmitted up the chain of command, whereas bad news is likely to be downplayed or quashed. Armies in combat need to maintain a positive outlook to endure the horrors they face. It is also due to the fact that armies are hierarchical organizations that reward success: painting an uplifting picture can improve an officer’s career prospects. Third, the European powers depended on locally recruited security forces during their decolonization wars, to provide capacity at a cheaper cost than metropolitan manpower. Knowledge about these forces’ misdeeds could be denied, as they often operated in a confused or incomplete chain of command. Finally, all military organizations depend on secrecy. The British state was exceptionally secretive after the Second World War. Cabinet ministers were easily excluded from decision making on nuclear weapons, for example. Parliament’s ability to investigate defense topics was severely circumscribed.

The Dutch information system was more diffuse. Formally, communication between Batavia and The Hague was the responsibility of the governor-general (from 1948 onward, the high commissioner of the crown) and the minister of colonies (from 1946 onward, of overseas territories). The governor-general was the supreme authority in the colony, responsible for the administration, the judiciary, and the armed forces (expeditionary force and colonial army, but Royal Navy excluded). In the Parliament, the minister of colonies was responsible for all matters colonial. In practice, other information channels existed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created an agency to liaise with Batavia—DIRVO (Directie Verre Oosten: Directorate for the Far East)—to support diplomacy worldwide. Other ministries had their own contacts in the administration, as well as in the public relations organizations—Defense and Navy in the first place, also Finance and Economic Affairs. Such contacts raised mutual suspicions when matters got tense. P. J. Koets, the chief of cabinet of the high commissioner, complained in January 1949 about “anonymous telegram exchanges” between field commanders
and their counterparts in the Dutch defense organization. He explicitly criticized “the romanticism” in the reporting by the army commander, General Simon H. Spoor. Overoptimistic reporting on the impact of his recent military offensive could have a dangerous impact on politicians at home who had no experience of the situation on the ground, Koets argued.35

Troops in the field reported daily to their headquarters on operational and intelligence issues. Tactical reporting routinely included mention of enemy fighters “laid down” or “shot while escaping.”36 The army commander’s office compiled information in comprehensive surveys, often on a daily basis, for the governor-general while leaving out most details.37 Batavia would add the accounts received from the field administration before sending them to the ministry at The Hague.38 Next, the Colonial Office compiled weekly reports that went to the cabinet and a select committee of Parliament.39 Thus, a multistaged practice of information management influenced the opportunities for accountability. In the reports from Batavia, actions by the enemy were highlighted, whereas those of the Dutch troops were mentioned much less, if at all. The responsible civil servants and politicians continuously received accounts of violations of truce, infiltrations, ambushes, attacks, and cruelties by the enemy. A sense was stimulated that harsh action had to be taken. Reports from Batavia paid attention to the internal political situation within the Republic of Indonesia, building an expectation that moderate leaders would get the upper hand if the Dutch held firm. The fear was expressed that the position of the supposed moderates would be undermined by radicals, being the “real enemies.” If relying on such “official streams of information,” judgment would unavoidably be tainted by thinking in terms of “military necessity” as a political instrument for mastering the situation.40 The same tendency defined the reporting by the government information services.41

These formal exchanges were complemented by communications along private, professional, political, and military avenues. Civil servants added private annexes to reports for their trusted counterparts overseas, senior officers exchanged opinions, politicians traveled frequently on the expanding KLM airline, and soldiers wrote letters home. Censorship of letters home was hardly effective. Nevertheless, troop commanders tried to suppress “undesirable political activities,” particularly monitoring communist and former National Socialist soldiers. All services acted on the understanding that “facts, of which publication is considered impossible or undesired” should be suppressed.42 Yet the Netherlands lacked a version of the British Official Secrets Act. On several occasions in 1946 and 1947 the Dutch cabinet discussed the possible introduction of such a law, explicitly referencing the British example.43 During the Indonesian War of Independence, it did not materialize, however. In any case, no strong culture of secrecy existed. The colonial administrators and military moved around in small
circles. People had shared education, careers, and experiences, worked together closely, visited parties, and drank together. In Batavia and elsewhere, Indonesians, also including Republican officials, shared news and gossip. Secrets did not remain secret for very long. What mattered was the capacity for steering and framing information. And this was challenged, even in government circles. In late 1949, as negotiations with Indonesia drew to a close, former minister of colonies J. A. A. Logemann wrote to his successor Johan van Maarseveen about the weekly reports to The Hague: “as in earlier times, this weekly report does not provide facts at all, only highly speculative and tendentious comments.” In his reply, the minister of the Roman Catholic Party in the coalition admitted the reporting from Batavia “did not excel in terms of objectivity.”

Official reporting chains in the British case must be seen in the context of a different constitutional situation. In the United Kingdom, Parliament’s authority over colonial matters was never clear, owing to the wide powers devolved to colonial governors, and the existence of legislative councils in many territories. Parliament legislated on imperial issues, such as defense and finance, but most legislation pertaining to a particular colony was enacted through Orders in Council, effectively ministerial decree. Information reached the cabinet as a whole, and the responsible secretaries of state for the colonies and war, via three channels. Firstly, the joint intelligence apparatus coordinated secret and open-source information. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) presided over a well-oiled machine with several levels. The committee comprised representatives from the three armed services, the Secret Intelligence Service (foreign intelligence), the Security Service (domestic intelligence), the Foreign Office, and, from 1948, the Colonial Office. Other departments attended meetings as necessary. Each department gathered intelligence; the committee then produced assessments on specific threats, several hundred each year. However, the JIC only became seriously involved in colonial intelligence after 1955. Before then, much was devolved to each colony’s local intelligence committee. During the Malaya and Kenya emergencies a hierarchy of committees took information from the district to the provincial and then the colony level. These committees normally met at least fortnightly and produced reports for their superior organization. Intelligence was gathered by the colonial administration, the police Special Branch, and the army. The Special Branch was normally the lead agency, receiving periodic advice from the Security Service, which had liaison officers in colonial territories.

The second avenue for reporting was from the governor to the Colonial Office in London. British colonial administration rested upon the belief that decision-making should be devolved as far as possible. The governor and his senior officials corresponded with the Colonial Office, which liaised with other departments where necessary. For Malaya, the office of the commissioner-general for
South-East Asia (in Singapore) was also involved in information management. Within the colonies a system of emergency committees operated. In Kenya the Provincial Emergency Committees, and their subordinate committees at district level, directed operations in their area. Chaired by the leading colonial official for the area, they brought the administration, military, and police together. They reported ultimately to the War Council presided over by the governor, which decided policy. Finally, the military chain of command stretched back to the War Office. Battalions in the field gave reports to their superior brigade at the end of every planned operation, in addition to real-time updates by radio signal. These were then sent to the headquarters commanding the campaign: Malaya District, or East Africa Command. Malaya District was responsible to the commander in chief, Far Eastern Land Forces. His assessments were sent weekly both to the

FIGURE 2.1  During the Kenyan Emergency, a British Army patrol searches a man suspected of being a member of the Mau Mau insurgent movement. (© Imperial War Museum [MAU 552])
regional Defense Co-ordination Committee (Far East), and direct to the War Office. For Kenya the superior headquarters was the Middle East Land Forces, subject to the same regional arrangements as in the Far East. From October 1952 the governor’s military staff officer in Nairobi directed operations. In June 1953 General George Erskine was sent to become the new commander in chief, East Africa Command. He had authority over all security forces and reported to the War Office.\textsuperscript{51}

Low-level reports covered tactical incidents in detail. These described events that may have constituted illegal or excessive violence. In Kenya, “On the 19th August [1953] an alleged informer, leading a Police party up the Telaswani River in the Timau area, tried to escape. Failing to halt when challenged he was shot dead.”\textsuperscript{52} At times, this phrase could be a euphemism for an illegal execution. Or it could represent a legitimate response to a dangerous situation. There is seldom any discussion in the sources—once the matter had been briefly itemized, it normally disappeared from the agenda. In any case there were simply too many of these tactical records produced for senior politicians and commanders to read them. At the next level up, province summaries still mentioned violence. Again a Kenya example is instructive: “An operation was mounted on the 7th May, 1954, on Kilombe Hill by the Devons, which resulted in the killing of one unidentified Kikuyu, who ran when challenged, and having no identification documents.”\textsuperscript{53} The lack of documents serves to close down any interest in the case. Without even knowing the deceased, how could any inquiries proceed? The top-level reports, such as the minutes of the Colony Emergency Committee, generally omitted specific incidents. These were the records most likely to be seen by politicians and generals in Britain. They did contain a clear sense of the repressive policies being pursued. A Kenya Colony Emergency Committee meeting in May 1953, for example, agreed to permit the security forces to open fire during ambushes without giving the normal legally required warning beforehand.\textsuperscript{54} Clearly granting such license was dangerous in creating a permissive environment for excessive killing—which is precisely what took place. Yet the absence of any language conveying human suffering connected to abstract policy decisions made the paper easy to skim over and quickly be forgotten. Sanitizing how events were described as the paper trail reached the top of government effectively rendered willful ignorance an irresistible choice.

The Eruption of Scandals

Scandals had the potential to disrupt the normal state of ignorance, or apathy, about extreme violence. In this section we demonstrate how scandals remained
exceptions to the rule. Most often, potential scandals were defused before they threatened to throw policy off course. During the first months of the Indonesian struggle for independence, much emphasis was put on the fate of the Dutch internees who were forced to remain secluded to escape the waves of violence occurring in several areas, the Bersiap/Berdaulat. Consequently, the Dutch mindset assumed the violent character of the Indonesian Revolution and the need to restore colonial authority. This is not to suggest the public sphere was under an iron regime suppressing information contrary to the official view. In the postwar Netherlands, there was much space for critical voices opposing the war. After the proclamation of Indonesian independence the debate evolved in two directions: either a new relationship with an autonomous or independent Indonesia, or restoring colonial rule. These issues were passionately discussed in the media, in Parliament, as well as in meetings at grassroots level. The conservative spectrum (Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Conservative Liberals) rejected negotiations with Sukarno’s Republic, advocated military force against “bandits” and “communists,” and refused to acknowledge the right of Indonesians to self-determination. Socialists, Progressive Liberals, and Liberal Protestants believed in a common future for the Netherlands and Indonesia in a voluntary union of sovereign states under the Dutch crown. The Communist platform promoted complete Indonesian independence and resisted deploying the military for recolonization.

One of the most active critics was Frans Goedhart, a socialist MP, founder and former editor of the resistance paper Het Parool. Goedhart traveled regularly to Indonesia and reported on Dutch atrocities. He worked with fellow Labor MP Nico Palar, an Indonesian who soon became disillusioned with Dutch politics and joined the Indonesian delegation at the United Nations. Another leading ex-resistance paper editor was Henk van Randwijk, who had many connections in the Indonesian freedom movement. He received letters from conscripts pointing to acts of indiscriminate violence. All this suggests the public sphere in the Netherlands concerning the war was as divided as the top political leadership. The left was pushed into a minority position, because of the political cleavage between socialists and Communists; the latter proved to be the most ardent adversaries of the war, but during the Cold War they were brandished as unpatriotic. Thus, the actions of Communist MPs and the reporting in the Communist newspaper De Waarheid did not get as much resonance as the subject matter deserved. In the spring of 1946 the socialist MP Palar was the first to intervene in Parliament concerning Dutch atrocities. This related to a case occurring in April, as the British military administration in West Java reacted furiously after a Dutch action “purging” the village of Pesing. Goedhart had been informed about the case by a Dutch journalist, who introduced him to an army captain of the Reserve, who was appalled by the behavior of the troops. He asked Palar to intervene in The
Hague. The minister of colonies instructed Batavia to investigate the case, but a committee whose members belonged to the colonial army and administration accepted the explanations of the implicated military. Later in the same year the administration let the case drop, basically exonerating the troops. Nevertheless the Pesing case was an early example of a practice developed by the military and civil authorities in the colony during the conflict when dealing with the communication of atrocities. Time and again, critical voices would be discredited and muffled by repertoires of blaming the whistle-blowers, blaming the enemy and his propaganda, blaming the circumstances, pointing at the fog of war, denying facts, denying responsibility, and indicating the importance of the mission.

Over the years 1945–1949, information on an array of atrocities by Dutch troops reached the metropole. MPs called to account the government in specific cases. In 1946 these matters included, besides the Pesing incident, a reprisal at Meester Cornelis. In 1947 letters from conscripts were cited in the left-wing press and Parliament about the mistreatment and killing of prisoners. In December Dutch troops killed unarmed men in Rawagede, West Java (120 according to Dutch sources, 431 by Indonesian accounts). The news was brought into the open by United Nations representatives. The most outrageous episode of the war was the “Westerling affair” developing in late 1946. Directed to “pacify” South Sulawesi, Captain R.P.P. Westerling and his special forces conducted a campaign of summary executions. His unit went from village to village, collecting the population on the central square, and interrogating presumed “terrorists,” assisted in this task by informers. In the process, special forces and regular colonial troops that joined the campaign shot at least thirty-five hundred persons. In February 1947, as the campaign was drawing to an end, the authorities in Batavia decided things were getting out of hand and withdrew the special forces (see also Asselin and Schulte Nordholt). When in July 1947 the press broke the news, the minister promised an investigation committee, but the report was only finalized in December 1948. The delay was blamed on a “lack of staff” for the committee. Moreover, the report was restricted to members of Parliament. In late 1950, the prime minister announced that no prosecution against Westerling was to be undertaken.

In 1948 and 1949 more letters from soldiers found their way into the press and Parliament. A letter detailing atrocities during the occupation of Yogyakarta in January 1949, published by the left-wing De Groene Amsterdammer, provoked questions in Parliament. Prime Minister Willem Drees was forced to promise another inquiry. As the inquiry proceeded, the minister of overseas territories complained that information about atrocities tended to be vague. Fact-finding was thus extremely difficult. The scandal was defused by means of delaying tactics, beyond the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in December 1949.
In the final year of the war, military operations escalated before a final round of negotiations started. Journalists and MPs on the left kept appealing to ministers about atrocities. These included the killing of prisoners in East Borneo and Malang and the shooting of Red Cross workers at Peniwen. The official reply remained the same: the army command had issued orders against excessive violence, and the authorities in Batavia remained committed to bringing to justice those who broke the rules of engagement. Once again, the socialist MP Frans Goedhart pressed for an inquiry. He was told by the colonial secretary that such an initiative might endanger the peace negotiations. The government and its agencies stuck to publicly supporting the assumption that the war had to be won first, that the purpose was right, and that atrocities were in essence caused by derailed individuals, not by the actions of the command structures and their civilian allies.

In the British case, only the Suez invasion in 1956 caused a major political crisis back home—and this was a dispute about the conflict’s legitimacy, rather than the violent methods employed during its course. Popular culture reflected uninterest in state violence toward the colonized. Memoirs written by soldiers and officials with frontline experience, and published while the conflicts simmered on, treated their deployment as a big adventure, often replete with hunting metaphors. References to transgressive violence by the state were notable by their absence. By the mid-1950s, newspapers, radio, and newsreels gave considerable coverage to the conflict in Kenya. But these reports paid little attention to the security forces’ behavior, instead sympathizing with the plight of European settlers subjected to the Mau Mau’s bestial violence. Any references to state violence usually framed it as defensive, necessary, and restrained. Three feature films about Kenya appeared while the conflict was under way. Simba (1955) and Safari (1956) conformed to official propaganda in portraying the Mau Mau as a brutal, anti-Christian movement; Europeans were clearly depicted as victims, not perpetrators. Hollywood’s Something of Value (1957) offered a more subtle account, leading the viewer to draw critical conclusions about colonialism, especially of the white settler variety. Overall, popular culture did little to lead public opinion toward a sustained critique of colonial violence. Cultural representations of insurgents as remarkably brutal shrank the political space for standing up for the rights of Malayan and Kenyan civilians subjected to colonial violence.

A range of anticolonial organizations operated on the left of British politics. Immediately after the Second World War the left prioritized domestic reconstruction and the expanding welfare state over anything in the colonies. Perhaps the best-known group, the Movement for Colonial Freedom (formed in 1954, after the most extreme violence in Malaya and Kenya was over), never attracted more than a thousand individual members. Though criticism of Prime Minister
Clement Attlee’s administration arose in relation to policy in India and Palestine, these controversies surrounded partition and withdrawal, rather than military action. The public’s interest in Britain’s international affairs was largely sated by policy makers’ success in sustaining the country’s image as a great power, even in an age of relative decline. Decolonization violence made no difference to the British voter’s life, in stark contrast to the Dutch situation. Consequently, attempts by activists to expose atrocities were consistently knocked back. Between December 1951 and December 1952 Labour MPs repeatedly criticized the recently elected Conservative government for the collective punishment measures applied in Malaya and Kenya. Their condemnation failed to hit home, as these measures had been authorized by the prior Labour administration. A motion against collective punishment attracted 131 signatures; yet another motion, applauding the tactic as “just and firm,” achieved 138. Public indifference melded with parliamentary arithmetic to neutralize the potential for change.

Labour MPs Leslie Hale and Fenner Brockway visited Kenya in November 1952 to investigate. On returning to the House of Commons they called for extensive arrests and detention without trial to be halted. In July 1953 a Kenya Committee was publicly launched in London, attended by Communist Party members, trade unionists, Labour Party members, and Kenyan representatives. The group, which continued to be dominated by the Communist Party, produced leaflets and held further public meetings to condemn British repression. These criticisms tended to be neutralized by official propaganda emphasizing Mau Mau savagery—thus British supporters for Kenyan nationalism could be written off as apologists for barbarity. The likes of Hale and Brockway remained on the Labour Party’s fringes. The party’s mainstream, and their allies in the Trades Union Congress, prioritized Atlanticism and anticommunism in foreign policy, not colonial liberation. In the two-party British system, an inability to make opposition to state violence a party priority effectively disarmed the issue entirely. Conservative MPs would never vote against their own party on a topic as emotive as supporting the troops in combat.

Critics outside Parliament were similarly sidelined. In May 1956 Eileen Fletcher, who had worked from December 1954 as a rehabilitation officer in the Kenyan detention camps, raised concerns in Britain. She expressed her reservations about detention practices in pamphlets, specialist journals, and the mainstream press. In June Fletcher spoke at twenty-four meetings and press conferences in a bid to win public attention. The campaign attracted interest partly because she spoke out for female and child victims, striking a chord with popular attitudes about vulnerability. On 6 June the House of Commons debated the case. Particular attention was paid to the legality of detaining children; the
CHAPTER 2

Colonial secretary argued that as all girls held in detention were over fourteen, their handling was perfectly legal. The government convinced Parliament that all was in order, partly by attacking Fletcher, and partly by describing the Mau Mau violence the detained girls were implicated in. Overall the episode failed to achieve a change in detention practices. Even the International Committee of the Red Cross became implicated in covering up state violence. Having avoided colonial conflicts on the basis that they were outside the ICRC’s remit, delegations eventually visited Kenya in 1957 and 1959. The 1957 inspection of detention facilities not only missed the systematic abuses then happening, but resulted in the delegates applauding the colonial authorities in the local press. Over the following two years government ministers exploited the ICRC’s favorable comments to rebut critics in Parliament who complained about detention conditions.

A notorious scandal did eventually hasten decolonization in Kenya. Eleven prisoners were beaten to death by guards at the Hola detention camp in March 1959, as a result of a coercive policy to force inmates to work. The authorities’ attempt to cover up the deaths as being caused by drinking contaminated water was destroyed by a damning coroner’s report. Despite a ferocious parliamentary outrage over the incident, the government managed to defend their detention policy in general terms as successful in rehabilitating the deranged Mau Mau. Even critical newspapers such as the Manchester Guardian accepted this logic. While the camp commandant and the commissioner for prisons in Kenya left office as a result, no senior official or politician in Nairobi or London was held to account. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan actually refused to let his colonial secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, resign in case Africans conclude that “they had now got the white man on the run.” The Conservative government won the general election that year with an increased majority.

Scandal Management

Whereas the preceding instances can be seen within the framework of avoiding scandal, both in the Dutch and British cases the emergence of open scandals could not always be avoided. Information management was scaled up to scandal management. There are reasons for leaders to indulge in willful ignorance or cover-ups. Foremost among these is the leaders’ reliance on their agents in the field. For example, when an intelligence organization is accused of torture, leaders may ignore the accusation because they depend on intelligence to continue making policy. If the agents are punished, an adverse impact may be had on their colleagues’ morale, leading to a drop in intelligence, or even a mutiny. Another
motivation derives from domestic politics. Elected politicians stand to gain little from criticizing their own military and security forces. A first step in managing scandals is outright denial, accompanied by attempts to discredit those who have raised the allegations. Once denial becomes implausible, leaders attempt to delay a reckoning until other events take over the news agenda. The next stage is for leaders to divert attention from the events by relativizing them. As abuses or atrocities happen in a conflict, leaders attempt to trivialize their own security forces’ misdemeanors while exaggerating the barbarous nature of the enemy. These claims are situated within longer-term propaganda by the government to shape public opinion. As a final stage in the process, leaders delegate responsibility to the most junior actor possible, and limit the blame to as small a number as possible in order to avoid demoralizing the security forces. A scapegoat must be found to validate the assertion that although there may be rotten apples, the barrel is fine. Often the scapegoat will be permitted a “soft landing” of very limited punishment.

In the Dutch case, the management of scandals in 1949 became closely tied to the unfolding military-political endgame. The Dutch had been condemned by the United Nations Security Council for their second large-scale military offensive aimed at eliminating the Indonesian Republic. This endeavor backfired, as the Indonesian Republic displayed military and political resilience, and the international community forced the Dutch to withdraw and negotiate. During the following months, however, a settlement was not reached while the military struggle escalated, and mass violence became commonplace. Dutch politicians and administrators were concerned that reports of atrocities would undermine their negotiating position. Correspondence between the minister of overseas territories and the high commissioner in Batavia illuminates the nervousness about the potential impact of scandals and the repertoire of denial, delay, and diversion deployed to keep these matters out of the public sphere. Colonial administrators wanted to continue with their policy of “pacification,” to strengthen their position during the negotiations. High Commissioner A. H. J. Lovink wrote about the dilemmas of restoring “peace and order” to his minister in The Hague, Johan van Maarseveen. Alluding to the Westerling scandal, he mentioned his recent visit to South Sulawesi, where, as compared to Java and Sumatra, “perfect degrees of law and order” existed. “If one considers,” he continued, “how this situation has been reached, one can only come to the conclusion that terror has been countered by terror, obviously successfully. I would prefer not to enter an inquiry into the methods applied.” In this context, information could be seen as harmful, and something requiring management.

At the same time the authorities tried to manage information offensively. A recurring element in the practice of diversion was discrediting whistle-blowers.
In 1947, leading missionary G. J. de Niet had written to the minister of colonies Jan Anne Jonkman, a fellow socialist. He damned the refusal to recognize Indonesian independence and branded the counterinsurgency operations as “Japanese measures of terror.” When Dutch troops took Yogyakarta in December 1948 they captured the letter. Military intelligence was eager to expose the Labor Party as unpatriotic. The director of Central Military Intelligence, Colonel Dr. J. M. Somer, sent the letter to the army commander, General Spoor, who warned the high commissioner about the “irresponsible tone” of De Niet’s correspondence. High Commissioner Louis Beel forwarded the document to the minister, who answered that he read the content with “much surprise.”

The distribution of the letter was used to discredit De Niet, and by implication Jonkman, and not to consider the issue of atrocities. What happened in 1949 was a combination of delay and diversion. Ironically, when sending the letter two years earlier, De Niet had encouraged Jonkman to share the letter widely. From his point of view, the matter should not remain secret. Jonkman then talked to the chairman of the Labor Party and with the government representative in

**FIGURE 2.2** Netherlands forces commander General Simon Spoor (center) receives parliamentary leaders from The Hague at his headquarters in Jakarta in December 1948. Spoor was frequently informed of abuse by his forces, but he and Dutch policy makers mostly frustrated prosecution of those responsible and were themselves never held accountable. (Photo: R. G. Jonkman, National Archives / Fotocollectie Dienst voor Legercontacten Indonesië)
Batavia, the independent minister of reconstruction L. Neher. Neher discussed the accusations with Spoor, finding them “rather vague” and difficult to address. Neher added that he would monitor the result of this intervention, as he had concluded that “reports and letters were written, but none of the authors would be in touch with the institutions whose actions were put to blame.” As a matter of fact, nothing further happened, until the “revelations” of early 1949. Thus, the repertoire of delay, diversion, nonresponse, blaming the whistle-blower, and political framing of criticism was applied to defuse a scandal.

These techniques would continue during the final year. In April 1949, Frans Goedhart addressed the Labor Party conference, criticizing the atrocities committed by Dutch troops during and briefly after the recent military offensive. Goedhart was countered in Parliament by the former minister of colonies and founder of a dissident Roman Catholic party Charles Welter. Welter, a colonial diehard, stated that Goedhart had no right to criticize the troops fighting a wily enemy. The leader of Labor in Parliament, M. van der Goes van Naters, approached Minister Van Maarseveen, defending Goedhart and asking for a public inquiry. Van Maarseveen said he preferred an inquiry to stay under the radar, in order not to endanger the Dutch position at the negotiating table. He promised to send legal specialists to discover if crimes had taken place on a scale that warranted prosecutions. Van der Goes assumed these specialists would be put at the disposal of the high commissioner in Batavia, so objected when it became clear they were to operate under the prosecutor-general in the colonial capital. This implied their assignment was limited to an investigation of criminal offenses under the supervision of the highest prosecutor in the colonial system—who had refrained from prosecutions so far. Despite his objections, Van der Goes did not press the matter in the interest of coalition politics. In the end, it was decided by the minister, in conjunction with the army commander and the prosecutor-general, to send three public prosecutors from the Netherlands, C. van Rij and W. H. Stam, to join the office of the prosecutor-general. They only departed on 22 September, after delays over their tropical outfits and pensions. Consequently, they arrived just more than two months before the end of colonial rule. Nevertheless, Van Rij and Stam wrote a thorough and revealing report founded on the files of the prosecutor. It was, however, submitted as late as August 1954, and then relegated to the drawers by Prime Minister Drees, only to resurface partially in 1969. Thus, the fact-finding about actual transgressive violence would be successfully relegated to the afterlife of the conflict, for decades to come.

Whereas in the Dutch experience the government seemed to be hit with multiple potential scandals at the same time, the British avoided simultaneous crises until 1959. The Hola detention camp furor made an impact precisely because it happened soon after a scandal about police repression in Nyasaland and
alongside criticism about policy in Cyprus. Earlier on, this cumulative effect was missing. During the Kenya emergency a major scandal over abuses by the security forces threatened to derail the government’s campaign against the Mau Mau. As a matter of fact, allegations of brutality by the colonial state had been raised since the counterinsurgency’s early days. Many of these implicated local forces. The Kenya Police Reserve, a force largely recruited from white settlers, was notorious for beating up suspects during questioning, sometimes with lethal consequences. These cases gained little traction in mobilizing political opposition in Britain, because they were dismissed as one-offs and, more effectively still, as wrongheaded actions by the settlers, who understandably were incensed at Mau Mau savagery. General Sir George Erskine’s appointment as military commander in June 1953 was partly intended to control the brewing controversy. He discovered that torture during interrogations and indiscriminate shootings were the rule rather than the exception. So he issued a directive to all officers in the security forces: “I will not tolerate breaches of discipline leading to unfair treatment of anybody. . . . I most strongly disapprove of ‘beating up’ the inhabitants of this country.”

Shortly after arriving, Erskine discovered that soldiers from the 5th Battalion, King's African Rifles (KAR), had executed twenty-one prisoners. This case was potentially much more damaging for the army and the British government than any earlier controversy, and therefore called for active scandal management. First, nobody had “accidentally” shot a single person in the heat of action. On the contrary, twenty-one deaths indicated premeditation. Second, twenty-one deaths implied direction by an officer. Third, the political and ethnic identity of the officer in question mattered. Crimes by settlers in the Police Reserve, or loyalist Kikuyu in the Home Guard, were condoned as impassioned acts by those with an emotional stake in the conflict. But the King's African Rifles were commanded by white, British Army officers. Such men were expected to maintain a higher standard. Finally, as an army regiment, the KAR came under the military chain of command, reporting directly back to London, and fell under military discipline. The political stakes were thus extremely high. As Erskine's investigations proceeded over the next six months, he discovered abuses by the army to be more widespread than he at first believed. Erskine came to realize the terror unleashed at the emergency’s outset could not easily be reined back in. He chose to punish offenders where possible, to cover up where not, and to continue with a military strategy that had violence against civilians at its very heart.

At first a court of inquiry was held by 70th Brigade, responsible for the 5th KAR. The court failed to fully establish what had happened on 17–18 June 1953, which contributed to Brigadier D. M. Cornah being replaced a few months later. A Major Griffiths and ten of his soldiers were placed under open arrest, while
further investigations took place. Military policemen discovered Griffiths’s unit had also shot dead two more civilians on 11 June. General Erskine hoped these matters could be resolved by court-martialing Griffiths, in what he described as a “revolting and unforgivable case.” At the trial in late November, the court heard how Major Griffiths executed two civilians at a checkpoint. He was acquitted because of a technicality that arose from the prosecution’s incompetence—they pressed one murder charge, and then proved he murdered the other man. Erskine was incensed by this verdict. Investigators began to prepare for a second trial covering the later events. Opposition leader Clement Attlee led questions in the House of Commons, demanding to know whether the case reflected broader practices in the army. The controversy centered on allegations about a competitive military culture that encouraged killing, regardless of whether the victims were legitimate targets or not. For the army, any blame needed to be appended to the most junior person possible, and make him a scapegoat. The Griffiths court-martials served to hold to account a rogue, relatively junior, officer, without looking into the wider practices in the army. However, the parliamentary pressures for more systemic questions to be addressed could not be completely ignored. If they must be answered, then General Erskine would follow a fundamental principle in military leadership—by taking the initiative.

On 5 December 1953 Erskine asked London for permission to establish a court of inquiry into military misconduct. The cabinet agreed, announcing the move to Parliament five days later. Lieutenant-General Sir Kenneth McLean flew out to chair the inquiry. His remit covered three areas: monetary rewards to soldiers for kills; whether units kept scoreboards to compare kill rates; and deliberate stoking of a competitive killing approach by commanders. Over twelve days he heard evidence from 147 witnesses. McLean found one instance of officers offering cash rewards to soldiers for kills. Scoreboards were deemed to exist for keeping track of statistics rather than to encourage killing. Finally, McLean discovered a normal rivalry between units, with no “unhealthy” attitude toward killing the enemy. The inquiry concluded the army’s reputation for “restraint backed by good discipline” remained intact. These findings were warmly welcomed in Parliament. Even critical MPs, such as Richard Crossman, now believed the army was operating to acceptable ethical standards. This outcome resulted, however, from careful stage management. Prime Minister Winston Churchill personally blocked the inquiry from examining all aspects of the army’s conduct, and insisted the evidence be heard behind closed doors. Erskine agreed that a “full enquiry” might well “do more harm than good.” McLean was prevented from looking into events before 1 June 1953, when the use of violence against civilians had been most unconstrained. Some witnesses were asked leading questions, and the inquiry ignored evidence presented to them of military rapes. Despite the presentation
in Parliament, the McLean inquiry as scandal management represented more a cover-up than a cleanup. Griffiths was finally convicted at his second court-martial, in March 1954, for grievous bodily harm and disgraceful conduct. No officer or soldier faced prosecution for the murder of the twenty-one people on 17–18 June: such a case would have exposed three officers, several noncommissioned officers, and a whole platoon as being involved in torturing and murdering members of a formation supposed to be their allies, the Home Guard. The image of the army as a whole was safeguarded behind a curtain of secrecy, which Britain’s democratic institutions failed fully to notice, let alone tear down.

Sociologist Kees Schuyt has stated that the quality of a nation as a moral community is strongly defined by the way in which political accountability is conceived and expressed. In liberal democracies, like the British and Dutch political systems, the core of that principle (accountability) is that leaders at the highest level should take responsibility for the mistakes of those at the lower levels. Moreover, they should provide all information relevant to the way in which they exercise their responsibility. This chapter points out that in the wars of decolonization, this principle did not work at all. Accounting for atrocities and mass violence was founded on information streams manipulated and framed by military and political leaders. These practices contaminated the quality of the polity as a political community. Being prepared to wage war and to make “dirty hands” systematically is one thing; to do so in a conspiracy of silence is even worse. The question in this chapter concerns the how and why of evading and refusing accountability, including urging action. The Dutch-British comparison shows that the processes of providing, framing, and withholding of information may have been different, as far as the working of the political and colonial contexts were dissimilar. Nevertheless, the outcome of the processes remains highly comparable. In both cases, the metropoles engaged in wars with colonial liberation movements that were not allowed to be called “war,” and the crimes committed by their own troops were not allowed to be called “crimes.” As a rule, information about what happened in the field was manipulated, filtered, framed, and in some cases made to disappear.

Maintaining colonial relationships and controlling the territories and populations were prioritized. To that purpose the armed forces and order troops could claim a large amount of freedom of action, as well as a strong benefit of the doubt. The management of information, if politically urgent, scaled up to management of scandal, and consisted of operating the military, administrative, and political channels of information. At the same time, the news media were used to influence the public sphere. Thus, the people in responsible positions were able to avert or evade accountability. Concerned citizens, journalists, and in particular
members of Parliament were in a position to ask critical questions and put pressure on the governments. Nevertheless, in both Parliaments there were stable majorities set to defusing such criticism. Politically speaking, almost all critical voices were heard from the left. In the Netherlands, as well as in the United Kingdom, the left was divided between communists and socialists, and the emerging Cold War was a decisive factor in these two groups operating separately. The socialists were divided as well, between a mainstream inclined to support the government’s position, and a highly critical minority on the left.

There are, of course, differences between the two cases, indicating how the specific national properties of institutions and sentiments have worked out—and these differences may enlighten some matters as well. Institutional secrecy is one of those: in the UK it was a defining element in the culture of governance, whereas in the Netherlands matters need not be officially secret to be stashed away anyway. The British media were more docile than the Dutch, but in the latter case the manipulation of the press was a more subtle game, owing to greater political and ideological pluralism. Despite all this, the Dutch press found more space for “bad news” than the British, even though the impact might be conformist and not necessarily shocking to the system. Moreover, during both world wars, the British had experienced and generally accepted government propaganda and steering of the media. In the Netherlands, owing to the German occupation, such propaganda was suspect and required subtler ways of influencing by those in power.

Domestic and international susceptibility to such propaganda underwent a change in the latter half of the 1950s, in step with an expansion of the global human rights regime. In Algeria the national liberation movement successfully internationalized its struggle to gain traction on the world stage. Insurgents in Cyprus (1955–1959), Aden (1963–1967), and then Northern Ireland (1969–1998) applied diplomatic, propaganda, and legal strategies to delegitimize the British with local, national, and international audiences. Brian Drohan has shown how through techniques of “cooperative manipulation” the British attempted in these conflicts to evade accountability while appearing to accede to normative pressures for restraint. From the second half of 1956, activist lawyers in Cyprus started to exert increasingly effective pressure on the security forces to comply with the law. The British fought back with tough emergency legislation, an extensive propaganda campaign, and a protracted diplomatic dispute with Greece that threatened to destabilize progress toward European political and military integration. Three factors enabled Cypriot activists to mobilize the human rights regime in a fashion not seen in Indonesia, Malaya, or Kenya: support from the Greek government, transnational inspiration from other liberation movements, and the ability to have recourse to the European Convention on Human Rights, applicable in colonial territories only from October 1953, when the Dutch
had left Indonesia and the worst fighting in Malaya and Kenya was over. The
convention only had an effect on decision making about counterinsurgency after
the Greek government lodged the first-ever interstate complaint with the Euro­
pean Commission of Human Rights in May 1956, over the draconian nature of
the emergency legislation then in force on the island. The Cyprus case under­
scores the requirement to approach the decolonization conflicts with great sensi­
tivity to the legal and political distinctions between time and place. Even within
the apparently fairly homogeneous British experience, the early postwar legal­
political context differed markedly from that evident from the mid-1950s.

In the Dutch case, the dynamics of the decolonization conflicts were more
tangible than in Great Britain. The main issue was always of a political nature:
would the nation be prepared to accept Indonesian independence or not? If so,
one had to let go of the colonial maxim that the ties between the Netherlands
and Indonesia should be considered as a manifest destiny. This was a highly emo­
tional issue for many Dutch of the time, who had been socialized in that idea
(“Indië Verloren: rampspoed geboren!”—If the Indies are lost, catastrophe will
be at hand!). The British were much more sober about such prospects: they kept
believing in the global importance of their empire, and they had more colonies
anyway, so the existential threat to their nation was not perceived that strongly.
In both cases, however, the struggle to maintain the colonial relationships was
addressed in terms of purpose and means to be applied. Those who believed
that this was a noble purpose accepted the fact that a price had to be paid. That
the price one was willing to pay could contaminate the political community for
generations to come was not a matter that concerned those who were evading
responsibility for the atrocities. Later generations in both nations would, how­
ever, make efforts to reconstruct accountability.