



Indigenocide and the Massacre of Aboriginal History

*We may be through with the past,
but the past is not through with us.*

Magnolia

LIKE ALL CULTURAL productions, *Quadrant's* recent articles and opinions on Indigenous issues have surfaced in particular historical contexts around certain issues and political circumstances. Most pertinently, these are the gains that some Indigenous Australians have made during the 1990s – the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (1990–2000), the 1992 Mabo judgement, the 1993 Native Title legislation, the 1996 Wik judgement, the 1998 national 'Sorry Day', the 'Stolen Generations' report (1997), the Walks for Reconciliation (2000) and, not least, the numerous apologies that settler Australians have made to Aboriginal people even if Prime Minister Howard refuses to offer one on behalf of his government.

These events have important implications for relations between settler-Australians and Indigenous Australians but such gains are also symbolic and ambiguous. As has been observed, those settler-Australians hoping for a "postcolonial apology" are attempting to redeem themselves "as settlers who properly belong" to this country, not the heirs of colonials who dispossessed and massacred Aborigines.¹ Paralleling *Quadrant's* disbelief about the 'stolen generations', the several legal challenges on this issue (most notably, the Gunner–Cubillo case) have stalled in the courts. Native title claims have failed in all but a few cases. Contrary to popular belief, native title has been extinguished on privately owned land (including family homes), residential and commercial leases, and areas where governments have built roads, schools and public works. The Wik judgement maintained the rights of pastoral leaseholders.² A 1995 Royal Commission in South Australia found that certain 'women's business' relating to Hindmarsh Island (Kumarangk) was 'fabricated', and the bridge these women and their supporters objected to is now built.³

Keith Windschuttle and *Quadrant* hold to the ab-

surd proposition that Aboriginal Australians will not be content until they have regained all the land that they forfeited under colonization.⁴ Informing some of the most recent *Quadrant* opinion pieces, moreover, especially Windschuttle's, is an uncritical imperialist discourse which valorizes the Roman Empire and Roman Law as the fount of what is 'best' about Western civilization and, by extension, what the British brought to Australia.⁵ This patrician ideology inflects *Quadrant's* more populist rhetoric which can be traced from the early to mid-1980s; and other, more recent populism like that driving Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, to demonize 'the so-called politically correct' – who include, typically, 'multi-culturalists', 'Asian immigrants', 'elites', 'the media', 'the Aboriginal industry', and the 'universities'.⁶

Such ideological labelling, however, does not advance knowledge or understanding much. We could typify P.P. McGuinness, Windschuttle and *Quadrant's* politics as 'patriotically correct', in a 'culture of complaint' whose views on a range of issues are close to those of the right or fundamentalist wing of the United States' Republican Party during the 1980s.⁷ In any event, 'striving for moderation' or 'commonsense' (one of Howard's favourite words), or applying the notion that "truth is always in the middle is not merely false but demonstrably false".⁸

Inherent in the *Quadrant* campaign, among other things, are returns to three major tropes about Australia: *terra nullius*; the 'Great Australian Silence'; and the 'quiet continent' thesis. *Terra nullius* legally defined Aboriginal Australian land as practically unoccupied when Cook claimed eastern Australia for George III in 1770 – until the Mabo judgement of June 1992. The 'Great Australian Silence' refers to the deliberate forgetting that anthropologist, W.E.H. Stanner, identified in 1968, which largely omitted Indigenous Australians from most of Australia's aca-

demic and official histories. The 'quiet continent' thesis derives from Douglas Pike's 1962 book of the same name and interprets Australia's history as relatively peaceful, as well as largely ignoring Aboriginal people's presence in this history.⁹

Quadrant's forays into Aboriginal history and Aboriginal affairs have generated considerable interest, not only among intellectuals but also in the public arena. So far, however, relatively few professional or academic historians, apart from Reynolds, have questioned Windschuttle's and McGuinness's charges and no professional or academic historian has made an extended response to them. (The most sustained reply so far, at least from the Left, is Bob Gould's self-published pamphlet, several times revised.¹⁰) Apart from Reynolds, Broome and to a lesser extent Lyndall Ryan, Windschuttle directs his salvos mostly at writers and journalists like Philip Knightley and Roger Milliss who, although they have written historical accounts, are not academics.

We are not dismissing non-academic history writing or making invidious comparisons between so-called 'professionals' and 'amateurs'. Academically-trained historians, nonetheless, base their interpretations on the attempt to disclose as much primary source material in as representative a range as possible; and this methodology, together with other techniques, provides more convincing empirical proofs than Windschuttle's random, chronologically-challenged approach. More seriously, Windschuttle fails to cite any unpublished archival or primary sources to support his interpretation, so his analysis cannot have any scholarly claims to history.

'Bookend history'

WINDSCHUTTLE STAKES MUCH of his case against widespread frontier conflict on four examples: the 'battle of Pinjarra' in 1834 (Western Australia); Waterloo Creek in 1838 (New South Wales); Forrest River in 1926 (Western Australia); and Coniston River in 1928 (Northern Territory). He claims that

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these rest mostly on shaky, or non-existent, empirical foundations. On the other hand, he emphasizes that there is much more reliable material about Aborigines killing settlers and that these deaths can be counted, whereas "mass killings of Aborigines were rare and isolated phenomena".¹¹ Windschuttle also infers that the settler-colonials were the major aggrieved party here because the supposedly superior and more meticulously gathered evidence of *their* "violent deaths" proves it.

Windschuttle writes with the confidence of one who has trumped his adversaries. But on closer inspection this apparent triumph is far less convincing. While there are certainly more detailed accounts of settler-colonial fatalities compared to Aboriginal ones as a result of frontier violence, the historical record is not as bereft of equivalent evidence as Windschuttle assumes. There is a reputable source that compares the ratio of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal deaths in the 'North Western District' of Port Phillip (Victoria) in 1838-1841 - namely a 'Return of the Number of HOMICIDES committed respectively by Blacks and Whites'.

According to this report, Aborigines killed eight 'White People' while 'Whites' killed forty-three Aborigines.¹² Windschuttle has missed this source, which is part of the *British Parliamentary Papers* volumes held in most state and university libraries and hence quite accessible to researchers. He accuses historians, missionaries and writers who have multiplied the ratio of Aboriginal deaths to non-Aboriginal deaths of inventing numbers but he needs to get his own empirical house in order.

Let us examine this issue a little further. Windschuttle's discovery that there is more comprehensive detail about settler deaths does not surprise historians familiar with Australian frontier history. With some exceptions, media reports, official enquiries, depositions and the like invariably attempted to calculate the numbers of 'white' or non-Indigenous deaths more scrupulously than they did when addressing Indigenous deaths, particularly in frontier

situations. Because White lives were considered more precious than Aboriginal ones, a bias towards enumerating settler fatalities exists in the historical record. Sometimes, names of Aboriginal aggressors, real or alleged, are noted but most accounts refer to them as 'the natives', 'the blacks', 'savages' or 'semi-savages'. Reports of Aboriginal deaths and reprisals against Aborigines tend to be more vague, especially about numbers, while any mention of the names of Aboriginal victims is unusual.¹³ And this does not even cover the perennial problem for historians of Aboriginal-settler race relations, namely the evidence that, one way or another, has gone 'missing'.¹⁴

The main point here, however, is that the shifting, unreliable quantitative evidence makes it difficult if not impossible to make direct comparisons. Nineteenth-century observers and officials who collated these estimates did not have the training of late-twentieth-century researchers to devise the statistically meaningful techniques of mathematically-informed social science. More importantly, even if they did, it is highly doubtful whether they *would* have bothered to construct representative samples of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. We know this because few censuses (as distinct from estimates) were done on Aboriginal people until the twentieth century. Part of the reason for this was the widespread belief that Aborigines were a 'dying race'.¹⁵ Other reasons were more practical or pragmatic: colonial governments had neither the resources nor the personnel for the job. Moreover, distant Australian frontiers did not leave the comprehensive paper trails that the Nazi concentration camp system did. In other words, Windschuttle is pursuing an ahistorical chimera. We need to adopt other approaches to make sense of what happened – considerations developed in the third part of this article.

The title of this section draws attention to one of Windschuttle's tactics – a method we have called 'bookend history'. The 'bookends', symbolically and chronologically, are the four massacre examples, noted above, and a number of others, at either end of an otherwise empty bookshelf: there are no volumes from 1839 to 1925 – the major period of frontier expansion. The 'Great Australian Silence' indeed! For that matter, why has Windschuttle begun in 1834 and ended in 1928 anyway? *What about the period from 1788 to 1834 or after 1928?*

Prior to 1834, Windschuttle would need to consider, for example, the Hawkesbury War of 1799; clashes with convict timbergetters in the 1790s in



Illustration from *Blood on the Wattle: Massacres and Maltreatment of Australian Aborigines since 1778*, Child and Associates, 1998, p. 119.

the Illawarra region of New South Wales; conflicts in 1804 at Coal River (Newcastle); the 46th Regiment's shooting of fourteen Aborigines in 1816 during Governor Macquarie's rule; Governor Brisbane's declaration of martial law in 1824 that reflected the serious state of frontier conflict in the Bathurst region; the 'rush' for pastoral land north of Sydney through the Hunter River region throughout the 1820s; the 'Black War' in Tasmania from 1824 to 1834; and the serious clashes that occurred in the early to mid-1830s as squatters fought to take up land further north in New South Wales on the Liverpool Plains and imperial troops battled Aborigines on the islands of Moreton Bay. If, at the other end of his chronology, he inquired beyond 1928, he would have to acknowledge the 'Christmas Creek massacre' in the Kimberleys during the 1930s where the perpetrators returned to the massacre site three times to ensure that there was no trace of the bodies; or the invidious situation in the Northern Territory where, even during the years of the Second World War, it was openly admitted that "it was nothing to shoot a black if he didn't do the right thing".¹⁶

But these fatal episodes, while serious and destructive of life and property on 'both sides of the frontier', did not match the scale and intensity of what happened in eastern Australia once the colony's export political economy moved more decisively, particularly after the early 1840s depression, towards exploiting land-based domestic animals like sheep and cattle, and land-based resources like minerals, and away from

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rounded a group of sleeping Aborigines and had shot thirty-four of them, afterwards throwing the corpses into a "neighbouring waterhole". Towards the close of this period, in much of northern Australia, murderous clashes, reprisal raids, and police actions occurred on what was mainly a cattle frontier. In 1899, for example, the Government resident of the Victoria River district in the Northern Territory reported that he had "no reason to doubt the information" that

the already depleted 'fisheries' (sealing and whaling mostly) of Australia's first maritime frontier. This geographic imperialism effectively dispossessed most Aboriginal people from an area two-thirds the size of the United States, or almost as large as western Europe, within eighty years.

At the beginning of this period, one 'collision' among many, in 1839, for example, was the Wiradjuri War where, in May that year in this bitter conflict along the Murrumbidgee, "posses of white settlers on both sides of the river trapped sixty or seventy Wiradjuri men, women and children on Murdering Island . . . and shot them down". Another was a massacre in 1840 in the Glen Ormiston district in western Port Phillip where the official deposition at an inquiry into this slaughter revealed that Glenormiston's overseer, Frederick Taylor, had sur-

overlanders from Queensland in 1886 "regarded the native as they would a crow, and they shot down many . . ."17

THE OTHER, 'MISSING VOLUMES' on Windschuttle's modest bookshelf cover an even more disturbing series of events and loss of life. Some of these conflicts and encounters include the Rufus River massacre of Aborigines by a government force and private overlanders (1841); the Kilcoy (Queensland) poisoning of Aborigines (1842); the Macintyre River War (1840-1849) where the Native Police first saw action in Queensland; the Wide Bay-Burnett War (1853); the extended vigilante and State reprisals following the 1857 Hornet Bank massacre (where Jiman tribesmen murdered most of the Fraser family); the Wills massacre of 1861 ("the largest single mass killing of Europeans by Aborigines in Australian history"); the 1878-1884 Kalkadoon War where whites and the Native Police killed hundreds of Aborigines in three separate raids; and the virtual obliteration of the Karangpurru people of the Northern Territory between 1886 and 1894.¹⁸

Windschuttle claims that there was only one 'genuine' massacre of Aboriginal people in Australian history (Myall Creek in 1838).¹⁹ By 'genuine' he means that these were victims who were essentially 'innocent bystanders', not Aboriginal warriors fighting their foes as in a battle or skirmish. He generalizes from this to suggest that there were no other such 'genuine' massacres. Apart from the point that Windschuttle ignores completely the possibility that a 'battle' (particularly between technologically uneven forces) can turn into a 'rout' and then a 'massacre',²⁰ his argument here reveals a number of fallacies.

One such fallacy is a variation of 'the lonely fact'. The 'genuine' Myall Creek example becomes a quantifiable generalization, therefore there are no more 'genuine' massacres. Related to this is a form of special pleading: Windschuttle applies his critical standards to evidence that he finds unsatisfactory (e.g. that of the missionaries Threlkeld and Gribble) but then leaves out entirely evidence which supports their findings. Thirdly, imbued in his analysis is the 'antinomian fallacy', namely the assumption that 'regularities do not exist in history, or that they do not exist significantly'. Thus, according to this logic (or lack of logic) there could not have been a pattern of violence on Australia's frontiers and there could not have been a series of massacres. From this position, Windschuttle reveals the 'pragmatic fallacy', selecting the examples

he does 'to substantiate the thesis one hopes is true'.²¹ These latter two fallacies return us to what we call the 'exceptionalist fallacy' or the 'uniqueness problem': Australia is 'unique' because it was settled peacefully (unlike other colonized countries).

Windschuttle urges that historians "should only accept evidence of violent deaths, Aboriginal or otherwise, where there is a minimum amount of direct evidence". For him this means "genuine eyewitnesses" to massacres, or those who "at least saw the bodies afterwards". Such reports, ideally, "should be independently corroborated". Windschuttle is also prepared to accept "admissions of guilt by those concerned, provided they are recorded first-hand".²²

Let us see whether Windschuttle follows this advice. As we pointed out before, historians in their practice subscribe to distinctions between sources, or traces of past events, that are based on their proximity or otherwise to the events or persons in question. Proximity here has a double meaning: proximity in the sense of direct, 'first-hand' experience (either/both as participant or witness); and temporal proximity (whether or not the participant/witness recorded what he/she experienced at the time, soon afterwards, or many years later). Proximate sources have added validity because they are examples of 'unintended evidence': materials that are either not written for posterity or those which survive 'for reasons independent of the actors' intentions'.²³ For these reasons and because they constitute examples of *intended* evidence, other accounts, by contrast, such as printed reports, official inquiries, books, articles, stories, films and broadcasts that are produced after the events themselves (and sometimes many years afterwards) have less credibility in historians' eyes as sources although this does not make them invalid or untrue.

However, much of the documentation that Windschuttle deploys to disparage *his* selection of missionaries', journalists' and historians' accounts is not 'first-hand' or 'proximate' at all. He cites the *New South Wales Government Gazette*, a *West Australian* police investigation, a Royal Commission, a Commonwealth Board of Inquiry, and the *Historical Records of Australia*. All these are either official, printed contemporary, or near-contemporary sources, or printed primary sources. The closest Windschuttle gets to 'direct evidence' is Lancelot Threlkeld's edited letters and papers – which Windschuttle then dismisses as "third-hand reports". Furthermore, most of Windschuttle's argument about the 'fabrication' of massacre stories depends on secondary works, nota-

bly Rod Moran's pugnacious and speculative *Massacre Myth*, which was published over fifty years after the events at the Forrest River mission.²⁴

As well as the gratuitous guidance Windschuttle offers to historians we would add two further, related criteria of our own: direct evidence *from* those who did not feel guilty about massacring Aborigines; and direct evidence *about* those who massacred Aborigines, whether or not these killers felt remorseful. Below we reproduce primary case studies from our own research of the Queensland frontier that meet these two criteria, as well as the other tests that Windschuttle insists on but himself evades.

But it is not even necessary to go to 'original', or 'first-hand' testimony to prove examples of 'frontier violence'; we can use the same type of documentation that Windschuttle approves of and which, in his own words, is "quite easy for anyone to check for themselves". Two of these sources are the *British Parliamentary Papers: Papers relating to Emigration, the Aboriginal Population and Other Affairs in Australia*, and the *British Parliamentary Papers: Correspondence relative to Emigration*, volume 21, republished in 1969. As noted earlier, most state government and university libraries have these volumes.

In them the reader will find a range of material, mainly about the Port Phillip district (Victoria), Western Australia, and Tasmania dating from 1839 to 1844 as follows:

1. Contemporary letters, for example one dated 14 July 1840 from Melbourne which claimed that the proprietors of an out-station near Portland Bay (on Victoria's west coast) murdered thirty-six of



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the thirty-eight Aborigines allegedly responsible for stealing several hundred sheep.

2. Depositions from witnesses like Aylward at the Grampians in June 1840 who saw "blood upon the grass, and in the tea tree two or three dead bodies", and from William Whyte in the same district who stated that twenty-eight out of thirty Aborigines were killed.

3. Protectors' and Sub-Protectors' statements about pastoral employees like William Taylor, an overseer at 'Coligan' sheep station, Lake Colac, who was "notorious for killing natives", particularly the Jacoort people of "all ages and sexes under 40", single-handedly reducing this once "very numerous and powerful people" to sixty survivors.

4. Statements from Aborigines, which an investigation into frontier violence in the Pyrenees district of Victoria found "more dependable" than other testimony when they gave the names of seven Aborigines shot by a "Mr Frances within the last 6 months".²⁵

Windschuttle's readers could gain a misleading impression that the handful of historians and authors whom he cites (Reynolds, Richard Broome, Lyndall Ryan, Roger Milliss, Phillip Knightley, Sandy Yarwood) as exemplars of Aboriginal and Australian history are a representative sample of those who have published in these fields over the past twenty or thirty years. To be sure, Reynolds and Broome are major, widely-published figures. Lyndall Ryan's *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (1981 and 1996) is still the major, current non-Indigenous academic history. At the same time, Windschuttle appears ignorant of many other academics who have produced important studies since the 1970s to the present. Windschuttle draws on some of Charles Rowley's and Andrew Markus's work but has failed to discuss volumes by Tom Austen, Geoffrey Blomfield, Bruce Breslin, Timothy Bottoms, Ian Clark, Michael Christie, Jan Critchett, Bruce Elder, Peter Gardner, Ann McGrath, David Trigger, Raymond Evans, Barry Morris, Roslyn Kidd, Anna Haebich, Deborah Bird Rose, Alan Pope, Peggy Brock, Howard Pederson, Graham Jenkin, Michael Cannon, Gordon Reid, Peter Biskup, Max Griffiths, Jakelin Troy, Cassandra Pybus, Peter Read, Dawn May, Don Watson, Bain Attwood, Bob Reece, Bob Hodge and

Vijay Mishra, Ian MacLean, and Chris Healy. Such studies contain scores of examples of massacres and mass killings.

Aside from these non-Indigenous accounts, Windschuttle ignores the Aboriginal academics, historians and other authors who have written and spoken about the realities of Australian history for them from various perspectives, for example Charles Perkins, Kevin Gilbert, James Miller, Bill Rosser, Jackie and Rita Huggins, Ruth Hegarty, Ruby Langford Ginibi, Marnie Kennedy, Sally Morgan, Roberta Sykes, Wayne Coolwell, Jimmie Barker, Evelyn Crawford, Doreen Kartinyeri, Christobel Mattingley and Ken Hampton, Irene Watson, Oodgeroo, Colin and Eleanor Bourke, and Joe McGinness.

Unearthing the Forgotten

Even the most cursory survey of the vast, thoroughly documented literature on frontier violence and Aboriginal destruction in Queensland discloses how limited Windschuttle's empirical spadework is and the narrow ideological trench it has dug. Decades of hard-won research, sifting through manuscript collections, archives, and newspaper files searching for some approximation to the weary truth about Australian colonialism appears to count for nothing in this unseemly rush to judgement. As in the blinkered 'Quiet Continent' writings, the rich vein of data dealing with mortal conflict is met yet again with the methodology of turning a blind eye – reducing mountains of sombre evidential knowledge to little more than a hill of beans.

No single, definitive account has been produced to date about the devastating effects the Queensland Native Mounted Police had from 1848 to the 1910s, although this lacunae is being rectified. This force performed at its lethal peak against Aboriginal peoples during the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s – its killing capacity maximized when Snider breech-loading rifles replaced muzzle loaders in the 1870s. Whereas muzzle-loading rifles had an average discharge of two shots per minute, Sniders could fire five times faster. And while we cannot provide a headcount of the Aboriginal corpses resulting from thousands of Native Police patrols over more than six decades of frontier warfare, we can suggest that their actions alone produced the estimated, conservative count of 10,000 violent Aboriginal deaths in Queensland, without even including the fatal effects of settler 'shoot-on-sight' activities.²⁶

Consider this: Up to two hundred mounted Aboriginal troopers, in killing squads of six to eight, and sometimes twelve to eighteen, scattered across Queensland, each armed with a Snider breech-loader, and led by white officers armed with Colt or Tranter revolvers. Each squad carried out monthly patrols, each patrol leading to an undisclosed number of 'collisions' and 'dispersals' of local Aborigines. In each 'dispersal' numbers of Aborigines were slaughtered by expert marksmen. Alan Hillier, who has made an exhaustive study of the force, notes that:

The Native Police were the most efficient colonial police force in the world in its day. . . . Aboriginal troopers were . . . well-trained killing machines, [expert] in the use of rifle, pistol, bowie knife, metal tomahawk, plus the traditional Aboriginal weapons of spear, boomerang, nulla, shield and tomahawk . . . They were well-drilled soldiers, and were excellent horsemen . . . at the peak of physical fitness, extremely agile and resilient, with an ability to live off the land, and suffer privations to a greater extent than any European . . .²⁷

Operating as a form of mounted infantry, capable of fighting from horseback or on foot, they were especially adapted to counter Aboriginal resistance. Hillier again:

In the open country, Aboriginal methods of warfare were almost useless against a man on horseback . . . In many cases officers would open fire on large groups of myalls from a distance of eighty to one hundred yards or more in a stand-up fight. If the myalls ran, they were followed and run down by the troopers on horseback, or shot or dispersed whilst lying on the ground. If the native police encountered a large mob of one hundred Aborigines or more, the tactics used were hit and run. This involved firing on a mob from a distance to disperse them into smaller groups . . . The police would then keep pace by tracking the mob for a day, and then return to hit the same mob in another attack. The process . . . would often last a week, as native police patrols could last up to fourteen days. If these . . . methods failed to destroy the tribe, they would be marked down for another patrol in the following month, when the tribe's camp would be attacked in a dawn raid without warning . . . the troopers would destroy

the camps and all items of value, for example spears, cooking utensils, fishing gear and the means of carrying water. This destruction of the means of survival would influence the abilities of old men, women and children to survive in the harsh Australian bush, and many died from starvation and thirst.²⁸

We have quoted this passage at length because the events outlined in it could never have happened in Windschuttle's wishfully exonerative account, yet

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they did consistently – albeit mainly in secret. We will never know the numbers of deaths, kidnappings, rapes, acts of torture, summary floggings and executions of troopers, or of Aborigines shot while 'escaping from custody' during this whole 'sorry business'. But, in the context of separating myth from reality, does it *matter* that no-one will ever provide unquestionably accurate statistics about these events?

The ubiquity of euphemism which matched the ubiquity of massacre made reliable enumeration impossible, quite apart from the other difficulties noted in section two. The transparency of the word 'dispersal' to describe Native Police and other, more private police actions became a standing colonial 'cold joke'.²⁹ When Belgian-born William Armit, who had been a Native Police officer in Queensland between 1872 and 1882, repeated his destructive performance as a Patrol Officer in the Tamata District of New Guinea in 1900 he was asked officially for the first time to explain what 'dispersal' and terminology like 'a salutary lesson' actually meant. In this instance the words had been used to camouflage the deaths of fifty-four tribespeople and the wounding

of many more.³⁰ "Do we shoot them? Of course we do," another Native Police officer, writing as 'Old Chum', admitted in 1877:

The popular idea is to disperse them by shooting over their heads. Bah! Only people who know nothing about wild myalls would imagine that they would be afraid of that sort of thing. One thing is certain: if you point a gun at a nigger to frighten him you had better let him have it straight, or you are very likely to find a spear sticking in your back as soon as you turn away. There is only one way to keep the beggars down: when they commit a murder, pay them out for it in their own coin.³¹

The recommended currency-exchange, however, was never simply that of 'an eye for an eye'. The kill ratio varied according to circumstances – five, ten, twenty or even fifty to one.³² In retaliation for Aborigines near Burketown "cutting steaks from the rumps of several horses", Sub-Inspector Wentworth D'Arcy Uhr conducted a "wholesale slaughter" of fifty-nine Aborigines in mid-1868. The newspaper which carried this account reported the following year that only thirty male Aborigines now survived in the Bowen district from the Juru people who, "not long ago could be numbered by hundreds" – killed not by disease or 'the bottle' but by

the rifle . . . when the native police, to use the words of an eye-witness, visited the public house after their work at the shambles, "the heels of their boots covered with brains and blood and hair".³³

Yet as the latter part of this disturbing quote implies, Queensland colonials regarded such carnage neither as exceptional nor sensational but rather as a routinized necessity in an officially undeclared war-front. It attained crescendos of retributive zeal when settler families, or others were killed *en masse* – such as the Frasers, the Wills, the Conns, the Straus, the Mulvo party, or the foolhardy *Maria* shipwreck survivors. After about a dozen of this latter group – hopeful gold-seekers *en route* to New Guinea in an old coal barge – died at the hands of Rockingham Bay Aborigines in early 1872, the *Sydney Morning Herald* called for volunteers "who could shoot straight" to avenge them and a ship, the *Governor Blackall* was requisitioned to carry the vigilantes, many armed with new Winchester rifles, northwards.

Here, anticipating "a lot of action", new arrivals were placed under the command of Lieutenant Robert Johnstone, one of the most experienced bushmen and "most destructive officers employed by the Native Police". Together with Johnstone's eleven 'native' troopers, crew members of HMS *Basilisk*, and five boatloads of white Cardwell residents, they conducted reprisals lasting months. Follow-up raids on surviving Aborigines occurred between 1873 and 1878. Hillier comments:

The effects . . . on the Rockingham Bay tribes were never recorded. Every camp fifty miles north of Cardwell was raided and destroyed. Many dispersals took place and the death toll . . . must have been high . . . Johnstone recorded in his memoirs that the Rockingham Bay tribes were the most numerous he had encountered on the frontier. By 1886 they had almost disappeared. The remnants were met by [Archibald] Meston in 1889. Here they expressed their fear of the Cardwell settlement and their hatred of the Native Police.³⁴

Again, there are no accurate head-counts but what other conclusion could any reasonable person make than to surmise a massive death toll? In any event, as we argued elsewhere, few colonials could be bothered to collate demographic facts. What this example also shows is how Aboriginal troopers, frontier settlers and others acted together to suppress Aboriginal resistance and aggressions, thus intensifying the Native Police's already formidable power. Native Police officers themselves were usually well-established, integrated members of colonial society – the sons of pastoral families, whose land seizures they rode out to defend; or of military families with a tradition of fighting in Britain's imperial wars. Some of the most vengeful officers, moreover, came from those families whose members had been attacked, injured or murdered by Aborigines. One such was William Fraser, the eldest son of the slain Fraser family of Hornet Bank station. Following the massacre of nine of his family in 1857, Fraser, known to local Aborigines as 'debbil debbil', went on a rampage. In 1860 he admitted to shooting "Seventy blacks up to that date" using a "double-barrel shotgun cut down to carbine length".³⁵ In 1867, Fraser was inducted into the Native Police, under the command of the equally vengeful Frederick Wheeler, whose wife had been terrorized in an Aboriginal raid. Throughout his life, Fraser alone was responsible for the violent deaths of hundreds of

Aborigines – a fact that he openly acknowledged. The colonial state ignored his mass-murdering activities. For his part Wheeler was responsible for ‘dispersing’ Aborigines across south-east Queensland, before fleeing the colony after being arraigned for flogging a ten-year-old Aboriginal boy to death at Mistake Creek, north of Clermont, central Queensland, in 1876.³⁶

Information like this is readily accessible to the experienced historical researcher but Windschuttle seems, either through unfamiliarity with the subject matter or political intent, to have been unable to factor any of it into his analysis. Indeed the sense we gain from such documentation not only reinforces conclusions about the ubiquity of frontier violence, it also reveals a colonial world-view that accepted such violence as normative and probably inevitable. No sooner had Gossner Society missionary, Brother Peter Niquet arrived at Circular Quay, Sydney in 1837 to board a schooner for Moreton Bay (Brisbane), than he was accosted by an elderly German settler who informed him that Aborigines were “less than human” and “fit only to be murdered and used as fertilizer”. This settler boasted that he had shot thirty of them himself. Five years later, Niquet’s colleague, Pastor K.W. Schmidt noted that “most of the cattle owners” in south-east Queensland would “shoot, poison, or set fire to [the poor natives] whenever the occasion arises”.³⁷

There is considerable evidence from people witnessing such massacres or admitting taking part in them. Such complicity usually became an ideological rationale to justify usurpation and its genocidal consequences. Frederick de Brebant Cooper, who had had substantial frontier experience in the United States and Mexico, wrote extensively in 1857 about reprisal raids in which he took part in Queensland and northern New South Wales. Describing assaults by a party of thirty “volunteers” out to teach Gwydir River Aborigines “better manners”, he confided:

we stuck to those scrubs up and down the river till . . . it was difficult to find a tree unmarked. You see they mark the timber . . . wherever a black falls . . .³⁸

Visiting central Queensland following the Fraser massacre on the Dawson in late 1857, William Stamer noted:

in most cases, the *lex talionis* was the order of the day . . . whole tribes had been rubbed out . . . No device by which the race could be exterminated

had been left untried. They had been hunted and shot down like wild beasts – treacherously murdered whilst sleeping within the paddock rails, and poisoned wholesale by having arsenic or some other deadly substance mixed with the flour given to them for food. One ‘lady’ on the Upper Condamine had particularly distinguished herself in the poisoning line having, if report spoke the truth, disposed of more natives than any other squatter in the district by means of arsenic alone. There can be no doubt that this amiable woman . . . was only carrying out those inscrutable decrees of Providence, the wisdom of which it is not for us to question. We are the chosen race . . .³⁹

The cynicism in Stamer’s closing words is less apparent in scores of other vindictive accounts. Writing on behalf of the British Council for Civil Liberties in 1946, Geoffrey Parsons summarized this literature thus:

settlers found it more convenient to assume that the Aborigine was a sort of anthropoid, higher perhaps than the marsupial in the biological scale on account of his resemblance to his white masters, but certainly incapable of any conscious social grouping and tradition, devoid alike of culture, religion or moral code. Such denial of his human standing cleared the way for the settler to ignore the Aborigine’s rights as a man. If they did not recognize the existence of his property rights, they could not be violating them when they seized his land . . . and if he was so much less than a man, to kill him must be so much less than murder.⁴⁰

IT IS INTENSELY DISCOMFORTING to conceive of an Australian social order where the mass murder of certain people, identifiable by their ethnicity, was a way of life, executed by a minority of perpetrators, tolerated by the settler majority, and winked at by a state which, in other settings, upheld the precepts of British culture, law and justice. This discomfort impels Windschuttle’s analysis into denial, distortion and disremembering while contributing to its credibility. But the context of acceptable terror was the historical truth. “Where are our magistrates?” George Lang asked in rhetorical despair as he bore witness to the “horrid, indiscriminate murders” of over 150 Aboriginal “men, women and children” in the Wide Bay hinterland in 1857–58: “I reply, our magistrates are all here and they might as well be in Jericho, they do not care a fig for

"... and Padraic then related to me how he and other citizens who demonstrated pluck and a quiet tongue had been inducted as special constables, for the 'dispersal' of the Aboriginal industry, which was a name given for something else, not to be mentioned here, but it had to be done, for the protection of our wives and hearts and history, to arrest our imperial past from the savage....."



either law or justice and ... are as guilty of every act of cruelty as the actual perpetrators".⁴¹ The British Colonial Office in 1866 recognized that "the recklessness with which blacks have been destroyed ... in Queensland" was a matter "by no means easy to exaggerate". Yet, it added chillingly, "... the Home government can but hold up its hands. *There is no effective power to interfere in their cause*"⁴² [Emphasis added]. So the combination of an indifferent Australian colonial state and an ineffectual British imperial state meant that there was virtually no legal protection for British subjects if they also happened to be Aboriginal, whatever horrors were visited upon them. As one harried Aboriginal man told a station owner who was turning him off his property in 1847, "Which way you (go) supposing this way you shoot em supposing that way you shoot em all about shoot em".⁴³

Press correspondents, albeit euphemistically, were quite open about this. An 'able bushman', calling himself 'Maori', wrote in 1880 of what he termed the

'wiping out' process: "There had been lust, rapine, treachery, bad faith, cruelty and downright savagery ... and we have had the advantage of superior numbers, wealth, intelligence, arms and organization". Another frontiersman, with sixteen years' experience, signing himself 'Never Never' admitted:

I am what would be called a 'white murderer' for I have had to 'disperse' and assist to disperse black on several occasions ... Hide it as you will, our policy towards the black is bad, but it is only the game we played all over the world ... The unanswerable fact remains that by overrunning this or any other country we expose the natives to the rigour of guerilla warfare - always the cruellest and worst - and knowing that, we come here and take up our quarters with our eyes open; by our very presence ... justifying the act of every other white ruffian in the outside country - we must go to the whole length, and say that the sooner w

clear the weak useless race away the better. And being a *useless race what does it matter what they suffer?* [Our emphasis]⁴⁴

Such fatalistic rationalizations led logically to situations such as that which confronted Florence Young and her husband, Jonathan, at 'Umbercollie' near Goondiwindi, south-west Queensland in late 1848 when, first, white vigilantes and then visiting police shot down the Youngs' Aboriginal workers in cold blood (intent on literally killing off Aboriginal labour competition!). The first attack, led by a notorious killer of Aborigines, James Mark, was part of a wider series of raids conducted at Boonall station (where forty Bigambul people were shot), Carbucky, Callandoon and Broomfield. Early on the morning of 11 June 1848 Mrs Young wrote:

Mr Marks [sic] and a team of men he had gathered arrived at our home, shooting every native in sight, even the station Aborigines, even my house gins . . . As these two gins were unarmed, and one was blind, they both had no chance of escape.⁴⁵

One of the vigilantes, Daniel McLean; himself testified before the local magistrate:

We all came up to the rails we could see the place where the blacks were lying we fired upon them . . . firing as fast as we could with cartridge . . . a gin planted by the side of the fence . . . got away. . . and ran – Steebie or Jones or Mark said 'Shoot her' – they fired upon her and she fell down close to the slip panel. When she fell Martin took his pistol and struck her once or twice on the head with it . . . we all fired upon her. We then put the net and cloaks on the fire and broke the spears and put them on the fire . . .⁴⁶

Inside the homestead, the Youngs were immobilized with fear watching the slaughter. Mrs Young continued:

At daylight, Jonathan went outside to get our two dead girls and bury them as already wild pigs were eating Maimie's body. This was a frightful sight beside our house . . . Some weeks later, the police came . . . shooting still more natives . . . We lost twelve of our station blacks. Two young gins ran to me for protection. I hid them up in a corner of our roof, behind some hay. They had to remain there for

two days without food and water. The police were still in and out of our house . . . After the police had gone . . . we faced the terrible sight of so many dead natives, and this time the wild dogs had joined the pigs in tearing the bodies to pieces . . .⁴⁷

Once again we are not simply attempting body-counts here but attending thoughtfully to the atmosphere of acceptable terror which surrounded these disturbing episodes. Although the Youngs themselves were horrified, Richard Bligh, the local Crown Lands Commissioner noted:

It may give you some idea of the state of combination and system of terrorism existing in this locality when I state that though the murderers . . . are known to everyone [and] though the government have offered large rewards . . . yet not the smallest additional evidence has been given . . . and persons of respectability . . . have actually joined in a subscription set on foot for the defence of the parties accused.⁴⁸

This then was the frontier pattern repeated over and over: settler killers with community consensus ultimately beyond the law; the colonial state mostly failing to curb private acts of excess while perpetuating its own excesses via the Native Mounted Police; and only the odd outraged, cornered or conscience-stricken individual prepared to tell or record the tale about Queensland's killing fields.

Korah Wills, an early mayor of Bowen (1865–67), and later of Mackay (1876–77) was one who, as an old man – and after retirement to his birthplace in Dover – decided to write it all down, in a partly confessional and partly boastful manner. Wills had been a corporal in the Victorian Volunteer Mounted Rifles and, at his testimonial dinner in August 1862 before going to Queensland, was presented with a patent Terry's breech-loading rifle which he soon put to effect on the Bowen frontier.⁴⁹ Wills related how he and any other male Bowen citizens who demonstrated "pluck and a quiet tongue" would be inducted as "special constables" to join forces with Aboriginal troopers under the control of G.E. Dalrymple, to "disperse" the Juru and Bindal peoples:

which was a name given for something else not to be mentioned here, but it had to be done for the protection of our hearths and wives and families, and you may bet we were not backward in doing

what we were ordered to do and what our forefathers would have done to keep possession of the soil . . . we have risked our lives . . . in arresting it from the savage . . . in my time they were dispersed by hundreds, if not by thousands . . .⁵⁰

As Hillier, Noel Loos and Bruce Breslin all demonstrate, the Bowen to Cardwell region was one of the most bloodthirsty in Queensland with the local newspaper, the *Port Denison Times* advocating that, in reaction to the killing of any European, "we take say fifty [lives] . . . exacting not an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but as many eyes and teeth as we can possibly get . . ." On 14 January 1865, four days after he had become Bowen's mayor, Wills went on "a dispersing expedition" along with "a few squatters and their friends" after Aborigines had speared a shepherd at Walter Scott's Valley of Lagoons station. "We turned out and ran them to earth," Wills wrote:

they got on the top of a big mound . . . and smacked their buttocks at us and hurled large stones . . . and hid themselves behind . . . huge rocks but some of them paid dearly for their bravado. They had no idea that we could reach them to a dead certainty at the distance of a mile by our little patent breech-loading 'Terrys' . . . some of them jumped I am sure six feet in the air.

During this mayhem, Wills decided to "select . . . a little girl with the intention of civilizing and one of my friends thought he would select a boy". In the process, Wills was assailed by a woman whom he presumed to be the 'mother' and received a desperate blow from her 'nulla'. Wills' unnamed 'friend', who he claimed was "a kidnapper to the hilt", had since "been connected with the Government of the Colony and . . . held the high office of Chief Emigration Commissioner and Protector of the Blacks".

Not satisfied with stealing the child Wills, whose original trade was that of 'pork butcher', dissected one of the Aboriginal corpses "to get a few specimens of certain *limbs* and *head* of a Blackfellow which was not a very delicate operation I can tell you". With all his friends watching, Wills began "to anatomize":

I went to work business-like to take off the head first and then the arms and then the legs and gathered them together and put them into my pack saddle and one of my friends who I am sure had dispersed more than any other Man in the Colony

made the remark that if he was offered a fortune he could not do what I had done. [H]is name was Peter Armstrong, a well known pioneer in the North of Queensland.

The next day, Wills stripped the limbs of their flesh beside one of the lagoons, as his companions fished and bathed nearby. At dusk, he gave up "the unholy job", and all returned to the station "for supper and yarns and pipes and nightcaps of *whiskey*, before turning in". Here, Wills was seized by excruciating stomach pains and thought he would die. "I believe it was a perfect shock to my system by doing such a horrible repulsive thing . . ." he observed, but

I was not going to be done out of my specimens of humanity, and I packed them home to Bowen as well as my little protegee [sic] of a girl . . . who rode on the front of my saddle for over eighty miles and crying nearly all the way.

In this grisly account, again, we have no precise numbers of those massacred. Yet, more significant is the tone of normalcy that pervades the retelling. Wills dissected the Aboriginal body with the same matter-of-factness as Jack Watson and Frank Hann employed some twenty years later when they nailed eighty Aboriginal ears to the outer walls of their Lawn Hill homestead, south of Burketown, after reprisals for cattle-killing. Emily Caroline Creaghe, travelling with Favenc's exploring party in 1883 would record that sight with the same equanimity as the Bowen citizenry displayed as they watched their mayor riding into town with human bones protruding from his saddle-packs and a weeping, stolen child before him on his horse:

as I neared the town . . . I met different people who hailed me with how do you do and so on and where did you get that intelegent [sic] little nigger from . . .

Some time later, Wills exhibited his 'trophies' at a bazaar organized to raise funds for the Bowen Hospital. Because of the "disgust of many", especially "the Ladies [who] might get a shock", Wills was impelled to cover the skull and other bones

with a flag, the Union Jack, and if anyone wished to see what was under that flag they had to ask the favor of one of the committee . . . that bazaar . . .

was a grand success in a monetary point of view . . . we had some grand gatherings at times for the benefit of all such institutions so requiring help . . .⁵¹

In this arresting scene, completely devoid of irony, but as confronting as a Gordon Bennett painting, Wills assembled these symbols and spoils of Empire as ingenuously as a child would play with toys. This tableau seems an apt metaphor for framing any further debate that arises from *Quadrant's* intervention and our response to it. Where Windschuttle and others prefer to see an unsullied Union Jack proudly flying over the Australian continent, we are compelled to examine the realities of what it hides. And what we discern is a chilling glimpse of Nietzsche's 'festival of cruelty'.⁵² Even in Wills' bleak account there remains an undertone of the 'whispering in our hearts' of a civilized ethical self – the butcher's stomach cramps, the Bowen ladies' 'shock' – but the overwhelming sense is that of abomination rendered commonplace.

Cases of Indigenocide?

Windschuttle and *Quadrant* reject the idea that genocide happened in Australia. In this, they are part of several vocal and influential 'genocidal denial' groups. These affronted conservative critics assert, rather than demonstrate, that genocide never happened and have little to say about its definition.⁵³

However, there needs to be a 'revised definition of genocide' that is consonant with the facts of Australian history. Paul Bartrop has observed that "death owing to frontier violence has a certain air of deliberation and intent accompanying it" and asks "but was it genocide?" Bartrop prefers terms like "genocidal destruction" and argues that each situation on the frontier must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. He also points out that most of those who have used it in the Australian context have not pursued "the deeper theoretical dimensions implicit in the concept".⁵⁴ Indeed, relatively few analyses of Australia's past either by Indigenous or non-Indigenous authors, apart from Colin Tatz's article and Alison Palmer's recently published *Colonial Genocide*, have examined the concept at any length, either in its 'theoretical dimensions' or its empirical applications.

This in turn raises other, and possibly more difficult, problems of definition and interpretation – including whether defining (and redefining) genocide (and related terms like 'ethnocide') are counter-pro-

It is intensely discomfoting to conceive of an Australian social order where the mass murder of certain people, identifiable by their ethnicity, was a way of life, executed by a minority of perpetrators, tolerated by the settler majority, and winked at by a state which, in other settings, upheld the precepts of British culture, law and justice.



ductive, and possibly 'futile', reifications. Whether we accept or reject these latter points depends on whether one accepts or rejects genocide as a peculiarly 'modern' phenomenon – with the Jewish Holocaust (1933–1945) as exemplar. This seemingly unprecedented mass extermination influenced the Polish-Jewish intellectual, Raphael Lemkin, to devise the first major attempt in 1944 to define genocide, one which the United Nations adapted, applied and updated after the Second World War.⁵⁵

If we accept this reasoning then we can apply the United Nations Convention on Genocide to what happened to Australia's Indigenous people from 1933 but not before. Chronologically this would include some twentieth-century Australian state assimilation practices but relatively few massacres, as the vast majority of these occurred earlier.

On the other hand, a number of genocide scholars and educators, Jewish and non-Jewish, have pointed out that genocide is 'nothing new', even if the term is.⁵⁶ To anticipate our argument, we suggest that it is possible to demonstrate, first, that certain elements of the United Nations Convention on Genocide fit the Australian Aboriginal situation under British imperialism and Australian colonialism; and secondly that it is appropriate (and even preferable) to have another, related term which fits Australian empirical realities

rather better, namely 'indigenocide'. The latter, in brief, refers to those actors (governments, military forces, economic enterprises or their agents, private individuals etc.) who carry out destructive actions, policies and practices on Indigenous/Aboriginal individuals, families and groups *mainly because of their perceived indigeneity or 'Aboriginality'*.

Genocide derives from the Latin words *genus*, meaning a 'group', and *caedere* meaning 'to kill'. The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide states that:

Genocide . . . is the committing of certain acts with intent to destroy – wholly or in part – a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such. What are the acts? First, actual killing. But it is possible to destroy a group of human beings without direct physical extermination. So the Convention includes . . . the acts of causing serious bodily or mental harm; deliberate infliction of conditions of life 'calculated to bring about' physical destruction; imposing measures to prevent birth; and, finally, forcibly transferring children of one group to another group . . . In accordance with the Convention, related acts are also punishable: conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, an attempt to commit the crime, and complicity in its commission.⁵⁷

The Tasmanian Aboriginal situation is often regarded as Australia's singular genocidal example. Was this the case however? It is certainly genocidal if one takes the United Nations Convention's definition, and deploys several of its criteria to what occurred during the height of the conflict between the settlers and the Aborigines over land (1824–1834). The most important rationale for the 'Black War' was that the pastoral settler-invaders and their mainly convict servants intended to displace Aborigines and replace them with sheep. The Aborigines, with some exceptions, did not accommodate themselves to this state of affairs and opposed the settler-invaders with quite effective and damaging resistance campaigns. Responding to settler-invader pressure and Aboriginal successes, Governor Arthur declared martial law in 1828 as a prelude to an "organized manhunt" of some 2000 men (including about 500 troops and 700 convicts) – the 'Black Line' of 1830 which sought to clear the settled districts of Aborigines. These events constituted what Landau calls "developmental genocide", that is, the "aim of eliminating an indigenous

population, usually outside of the political structure, which is deemed to stand in the way of colonization, settlement or development". Secondly, especially with Arthur's actions, there was deliberate intent by the state directed at a collectively defined group designed to ensure their elimination from the landscape and to confine those who survived to marginal areas and to one major site, Flinders Island.⁵⁸

Thirdly, the United Nations Convention is clear that the 'intent to destroy' any group of people does not have to be total. Some Australians and other analysts have assumed, incorrectly, that the Aborigines (estimated to be about 5–7000 originally) 'died out' in 1876 with Truganini, the 'last Tasmanian'. In fact, Bass Strait Islander communities who were descendants of Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal sealers and whalers had avoided much of the land war and provided a base for the present-day diaspora population numbering some 12,000 people, according to the 1996 Australian Census.

Fourthly, 'actual killing' occurred of at least eight hundred Tasmanian Aboriginal people largely through the settler-invader 'roving parties'.⁵⁹ So this fits the definition. There is also the psychological or traumatic effects of so much killing on those who escaped from imminent death. However the United Nations Convention also states that "it is possible to destroy a group of human beings without direct physical extermination" and specifies the deliberate imposing of "conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction".⁶⁰ Here the *type* of colonization that occurred, both in Tasmania and throughout much of mainland Australia from the 1830s to the 1890s, i.e. geographic imperialism with pastoralism as its core, was the *fundamental* reason why Aboriginal 'conditions of life' changed so radically, leading to their direct 'physical destruction'.

But what about the rest of Australia? We have already mentioned the geographic imperialism concomitant with pastoral production, mining and agriculture. In this respect, as Lyndall Ryan has argued, it was Tasmania repeated but on a much larger scale.⁶¹ We have also demonstrated more examples of extermination in colonial Queensland, where an Aboriginal mounted infantry (the Native Police) added another lethal ingredient to the general deracination. In any event, the taking of Aboriginal children from kin (or sometimes with kin) to non-Aboriginal families, institutions, homes, reserves and employers – an Australia-wide phenomenon that began in the nineteenth century and lasted well into the 1960s (as Anna

Haebich's *Broken Circles* has shown graphically) – exactly conforms to another United Nations Convention on Genocide criterion, that is, “forcibly transferring children from one group to another group”.

Genocide denialists and also a few more temperate and thorough scholars nevertheless query “the vexed question of intention” in the “unplanned process of colonization” in Australia.⁶² Arguably, in both Tasmania and Queensland, it is easier to demonstrate ‘genocidal intent’ because Aboriginal resistance was possibly more ubiquitous and dangerous in those places than in other parts of Australia, and thus required a more clear-cut, intentional response from settler-invaders and the state.

This dubious proposition of unplanned colonization rests on Sir John Seeley’s oft-quoted observation, or rather fantasy, that Britain “never really had an empire”; “that conquest had played no part in the accretion of territories”; and that British colonization had occurred “in a fit absence of mind”.⁶³ On the contrary, by 1760 and certainly by the time Governor Phillip arrived on Eo-ra land in 1788, “colossal wealth” was pouring into Britain “from the colonial tribute of empire that now eclipsed all others”.⁶⁴ Planting a convict colony at Sydney Cove, and following this up with a smaller, convict-based outlier in Hobart from 1803 underscored British hegemony over France in the south-west Pacific. Still influenced by mercantilist economic principles, British naval and state power backed the East India Company’s commercial presence, while the exile of convicts to Australia revived Britain’s colonial policy of transportation that the American War of Independence curtailed. Belated as it was, the British state’s decision in 1786 to establish a penal-colonial outpost at ‘Botany Bay’ was still a *decision* i.e. an *intention*, and one made at the highest government levels.⁶⁵

Once established, political, commercial and material realities ensured that the new British colony would eventually outgrow its penological rationale. Until the 1820s, the main economic preoccupation of the colonists was to have enough food to survive.⁶⁶ Trade, commerce and imports met some of this need, but future self-sufficiency, let alone commodities for export, required agricultural and grazing enterprises that could only be obtained by expropriating Aboriginal land and water supplies. In any event, the felons sent to Australia were expected to fend for themselves when their sentences expired which meant that they had to become independent producers or proletarians. That is, they were compelled to compete with

each other and with the Indigenous for their livelihood. This state of affairs lay at the heart of the Hawkesbury War, noted earlier. Colonial Office instructions to successive New South Wales governors from 1787 until the 1820s (and to Aboriginal protectors in South Australia in the 1830s) recognized the Aboriginal presence but contained a fundamental contradiction: a stated *intention* to “conciliate” Aboriginal “affections” and “live in amity and kindness with them”⁶⁷, together with the *intention*, indeed the *necessity*, to take their land.

Thus Britain’s expansion into Australia, its adjacent islands and seas was a calculated and deliberate series of complex moves, that many people made – from Secretaries of State for the Colonies in Britain, to governors, merchants, ‘officer-farmers’, squatters, explorers, surveyors, farmers, politicians, miners, journalists, Native Police commandants, entrepreneurs, capitalists, missionaries, ex-convict farmers and shepherds, and numerous others. It was anything but the heedless osmosis of territories that Seeley suggested or the benign process of ‘assimilation’ that Windschuttle defends. Viewed in this light, it may be pedantic to insist on distinctions between the criteria for genocide and the criteria for imperialism and colonialism, given that, in comparing the American and Australian examples, the death rate of Indigenous peoples on both continents as a result of European invasion and conquest was well over 90 per cent⁶⁸ – an appalling statistic that prompted David Stannard to call his history of colonial conquest *American Holocaust*. And to return to the United Nations Convention on Genocide, the introduction of diseases (whether deliberate or otherwise) was a bigger killer of Aboriginal people than outright violence (Windschuttle is right for once on this point though the issue of intentionality invites debate), and made it possible ‘to destroy a group of human beings without direct physical extermination’.

Much of the documentation that Windschuttle deploys to disparage his selection of missionaries’, journalists’ and historians’ accounts is not ‘first-hand’ or ‘proximate’ at all . . . The closest he gets to ‘direct evidence’ is Lancelot Threlkeld’s edited letters and papers – which he then dismisses as “third-hand reports”.

SO, FINALLY, where does all this leave us with the questions, Was it genocide? and, did it constitute an Australian Holocaust? Our answer to the first question is a fairly resounding 'Yes'; to the second question a cautious 'No'. We discuss our reasons for these answers next and propose that a form of 'developmental genocide', namely 'indigenocide', is a concept that comes closer to accounting for the Australian settler colonizing process.

If one adopts the United Nations Convention (and no other) then the imperial takeover of Aboriginal Australia was genocidal. One of the main differences between the Jewish Holocaust and Australia's 'killing fields' however was that the destruction of Aboriginal life was mainly a private, i.e. settler-invader led, ideologically defended, piecemeal series of events whereas the Nazi government's 'Final Solution' was a concerted, bureaucratic, industrial, highly concentrated, state-directed ideological program of mass annihilation with Jews as the main victims. Crucially, the Australian colonial state, except in Tasmania and Queensland (the latter with the Native Police), was not the main perpetrator or initiator of genocide; and even in these instances declarations of martial law, and Native Police punitive sorties were possibly secondary to privately organized vigilantism and raiding parties, or individual rampages (e.g. William Fraser) against Aborigines. Rarely did the colonial state intervene on behalf of these 'British subjects'. As for the British imperial government, it was too far away from events in the colonies to prevent the mayhem on the frontiers that the Colonial Office became so alarmed about during the 1830s and 1840s. This apparent lack of interest, however, does not diminish such actions from being genocidal, for indifference to and/or complicity with genocide still falls within the United Nations Convention.

Nevertheless, we would be reluctant to characterize what we have explored here as an 'Australian Holocaust'. The modern concept of 'genocide', and the Hebrew word, *ha-shoah* (the Holocaust) to describe it were invented precisely to account for what was a probably unique manifestation of the quite ancient practice of genocide. To put it another way, this genocide (i.e. the Holocaust) could not run ahead of its time and thus 'belongs' to a particular epoch in human history, i.e. the rise and fall of German fascism (i.e. Nazism). Thus we can apply this 'modern' definition both to the 1933-1945 period itself, and to policies of forced assimilation in Australia *at that time*. This, as we have pointed out before, does not

rule out using the term 'genocide' more widely. But it does run the risk of what Steven Katz calls "offensive moral chauvinism" by diminishing or conflating the Jewish experience, as well as being a-historical.⁶⁹

'Indigenocide' is a means of analysing those circumstances where one, or more peoples, usually immigrants, deliberately set out to supplant a group or groups of other people whom as far as we know, represent the Indigenous, or Aboriginal peoples of the country that the immigrants usurp. This immediately excludes some British and European imperialisms, e.g. in colonial India, and in most of the African colonies. One exception, in the African case, was 'colonial genocide' – the German occupation of Herero lands in south-west Africa.⁷⁰ The point is that imperialism and colonialism do not simply equate with genocide, destructive of Indigenous lives as they may be.

Australia was very different however. It was first of all a settler-invader British colony whose 'invaders', whether convicted or otherwise in the first instance, with few exceptions, stayed on. A certain proportion of the colonial elite (the squatters) were temporary sojourners, but most remained to found dynasties in Australia, while other middle-class and working-class immigrants came to the colony to 'improve' themselves. Crucially, the immigrants kept coming and by the 1850s if not earlier, exceeded the Aboriginal population in size.

Secondly, as examined above, wealth creation in the colonial period relied on finding export staples that competed successfully on the world market. Britain's pre-eminence in manufactures and shipping ensured that Australia's political economy be based on raw materials with Britain as chief market; and once these raw materials shifted to land-based commodities (domestic livestock, minerals and grains) it opened up huge tracts of territory, putting pressure on its Indigenous owners. The latter were sometimes absorbed into the colonial economy as colonized labour (often after being captured at the point of death); and from the 1840s provided the core workforce on many remote pastoral holdings.⁷¹ But mostly they were dispossessed in the ways we have described. In short, for the colonials, Aboriginal land was a more valuable asset than Aboriginal labour.

Because of these reasons, and because Aborigines resisted these successive invasions; or, alternately, refused to adapt to alien cultural norms; or finally, looked as if they would not survive as a people, they became the targets of a plethora of degrading epithets: 'savages', 'vermin', 'superstitious

barbarians', 'nomads', 'heathens', 'intelligent monkeys', in the 'lowest state of existence', 'cannibals', 'wild animals' that 'deserved to be shot', and 'poor creatures' who needed 'protection'. Most of these stereotypes were made because settler-invaders, the politicians and the press which supported them believed fervently that Aborigines stood in the way of colonial progress; and, as such, should be cleared from the landscape as a matter of duty to a 'higher' and more 'advanced' civilization.⁷² Here 'developmental genocide' was in operation, and probably 'ideological genocide' as well.

While peoples other than Aborigines attract pejorative or racist invective, Aboriginality (or perceived qualities of Aboriginality) is the defining feature here. This means that those doing the defining, especially in a colonial situation, construct typologies or hierarchies of race that almost always place Aborigines at the very bottom of the human scale and, in extreme cases, deny their humanity altogether. Invariably the invading and defining group, irrespective of class, regards itself as inherently superior to the Indigenes and constructs its own differences as normative and hegemonic. Incoming migrants who become part of settler-invader society place themselves in relation to the Indigenes, or are placed by the hegemonic group, into the racial hierarchy. But almost always again, the Indigenous group as a whole remains at the bottom.

In this respect, the society takes on more of a caste-like quality than a class one, or rather *caste relations apply mainly to Aborigines or Indigenes while class relations apply mainly to the dominant ethnic groups*. In other words, dominant-group exclusionary pressures are directed most consistently against Aboriginal people, as demonstrated by the numerous proscriptive and classificatory laws for Aborigines as a group, which began in Australia in the nineteenth century. Two examples were the 1897 Queensland *Aborigines Protection Act* and the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board of 1883, both of which systematically removed thousands of Aboriginal adults and children. The important point here is that the dominant groups, and particularly those who control the state apparatus, deny social mobility most of all to Indigenous people.

It could be argued that at least some of these criteria apply to other non-dominant ethnic groups, especially under colonialism. Plenty of cases can be cited in Australia of racial exclusion, not least the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901, the first piece of federal

legislation passed by the new Australian commonwealth. Exclusion, segregation and other forms of social closure and worse have been, and are, daily visited upon all sorts of people – many of whom are White – for example, homosexuals, the 'intellectually handicapped' and so on. While this is so, 'indigenocide' has a number of other vital ingredients that set it apart from the racisms, the oppressions, and the exterminations of most other genocides or ethnocides.

First, as pointed out before, indigenocide usually occurs when an invading group *intentionally* invades and colonizes another group or groups who are the 'first peoples' of that region, or who have proof of such origins. Even though *terra nullius* was assumed, the first British and European navigators to observe Aborigines (e.g. Dampier, Cook, La Perouse etc.) proved that people occupied Australian soil. Secondly, the invaders must conquer the Indigenes and maintain their advantages over them as long as is necessary or possible. Thirdly, as conquerors, the invaders must kill sufficient numbers of Indigenes, or render their ways of sustaining meaningful life so difficult that they come close to extinction and may disappear altogether. (This characteristic, as we noted above, distinguishes indigenocide from other forms of colonialism such as British rule in India.) Fourthly, and this reinforces the actively *genocidal* aspects, the invaders must classify the indigenes as 'the lowest form of humanity', rather like Eichmann classified the Jews as a 'garbage nation', who deserve to be exterminated.⁷³ Fifthly, indigenocide, notably with Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians, involves destroying, or attempting to destroy, Indigenous religious systems and imposing binaries between the material and spiritual realms. Above all, indigenocide implies in theory and practice that Indigenous people are *less valued* than the land they inhabit and which the invaders desire.

AT LEAST ONE SECTION of Australian thought remains stuck in the 'myth of peaceful settlement'. In Windschuttle's scenario, the Australian historical world turns upside down. British fair-play and justice patrol the frontiers rather than expediency, licence and mayhem; indiscriminate violence is the least of problems there rather than the most daunting. It is the conscience-stricken, contemporary White 'whistle-blowers', who are cast as the liars instead of those who create, perpetuate, condone or hide such misdeeds. And it is Indigenous cultures that suffer from an ongoing 'faulty memory'-syn-

drome' rather than a society of land-inheritors, still frozen in denial or forgetting.

There is little that is new in these intellectuals' arguments and justifications, which rest on assumptions about Australian exceptionalism, the inherent superiority of Western materialism, and on an indignant insistence that Indigenous Australians subsume themselves within it. This outlook echoes the 'developmental genocide' mentality that deranged Indigenous Australian lives for such a long time and which bedevils them still; and it appears that Windschuttle and some other *Quadrant* contributors, like their colonial predecessors, value the oldest continent and its economic resources more highly than the oldest civilization and its human resources. In the process, they have given us an expurgated version of history and recast it as truth. The historical problem we face is not how some historians, journalists and missionaries may have exaggerated a small quotient of colonial disorder. Rather we face the history of attempts to liquidate that 'oldest civilization' which, nevertheless, has survived indigenocide; and the accompanying attempts to hide the story of that massive tragedy.

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