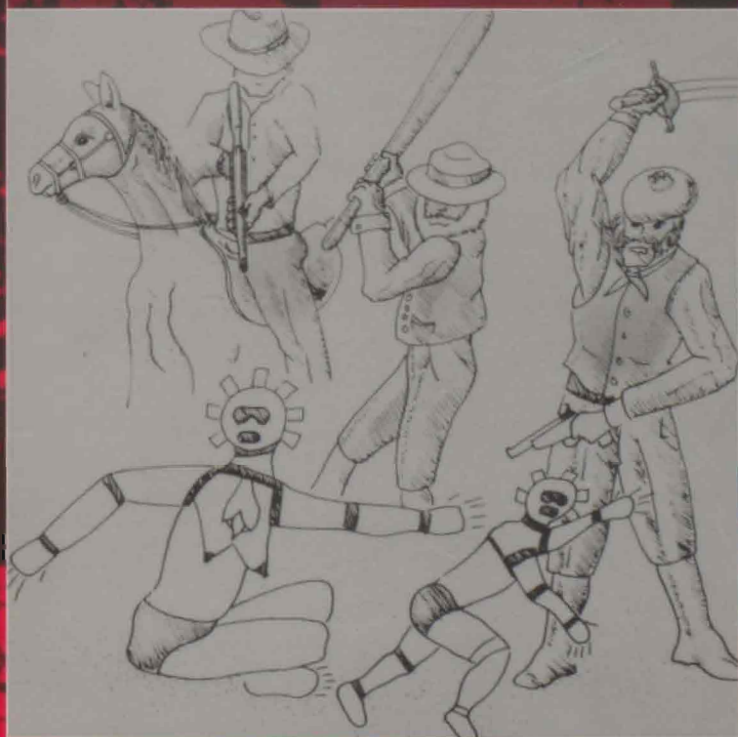


GENOCIDE and SETTLER SOCIETY

Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous
Children in Australian History



Edited by
A. DIRK MOSES

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GENOCIDE AND SETTLER SOCIETY

*Frontier Violence and
Stolen Indigenous Children in
Australian History*

Edited by

A. Dirk Moses



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Memorial Stone, Myall Creek

On 10 June 1838, twenty-eight Aboriginal men, women, and children were massacred at Myall Creek, in northern NSW, Australia, by a group of armed white stockmen. With the help of local stockmen, the killers were found and identified. Seven men were convicted of the murders, and were hanged in December 1838.

Len Payne, a local resident, first proposed a memorial at the site in 1965. On the suggestion of a descendant of the Aboriginal people who survived the massacre, a conference on reconciliation was held at Myall Creek in 1998. A committee was formed at that conference to develop a permanent memorial. Descendants of the perpetrators, and the Uniting Church, assisted with the planning for the memorial.

One hundred and sixty-two years after the massacre, on 10 June 2000, a memorial walkway and stone were unveiled at the site. There are seven interpretive plaques along the walkway, telling the story of the massacre in both Gumilaroi and English.

The image on the cover of this book is taken from a plaque that also reads:

**Burrulaa Mari gangjibalu
bawurragu bumaay**

Toward the end of 1837, parties of European stockmen and station hands, encouraged by a punitive expedition of Mounted Police, sent from Sydney, embarked on a bloody rampage throughout the region, hunting down and killing any Aboriginal people they could find. Hundreds of Aboriginal people were slain.

The plaque on the large granite memorial stone at the end of the walkway reads:

In memory of the Wirrayaraay people who were murdered on the slopes of this ridge in an unprovoked but premeditated act in the late afternoon of 10 June 1838.

Erected on 10 June 2000 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in an act of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history.

We remember them. Ngiyani Winangay Ganunga.

Cover image courtesy of Paulette Smith.

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TIM ROWSE is Senior Fellow in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. In 2003/2004, he was Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University. He is author of nine books since 1978, the latest two being *Indigenous Futures: Choice and Development for Aboriginal and Islander Australia* (2002) and *Nugget: a Reforming Life* (2002).

PAMELA WATSON is an anthropologist and fifth-generation descendant of early British pastoralists who appropriated Aboriginal land in West Australia. Watson's focus has been on the economic and social aspects of drug production and consumption in tribal communities in both the Pacific and Australia, on which she has published journal articles and a monograph. More recently, an interest in drugs in Aboriginal society prior to and immediately following British settlement led her to study a range of early white documents: explorers' journals, archival records, pastoralist memoirs, etc. Horrified by the accounts of brutality towards the indigenous people she encountered in these reports, and the degree to which they contradicted the benign view of white settlement believed by most Anglo-Celtic Australians, she explored these conflicting foundation myths in *Frontier Lands and Pioneer Legends: How Pastoralists Gained Karuwali Land* (1998). The argument Watson makes here for genocide was originally intended for her book, but was omitted from it at the request of the publisher.

JÜRGEN ZIMMERER is currently research fellow at the "Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares do Século XX," University of Coimbra in Portugal. He is working on transnational European History in the twentieth century, as well as the relationship between colonialism and National Socialism. The second edition of his book, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* appeared in 2002. His edited book (with Joachim Zeller) *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* appeared in 2003. He has written numerous articles on German colonialism and comparative genocide, and was an editor of the *Newsletter des Arbeitskreises Militärgeschichte*. He currently serves on the editorial team of *Sozial.Geschichte* (formerly 1999) and the online review journal *sehpunkte*.

PREFACE

This book was conceived in early 2000 when I arrived in Australia to take up a post at the University of Sydney. In proposing a new course on comparative genocide, I discovered that I could not prescribe my students a book on genocide in Australia: such a book did not exist (in 2001, Henry Reynolds presented his analysis of the subject in *An Indelible Stain?: The Question of Genocide and Australian History*). At the same time, a lively and at times acrimonious academic and public debate was underway about the topic. Since 1997, it has revolved around past government policies of “removing” Indigenous children of mixed Aboriginal/European descent from their families, ostensibly to “rescue” them from barbarism. In 2000, the genocide controversy turned to frontier conflict in the nineteenth century, which has been the subject of intense research since the 1970s.

Genocide and Settler Society presents recent research on both subjects. The first section, “Conceptual and Historical Determinants,” introduces readers unfamiliar with Australian history and genocide studies to the relevant theoretical issues and factual context. The next two sections contain four chapters each on various aspects of frontier violence and stolen Indigenous children, mainly in Australia. Because of the enduring and massive presence of the Holocaust in debates on genocide in Australia and elsewhere, the series editor Omer Bartov thought it appropriate to include a chapter on the relationship between the Holocaust and colonialism, and another on the Nazi policies of removing Slavic children deemed to possess “good Aryan blood” from their families and settling them in Germany. Readers can judge for themselves how relevant these cases are for Australia. At least now they can refer to the latest findings by two outstanding, young German historians.

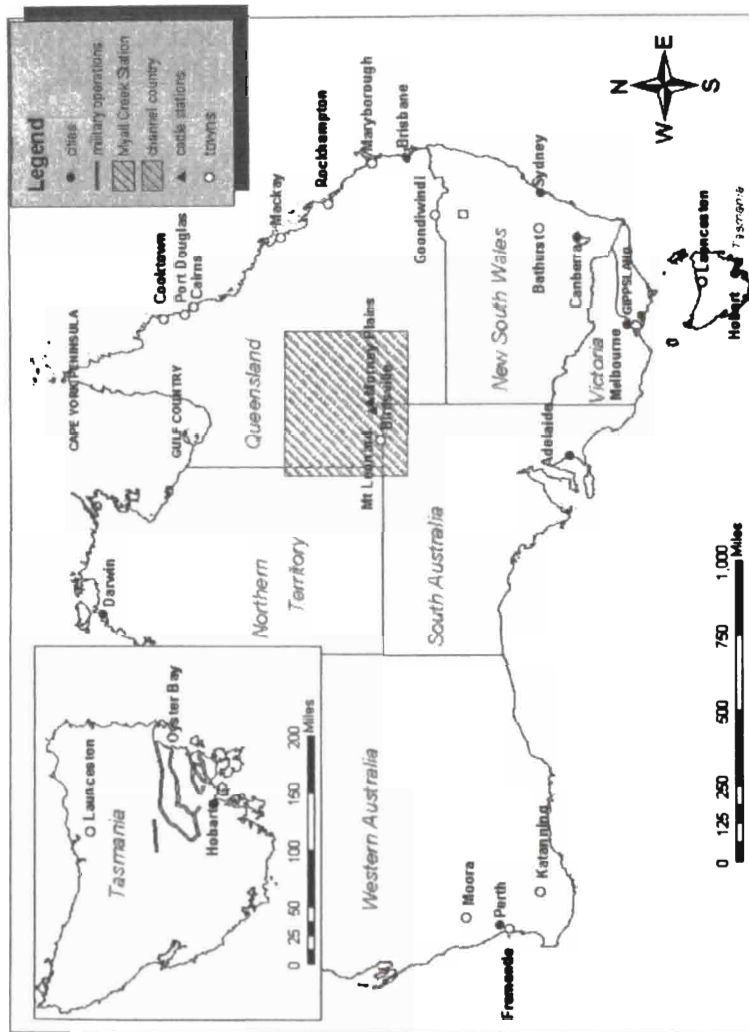
Genocide studies is a burgeoning field of research. Understandably, it has focused on the enormities of twentieth century

totalitarian regimes: Stalin's Soviet Union, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and of course the Holocaust. Or on the internecine legacies of ethnic and civil conflict, like the Turkish-Armenian case, or the all-too-recent instances of Rwanda and Yugoslavia. Now many scholars are beginning to ask after the colonial and imperial roots or dimensions of these conflicts. The inventor of the term "genocide," Raphael Lemkin, certainly conceived of the Nazi project in Europe as colonial. This book aims to contribute to this literature by interrogating the concept of "settler colonialism" in relation to genocide, using Australia as a case study. Each contributor has settled on his or her own definition of genocide—whether that of Lemkin or the narrower formulation of the United Nations—reflecting the open-ended nature of the debate. The book aims to stimulate still more research, rather than provide easy answers.

An editor of any collection accumulates debts in the process of writing and compilation, and this one is no exception. I wish to record my thanks to the following people: to Omer Bartov and Marion Berghahn for intellectual companionship and for enthusiastically supporting the project after Australian publishers had shown a profound lack of interest; to the contributors for their good-humored toleration of my ceaseless demands and unremitting pedantry; to Andrew Beattie for his expert translations; to Caroline Jones and Catherine H. Kirby for their copyediting; to Maria R. Reyes at Berghahn Books for seeing the manuscript through the production process; and to Paulette Smith and Rosemary Hollow for the cover image.

The notion of genocide in relation to the Indigenous peoples of Australia was first conveyed to me in 1996 by a friend, C.L., herself an Indigenous Australian. Hitherto, I had been more or less oblivious to Aboriginal perspectives on Australian history, a regrettable ignorance I can only partially blame on my growing up in the illiberal and racist atmosphere of Brisbane, Queensland, in the 1970s and 1980s. In many ways, the nature of the intellectual journey that I, first and foremost a historian of modern Germany, have been prompted to make since then in order to be able to contribute, in this small way, to scholarly debate and consciousness-raising about this important topic can be attributed to that conversation. I promised her a book then, and here it is.

These chapters have been peer reviewed.



Map by James Hohnen and Phil McManus, the University of Sydney.