Historical Encounters

A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

Volume 10 | Number 2 | 2023

Special Issue: Frontier Wars

GUEST EDITORS

Mario Draper, Martin Kerby, & Margaret Baguley

HERMES

History Education Research Network

ISSN 2203-7543

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ISSUE DOI

doi.org/10.52289/hej10.200

PUBLICATION DATE

21 December 2023

JOURNAL ISSN

2203-7543

CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE

CONTACT DETAILS

E: Robert.Parkes@newcastle.edu.au
W: www.hej-hermes.net

EDITORIAL TEAM

GUEST EDITORS

PUBLISHER

Historical Encounters is published by the **HERMES History Education Research Network** concentrated at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This special issue represents an experiment in publishing both history, public history, and history education within the space of a single special issue of our journal. There are articles in this special issue which fall outside the boundaries of what we usually publish in *Historical Encounters,* but which fall within the theme of the special issue itself, and so an allowance has been made to keep this set together, given the importance of historical memory and frontier violence within history education, and the public history field more broadly.

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ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

War on the frontier

Mario Draper
University of Kent

Martin Kerby
University of Southern Queensland

Margaret Baguley
University of Southern Queensland

ABSTRACT

This article explores current historical thinking regarding the 'small wars' fought on the frontiers of European empires during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By drawing on a variety of examples ranging from South Africa to Bolivia and Australia to the Congo, the authors identify three major themes - the expansionist aims of imperial governments often being shrouded in a veneer of benevolence, the brutal fighting that occurred when Indigenous populations challenged the loss of traditional lands, and the speed with which the ostensibly 'civilised' European colonists discarded battlefield norms when they waged what were in effect wars of annihilation. In a challenge to the thematic or narrow temporal boundaries that have traditionally dominated scholarship, the authors avoid characterising these wars in discrete national terms. For though every frontier conflict possessed its own unique character, there are broad similarities that can be explored through an analysis of European thinking regarding these 'small wars' and the violence and destruction that accompanied them.

KEYWORDS

European empires, Frontier Wars, Genocide, Small Wars

CITATION

Draper, M., Kerby, M., Baguley. (2023). War on the frontier, *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.201

Introduction

Science fiction fans may well have been premature in celebrating the much-anticipated return of the *Star Trek* American science fiction media franchise in 2009. The series was created by Gene Roddenberry and began with the iconic 1960s television series which followed the voyages of the crew of the starship USS *Enterprise*. *Star Trek* became a global pop-culture phenomenon resulting in films, television series, video games, novels, and comic books. However, it was not until the third modern movie in the series, *Star Trek Beyond* (2016) that viewers were exposed to something more than a big budget space opera. Nevertheless, its engagement with some deeper themes is only peripheral and is primarily confined to the film's antagonist, Krall, "a reptilian Che Guevara-type" played by Idris Elba (Seitz, 2016, para. 7). His plan is as grandiose as any of the cinematographic villains who have graced our film screens. In his case, there are serious political undertones in his desire to lead the peoples inhabiting the frontiers of the universe in an armed challenge to the Federation of Planet's expansionist agenda. It is this agenda which various incarnations of the USS *Enterprise* have served during their five-year mission which first began in 1965 and ended in 1968, the year during which the limits of American imperialism were laid bare in Vietnam. Although the "fake brand of benevolence" (Seitz, 2016, para. 10) that pervades the Federation's actions bear more than a passing resemblance to the ideological imperatives underpinning centuries of Imperial expansion, the legitimacy of Krall's actions is an issue left to the individual viewer. Of course, this clash between Indigenous societies and an Empire intent on expansion is not confined to Gene Roddenberry's creation. It is now a dominant theme in contemporary science fiction, whether it be the New Order and the Empire in *Star Wars* another eponymous science fiction media franchise created by George Lucas in 1977, the more benign though no less determined Alliance in *Firefly* an American space Western television series created by Josh Wheedon in 2005 and later movie *Serenity* (2005), or a host of other fictional conflicts fought "where no man (sic) has gone before."

The Indigenous populations faced with annihilation in the 'real world' would not have characterised themselves as living where no man has gone before, nor would they have concurred with the pejorative view that they were engaged in 'small wars'. To European militaries, however, this description reflected deeply entrenched views about warfare generally and the pitched battle specifically.

> Despite its horror and savagery, a pitched battle [is] a contained and economical way of resolving a dispute between two warring groups or countries … a blessing, an institution that by its very nature contains the violence of war. Indeed, in its classic form, as it existed before the late nineteenth century, a pitched battle was supposed to be a beautifully contained event. (Whitman, 2012, p. 4)

From the 1860s, however, it is clear, at least in retrospect, that warfare could no longer be contained to the battlefield; the era of decisive battle was over (Keegan, 2009). Despite some anomalies, for European powers such as Great Britain and France, the nineteenth century was an age dominated by small wars fought on the frontier of Empire. Ian Beckett's article *Indigenous Resistance in the Anglo-Zulu War*, which opens this special theme issue, owes at least some of its resonance to the fact that the Zulus were in fact keen to fight a pitched battle. At Isandlwana on 22 January 1879 they inflicted the worst single day's loss of life suffered by British troops between the battle of Waterloo in June 1815 and the opening campaigns of the Great War in August 1914. In passing this great military test, they won the respect of the very Empire which would ultimately defeat them in a seven-month conflict that cost a mere £5.2 million. In terms of the human and financial treasure of the European Empires, the cost of conflicts such as the Anglo-Zulu War fall far short of that demanded by the total wars of the twentieth century. However, as this special theme issue will show, they were nevertheless often violent and brutal affairs that usually ended in the dispossession and destruction of Indigenous societies.

Readers of this special theme issue might well be interested by the fact that the earliest use of *Star Trek's* iconic opening was by Captain James Cook who wished to go "farther than any man has been before me, but as far as I think it is possible for a man to go" (Glyn, 2011, para. 3). It is also worth noting that statues to Cook, long regarded as one of history's greatest explorers, have regularly been vandalised in Australia for his perceived links to colonial expansion and Indigenous genocide. Modern attitudes to a nation's imperial past have undergone a seismic change. This re-evaluation has as its most visible expression the vandalising of statues raised to honour 'Heroes of Empire' or their removal by governments now embarrassed by the history they commemorate. This special theme issue of *Historical Encounters* bears testament to the extent of the problem, with articles exploring conflicts in places ranging from South Africa to Bolivia and Australia to the Congo. Across the different contexts various themes emerge, with three being particularly prominent – the expansionist aims of imperial governments often being shrouded in a veneer of benevolence, the brutal fighting that occurred when Indigenous populations challenged the loss of traditional lands, and the speed with which the ostensibly 'civilised' European colonists discarded battlefield norms when they waged what were in effect wars of annihilation.

Small wars and the destruction of Indigenous societies

In 1887 a little-known artillery captain by the name of Charles E. Callwell published a prize-winning article in the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute* (RUSI) entitled 'Lessons to be Learnt from the Campaigns in which British Forces have been Employed since the Year 1865'. In it, he reflected upon the British experience of 'minor' imperial campaigning which, except for the Crimean War (1854-56), had dominated the practice of soldiering since 1815 (Callwell, 1877). These 'small wars', as Callwell would come to describe them in his seminal 1896 publication of the same name, provided the army with first-hand experience of combat that could not be replicated in the classroom, on the parade ground, or during annual manoeuvres (Callwell, 1898). Its value lay in its frequency, which contrasted sharply with the established conception of 'real' war, characterised by conventional, inter-state conflicts fought between regular armies. In a European setting, only the German Wars of Unification (1864-1871) had truly afforded the Great Powers an opportunity to test and hone their fighting capabilities against one another, leading to an inexorable race to imitate the victorious Prussians who had practically converted the art of war into a science overnight.

Yet, as Callwell's publications demonstrated, the lessons to be learned were as varied as the nature of the wars themselves. From causes to conclusions, tactics to strategy, not to mention the primacy of intelligence and aggression, *Small Wars* offered much to ponder and even more in terms of practical experience to an army that, otherwise, had few opportunities to test itself. In France, Hubert Lyautey's Du rôle colonial de l'armée', published in the *Revue des deux mondes* in early 1900, similarly reflected upon principles which might influence French fighting methods – albeit in an army more recently digesting the reasons for its defeat in Europe in 1870 (Lyautey, 1900). Collectively, works like these began the process of synthesising past and current experiences into a meaningful sub-field of military inquiry which, as Ian Beckett noted in the opening issue of the much-celebrated journal *Small Wars & Insurgencies* (1990), helped to establish the roots of modern counter-insurgency theory which would later be refined in the period 1900-1945 (Beckett, 1990, pp. 47-48).

Efforts to absorb the lessons of these 'small wars' were, at best, intermittent. As Mario Draper observes in his article *The Force Publique and Frontier Warfare in the Late 19th Century Congo Free State*, frontier conflicts that extended beyond the British and French context were under-theorised despite providing tactical lessons. In the case of Belgium, they served to contribute to the establishment of a colonial military tradition independent of its larger colonial neighbours. His exploration of the *Force Publique* of the Congo Free State is particularly valuable because modern scholarship has only rarely sought to situate it within the wider sphere of colonial conflict. This absence of scholarship has been particularly surprising given that the *Force Publique*'s campaigns were anything other than one dimensional, ranging as they did from limited actions

against enemies as varied as Indigenous tribes to African empires, and from wars of conquest to counter-insurgency operations.

Nevertheless, the analysis of small wars that occurred contemporaneously to events did not constitute the first modern studies of 'small wars.' Military theorists as celebrated as Carl von Clausewitz had considered the nature of irregular warfare almost a century earlier, as applied to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Yet his was primarily a preoccupation with the partisan of Europe rather than the Indigenous warrior of empire (Heuser, 2010; Rink, 2010). In time this character would evolve into the *guerrilla* and the *franc tireur* within the broader conceptualisation of a 'people's war' (Förster & Nagler, 1997, pp. 5-6). The disinclination to fully embrace the lessons of frontier conflict or to frame them within European modes of thinking have continued into the modern day. Samuel Duckett White's *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels: A Modern Military Interpretation Economic Warfare* is a particularly opportune example of this limitation in thinking. Despite some growing scholarly interest in the wars fought on the Australian frontier, many contemporary works that challenge a 'massacre' narrative remain incomplete:

> … for the most part, we are still telling an invaders' story from an invaders' perspectives. The motives, strategies, and manoeuvres of First Nations peoples remain poorly understood. We are supposed to believe that, although their world was being rapidly destroyed, they could not find it in themselves to mobilise a meaningful resistance. (Kerkhove, 2023, pp. 1 – 2)

White posits that the Indigenous understanding of European settlement's 'centre of gravity' made it particularly vulnerable to a well-orchestrated waging of economic warfare. Though it is not widely acknowledged, as it was practiced along multiple frontiers in Australia by First Nations groups, it was a sophisticated and remarkably effective assault on the fragile economies of colonial Australia. Notably, White also makes a compelling case for its value in any study of modern military operations, an assessment which is, if anything, even less widely shared.

By contrast, small wars, as Daniel Whittingham has noted, became an inherently Eurocentric term suggestive of the irregular or Indigenous fighter on the periphery; something and somewhere diametrically opposed to the established and accepted norms of European war and against whom the written or unwritten rules of engagement did not apply (Whittingham, 2020, p. 39). Consequently, small wars, as Dierk Walter remarked, were often "hallmarked by an apparently indiscriminate brutality which was only remotely matched within the core territory of the Western world between the Thirty Years' War and the Second World War by a few exceptional situations" (Walter, 2017, p. 150). The desire to force a quick decision against an ephemeral foe, who blended into the topography and local population lent itself to greater aggression against combatants and non-combatants alike. Often, it proved difficult to distinguish between them, resulting in increasingly population-centric strategies that legitimized violence through casting Indigenous peoples as ruthless 'savages' or 'infidels' who opposed the spread of civilization.

Modern historiography often refuses to recognise thematic or narrow temporal boundaries, as Jay Winter and Antoine Prost (2004) so notably observed of the Great War. For decades, the war was imagined in discrete national terms, with historiography committed to the belief that every nation had its own Great War. The same has traditionally been true of research into frontier conflict. Draper challenges this understanding in his study of the *Force Publique* and Janne Lahti does the same in his article *Settler Colonial Violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa.* Lahti argues that colonial violence in the American Southwest and in German Southwest Africa have seldom been compared by historians. Presumably, in many cases, societies likewise had their own unique experience of frontier conflict. Nevertheless, the racialisation that "further widened the divide between conventional and small wars" (Porch, 2013, p. 26) was, as Lahti shows, typically a major feature of frontier conflicts. The violence in the American southwest was, for example, never simply a response to Indigenous raids or a fear of savage tribes descending on white settlements. It was a war of annihilation waged by state and state-sanctioned forces, Indigenous polities, corporate mercenaries, and private people and ranged

from individual acts of murder to mob lynching and ultimately, to genocide. The very existence of the Native American Apaches and Yavapais peoples appeared to justify their extermination, which until the Holocaust was not usually a feature of war as it was fought in a European context. On the frontier, however, it was widely embraced as a justifiable means to an end.

While increasingly unpalatable to a more discerning public back home, commanders on the ground frequently played upon the real and imagined separation between them and the metropole to pursue any means necessary to deliver results, safe in the knowledge that no respectable government would willingly reject another imperial *fait accompli*. Whereas many small wars were conducted with a clear diplomatic or military aim in mind – even if the operational and tactical methods were left to the discretion of its executioners – others suffered terribly from a distinct absence of political oversight. Isabel V. Hull's work into German imperialism has shown how the absence of defined strategic goals created a vacuum in which operational imperatives expanded to fill the void. This produced terrible consequences for the Herero in its Southwest African holdings (present-day Namibia) in the early 20th Century (Hull, 2005, pp. 5-90). Lahti outlines in some detail what these 'terrible consequences' looked like in his analysis of German colonialism in Africa in his article *Settler Colonial Violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa.* Instead of engaging with international parallels, he argues that scholars have often linked German actions in Southwest Africa to the Nazis and the Holocaust. Indeed, the genocide of the African ethnic Herero and Namaqua peoples has now been recognised by both the United Nations and by the Federal Republic of Germany (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2016). In May 2021 the German government accepted responsibility by establishing a $1.3 billion compensation fund.

The absence of German Southwest Africa from many discussions about colonial genocide emphasises that not all frontier wars are equal in the cultural memory. For example, Marcela Mendoza's article *Bolivian Settlers and Toba Peoples: Appropriation of Indigenous Lands on the Chaco Plains in the 1800s* explores Indigenous dispossession and extermination in the Bolivian Chaco, a development that has made only limited impact on Anglo-Saxon historiography. Aside from being a fascinating example of frontier conflict, it was an important feature of Bolivian nation building, because the Chaco plains extended the national territory to what was then unresolved international borders with the Argentine and Paraguayan Republics. Mark Lawrence's article *Popular violence and 'lay religion' in centre-west Mexico during Mexico's Cristero war (1926-29)* likewise explores a conflict that would struggle to find a place in the Anglo-Saxon cultural memory of frontier warfare comparable to the scramble for Africa or the wars fought in New Zealand and Australia. That said, the gaps in the literature allow this exploration of the ongoing, albeit often unacknowledged, agency of Mexico's Indigenous populations in the Cristero revolt of 1926-29, to make a unique contribution to this special theme issue.

Common amongst many small wars was the policy of forced resettlement or 'reconcentration', as it was sometimes known. The British use of concentration camps during the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 has been well documented, but numerous examples exist elsewhere. President Andrew Jackson's infamous Indian Removal Act in 1830 authorised a systematic displacement of tens of thousands of Native Americans, whose presence on the frontiers of U.S. westward expansion was considered threatening to white settlement and progress. Lahti's article *Colonial Violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa* identifies a similar policy. By 1875 all Yavapais or Western Apaches still alive had been forced into reservations. By 1908, all surviving Hereros were forced into camps, from where they were used as forced labour, or exiled into neighbouring British territories. Further afield, the U.S. established 'zones of protection' in the Philippines, which saw reconcentration policy extend beyond the formal conclusion of the war in 1902 (Twomey, 2022, pp. 25-42). The Spanish experience in Cuba following the arrival in 1896 of Max Weyler (known as 'the Butcher') is equally noteworthy; not least on account of the insurgents' own willingness to involve themselves in a policy of forced removal. This aimed to over-populate Spanish-held territory and place undue strain on Weyler's logistical capacity by creating a veritable refugee crisis (Tone, 2006, pp. 193-224).

In effect, war among the people, such as that waged by settlers in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa, targeted the people often for want of suitable alternatives. While the French interpretation of this evolved from the *razzia* of Thomas Robert Bugeaud's campaigns in Algeria in the 1840s to the *tache d'huile* (or oil stain) of Field Marshals Joseph Galiéni and Hubert Lyautey by the turn of the 20th Century, a true attempt to separate insurgent from civilian through gentler means was always tempered by the realities of war. Indeed, by the 1950s, the French Army's *guerre révolutionnaire* appeared as concerned with exploiting military power as it did with capturing 'hearts and minds' (Finch, 2018, pp. 410-434). Similarly, the British preoccupation with 'minimum force' – supposedly based upon a wealth of experience during the Victorian era's colonial campaigns and its subsequent long-term commitments closer to home in Ireland – proved to be less than robust when faced with the Malayan Emergency and the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya after the Second World War (French, 2012, pp. 752-753).

Such actions on the part of the insurgents reminds us that, they too, possessed agency. The study of small wars can all too often revolve around a Westernised response to the challenges encountered. Yet, the actions of local groups played key roles in the outcomes of campaigns. While many might have been identified as the enemy – and indeed identify colonisers as such in return – others saw great value in collaboration, if only for limited periods of time. Indeed, studies of central Africa have shown how old inter-tribal scores were settled through carefully crafted alliances with white colonisers, benefitting not only from their physical presence but also their access to firearms. Such interactions became a defining feature in militarising African society (Macola, 2016, p. 93; Reid, 2012, pp. 103-145). Elsewhere, this divide and conquer strategy manifested itself in the *Bureaux Arabes* established by the French in Algeria, which raised specifically identified tribes to dominance over others in a bid to pacify the region through self-policing and information networks (Rid, 2010, pp. 739-742).

The most obvious expression of all, though, was the ready participation of some groups in filling the ranks of locally raised forces throughout Asia and Africa. This process of Europeanising native recruits had a dual purpose, in as much as it was more expedient for the colonisers than sending and maintaining white troops around the world, but also in introducing the discipline and firepower that was held up as a critical advantage if only the enemy could be brought to battle. The effects at the battle of Omdurman in 1898 added weight to the harsh reality of Hilaire Belloc's much-repeated assessment that: "Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim gun, and they have not" (Belloc, 1898, p. vi). Indeed, most contemporary writers on small wars agreed that the ultimate aim of any campaign was to aggressively seek out the enemy and bring this technological and organizational superiority to bear. The only real problem was how?

Among the biggest conundrums facing European forces in their myriad small wars was the idea that ground and territory meant virtually nothing to their erstwhile opponents and, as such, could not easily be held (Rid, 2010, p. 733). As General Pierre le Comte de Castellane put it: "In Europe, once [you are] master of two or three large cities, the entire country is yours. But in Africa, how do you act against a population whose only link with the land is the pegs of their tents?" (Vandervoort, 1998, p. 68). In his case, the answer was the *razzia*, which married local methods with the Marshal of France and Governor-General of Algeria Thomas Bugeaud's idea that, to be victorious in Algeria, his forces needed to become "even more Arab than the Arabs" (Porch, 2013, p. 20). Elsewhere, the employment of native auxiliaries to support the more regularised forces in terms of mobility and intelligence gathering, helped to fill the tactical and operational blind spots (Spiers, 1992; Draper 2019).

Consequently, success in small wars depended on flexibility and a willingness to adapt to local conditions. This included working with various groups within an otherwise hostile environment as much as seeking out opponents for destruction. Callwell's writings exemplified the diversity of campaigns that the British Army had fought during the 19th Century and concluded that there was no single way to fight such disparate enemies. However, intelligence, organisation, and preparation were often key principles by which commanders on the ground could gain advantage. Despite establishing a so-called French model that differed from the British, Lyautey's conclusions were not altogether dissimilar. Despite the obvious need to identify what made one

small war distinct from the next, such campaigns often had as many similarities as they did variances. The challenges of terrain, climate, and enemy reflected the somewhat uncomfortable realisation that asymmetric warfare in an extra-European theatre was neither simple nor refined. Small wars did not necessarily possess the same cadence as regular inter-state conflict. Nor, indeed, did it recognise the same rules and mores. Yet, in their own way, small wars became the norm for most armies throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries, filling the gaps between the cataclysms of European or World Wars. Even then, small wars continued to feature, albeit in their traditional space: on the peripheries.

As Koss et al. (2018) found during an audit of American children's picturebooks, the shifting terrain of children's literature parallels social and political developments outside children's literature. Baguley et al.'s article *Australian Children's Picture Books, the Frontier Wars, and Joseph Campbell's Hero with a Thousand Faces*, but more broadly as people seek to make sense of events that continue to resonate across society. As they are often chosen by adults, such as parents, teachers and librarians, picture books offer a valuable insight into contemporary attitudes, more so than the predilections of the readers (Kerby et al: 2022a; Kerby et al: 2022b; Baguley & Kerby, 2023; Flothow: 2007; Avery: 1989). They also reinforce existing beliefs or established stereotypes by the way characters and events are portrayed. Frank Uhr and Debra O'Halloran's *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* (2019) engages with the uncertain place the Frontier Wars occupy in the national imagination by subsuming Indigenous resistance into the nation's broader celebration of its participation in foreign wars.

The evolution in how people understand historical events is evident across entire cultures, transcending children's literature to include everything from academic scholarship to popular culture. Although Ian Beckett's article *Indigenous Resistance in the Anglo-Zulu War* is based on significant research, its appeal to the non-specialist reader owes at least some debt to the 1964 movie *Zulu* and its visually stunning recreation of the Battle of Rorke's Drift. Like *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* it must, however, be understood in terms of contemporary thinking rather than being an accurate representation of the mores of 1879 or 1964, for if the movie was made today:

> … more attention would surely be given to dramatizing the Zulu viewpoint, and to providing a sympathetic focus for identification with non-White characters. It is also likely that opposition towards the politics of imperialism and the record of the colonial past would nowadays be expressed more explicitly, less ambiguously. (Hall, 2014, p. 167)

This need to shape a historical narrative to suit modern sensibilities is evident in a documentary film about Multaggerah, an Australian Aboriginal leader who led resistance to white settlement in southeast Queensland. A contemporary audience may well expect a documentary to be 'truthful', but in reality, the question of whether film can convey an objective truth is far from being settled. As is evident in Maddock et al.'s article *The Search for Truth: Filming the Battle of Meewah*, Western modes of film making might be dismissed as a form of cultural imperialism, leading documentary makers to seek more authentic ways to align with Indigenous story telling culture. Rowan Light's article *'Pou maumahara', 'the memory-place': Historical remembrance and colonial conflict at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira* also explores how histories of conflict and violence can be authentically presented to a contemporary audience. As each of the authors in this special theme issue would agree, this process requires an engagement with the trauma of colonial conflict in the nineteenth century. In this case, Light analyses how a curatorial team at the Auckland War Memorial Museum has conceptualised a new gallery displaying stories and objects relating to 'the New Zealand Wars'. Their openness to exploring this topic in an institution constructed after the Great War shows a breadth of vision and inclusivity that has not always been a feature of the Australian War Memorial.

Children's literature and documentary film have certainly grappled with how best to explore Australia's frontier wars, but the most sustained controversy has been over its presence in the *Australian Curriculum*, and specifically the discipline area of History. As Bedford, et al. observe in

their article *The very marrow of the national idea: The Frontier Wars and the Australian Curriculum*, prior to the 1970s indigenous issues were rarely explored in any depth in Australian history classrooms. The decision to implement a national curriculum saw political parties from the Left and Right clashing over their competing conceptions of national identity, central to which is the place of foreign wars in the creation of a national foundation story, and the associated but no less keenly felt commitment to characterising white settlement as an essentially benign process.

Conclusion

In his creation of the *Star Wars* universe, George Lucas was inspired by his study of Joseph Campbell's conception of the monomyth, discussed in his seminal work *The hero with a thousand faces* (1949/2008). Campbell identified a pattern in story forms, fairy tales, songs, and sonnets, sacred writings, dreamings, and monologue accounts. The canonical narrative arc of the hero's journey has three core elements - a 'call to adventure', engagement in a range of trials and challenges, and the return home. Though Lucas's Star Wars galaxy 'far, far away' is the setting for a war on the frontier, it is morally ambiguous. Helpfully, the villain even wears black. Yet in the 'real world' there is ambiguity. European nations seeking to celebrate their histories are confronted by the moral and legal ramifications inherent in the violent destruction of Indigenous peoples and the ongoing, intergenerational trauma that has been, and continues to be caused. The heroes of the Empire were not all villains, but even if they were ethical by the standards of the day, and by no means was this true of all of them, their actions often ended in the destruction of Indigenous peoples in a manner contemporary audiences would consider genocidal.

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About the Authors

Mario Draper is a Senior Lecturer in Modern British and European Military History at the University of Kent. His research interests centre on the intricate relationships between armies and societies, with a particular specialism in the history of Belgium. Dr Draper has published widely in various peer-reviewed academic journals as well as his monograph The Belgian Army and Society from Independence to the Great War (Draper, 2018, Palgrave Macmillan). Dr Draper's current research project centres on the role and motivation of the 19th Century European 'mercenary' officer. More broadly, Dr Draper has co-written a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) entitled From Waterloo to the Rhine: The British Army 1815-1945, which is hosted in FutureLearn. A second MOOC sponsored by the Western Front Association and entitled The Imperial Western Front is in production at the time of writing. Dr Draper is a Research Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and is also a Managing Editor for the British Journal for Military History.

Email: m.a.draper@kent.ac.uk
ORCID: 0000-0001-7240-343X

Martin Kerby is an Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. His research interests include biography and artistic and cultural responses to conflict. Dr Kerby holds two doctorates in the field of biography. He has received numerous research awards including several ANZAC Centenary grants, both state and national (2014, 2015, 2017). Dr Kerby was a 2018 Q ANZAC 100 Fellow at the State Library of Queensland with his project was titled 'A War Imagined: Queenslanders and the Great War'. He was recently awarded a place on the highly regarded Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators (2020). Dr Kerby has published extensively including The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). He is also the Chief Investigator on a USQ Capacity Building Research Grant titled 'Counter Memorials/Monuments and the Australian Commemorative Landscape'. He is also currently the Chief Editor of Australian Art Education.

Email: martin.kerby@usq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0003-4073-2559

Margaret Baguley is a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in visual arts. She has received numerous awards recognising the high quality of her teaching and research. She is currently the Associate Head Research for the School of Education. Her research interests encompass the arts, arts education, leadership, group dynamics and creative collaboration. She has an extensive number of publications including The Palgrave Handbook of Global Arts Education (Barton & Baguley, 2017, Palgrave MacMillan) and The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). Dr Baguley is also a practising artist with 10 solo exhibitions and 47 group exhibitions with forty of these being invitational. Her most recent group exhibition received Australia Council for the Arts funding and

she has been a recipient of grants from the Ian Potter Foundation, Craft Queensland, Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. During 2020 Dr Baguley was one of a team awarded a USQ Learning and Teaching Open Educational Practice (OEP) Grant for the project titled 'Exploring social justice, democracy, human rights and citizenship: Engaging tertiary students through an open history textbook initiative'. Dr Baguley was co-awarded a Princeton University Library Research Grant (2020) with Dr Kerby to undertake research on the relationship between the artist and author of the Mary Poppins series of books. Dr Baguley is currently elected Vice-President of Art Education Australia (AEA), the national peak body for visual arts education.

Email: baguley@usq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0003-0098-6378

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

Indigenous resistance in the Anglo-Zulu War

Ian F. W. Beckett
Independent Scholar

Abstract

The Anglo-Zulu War, one of the shortest of the Victorian (South Africa) 'small wars', saw the Zulus score a notable victory over the British army at Isandlwana in January 1879. This defeat resulted in the worst single day's loss of life suffered by British troops between the battle of Waterloo in June 1815 and the opening campaigns of the Great War in August 1914. Within months, however, the traditional Zulu way of war had condemned them to tactical and strategic defeat. Their reliance upon close-quarter hand-to-hand combat even when confronted by superior British firepower cost them 6,000 dead and subjected them to a post-war political settlement that dismantled the military system that underpinned the Zulu polity, led to fragmentation, civil war and, ultimately, to British annexation in 1887.

Keywords

Anglo-Zulu, Isandlwana, Victorian Britain, Zulu

Citation

Beckett, I. F. W. (2023). Indigenous resistance in the Anglo-Zulu War. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 12-21. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.202

Overview

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 was one of the shortest 'small wars' fought by Britain during the Victorian era. Only seven months separated the British invasion of Zululand on 11 January 1879 from the final defeat of the Zulu at Ulundi (oNdini) on 4 July 1879 and the capture of the fugitive Zulu King, Cetshwayo kaMpande on 28 August. As the war was fought entirely on Zulu territory, it cost the British a relatively cheap £5.2 million (Beckett, 2019); nevertheless, the ramifications were considerable. In addition to totally derailing the British government's policy in southern Africa, the defeat at Isandlwana on 22 January 1879 resulted in the worst single day's loss of life suffered by British troops between the battle of Waterloo in June 1815 and the opening campaigns of the Great War in August 1914. Isandlwana and the Zulu victories at Intombe (12 March 1879) and Hlobane (28 March 1879) were particularly remarkable given the disparity in resources and technology available to the belligerent nations. It came, however, at a significant cost. Victory at Isandlwana, which cost the Zulus 1,000 dead was quickly followed by defeats at Rorke's Drift (22-23 January 1879), Kambula (29 March 1879), Gingindlovu (2 April 1879), and Ulundi. The Zulu reliance upon close-quarter hand-to-hand combat even when confronted by superior British firepower meant that in a little over two months of war, Zulu dead numbered 6,000.

Nevertheless, their battlefield prowess transformed the Zulu in the eyes of the British forces arrayed against them and those who subsequently commented on their ferocity. They were no longer dismissed as just another barbarian foe and instead were worthy military opponents, variously proclaimed the "finest and bravest race in South Africa" by Queen Victoria (Beckett, 2019, p. 15) and the "finest savage race in the world" by Henry Rider Haggard (1908, p. 764). Despite their casualties, it was the peace that followed which wrought the greatest destruction on Zulu society. The actual fighting impacted directly only on a relatively small part of Zululand. In addition, British operations included systematic destruction of military homesteads - *amakhanda* - and the carrying off of livestock, but this did not fundamentally alter the Zulu way of life (Laband, 2009). In contrast, the post-war political settlement imposed on Zululand - division into thirteen petty chiefdoms - and the dismantling of the military system that underpinned the Zulu polity led to fragmentation, civil war and, ultimately, to British annexation in 1887.

British imperial strategy

The Anglo-Zulu War was part of an established pattern of imperial expansion in southern Africa, though in this case strategic imperatives rather than economic opportunities drove British government policy. Using the British colony of Natal as a gateway for European goods into the interior by drawing upon cheap African migrant labour was without doubt an attractive proposition. It was secondary, however, to the tactical importance of the Cape which lay on the vital strategic route to India. To protect it and British interests in southern Africa more broadly required a policy of confederation to end the political fragmentation between the British colonies of the Cape and Natal on the one hand and the Boer (Afrikaner) colonies of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal on the other. The subjugation of independent African entities was also a necessary pre-requisite; during the 1870s the British subdued not just the Zulu but also the Ngqika and Gcaleka amaXhosa, the Pedi, the Griqua, the Balthaping, the Prieska amaXhosa, the Korana, and the Khoesan (Laband, 2014a). It was the Zulu, however, who were perceived to be the greatest threat to Natal. The British High Commissioner at the Cape, Sir Henry Bartle Frere, was easily persuaded by some colonists and by the European missionaries excluded from Zululand by Cetshwayo that the Zulu had been behind the Xhosa disturbances that had promoted the Ninth Cape Frontier War (1877-78). Frere further characterised Cetshwayo as "an ignorant and blood-thirsty despot" who presided over an army of 40,000 "man-slaying gladiators" (Beckett, 2019, pp. 24 - 31). His was not an isolated view; even two decades later Charles Callwell (1896) in his classic *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* still characterised the Anglo-Zulu War as a campaign "for the overthrow of a dangerous power" (p. 28). These assumptions regarding the

nature of the Zulu polity were a major factor driving the British determination to neutralise the supposed threat to Natal.

The annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 appeared to offer Frere a pretext for war. The Transvaal had been bankrupted fighting a border war against Sekhukhune's Pedi, which meant that the British inherited a border dispute between the Zulu and the Boers. Frere's desire to provoke a war on the issue was undone by a border commission finding in favour of the Zulu. He then exploited several border incidents and past promises of good conduct extracted from Cetshwayo to deliver him an ultimatum on 11 December 1878. In demanding the dismantling of the Zulu military system, Frere knew he was striking at the basis of Zulu polity, a development that even the more pacifist elements within the Zulu leadership could not accept. He took the precaution of not despatching the text of the ultimatum to London until it was too late for the government to intervene. There was already a war in Afghanistan and London did not want another in South Africa. When the Zulus showed no sign of being prepared to accept Frere's terms, the British invaded Zululand on 11 January 1879. The war that Frere orchestrated was highly unusual in that it was a colonial campaign initiated by the British at a time and place of their choosing.

British and Zulu tactics

Although the British were experiencing difficulties in the ongoing campaign against the Pedi, there were expectations of easy victory against the Zulu. The British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Chelmsford, was certainly aware of the Zulu military system and of Zulu fighting methods. A pamphlet, *The Zulu Army*, was issued in November 1878 as well as *Précis of Information Concerning the Zulu Country with a Map*. Nevertheless, it was assumed that the Zulu would fight much like the Xhosa, who had been shattered by British firepower at Centane on 7 February 1878 in the Ninth Cape Frontier War. By advancing directly to the centre of Cetshwayo's authority at his main homestead at Ulundi, Chelmsford hoped to entice the Zulu into attacking in the open. Superior firepower - not least the breech loading Martini-Henry rifle – would, it was assumed, more than compensate for the small numbers of troops deployed. As Chelmsford wrote in November 1878, "I am induced to think that the first experience of the power of the Martini-Henrys will be such a surprise to the Zulus that they will not be formidable after the first effort" (Chelmsford, 1878). Chelmsford's strategy also recognized other Zulu vulnerabilities. Upon entering Zululand, three separate columns - Nos. 1, 3 and 4 - would divide the Zulu army (*impi*) as well as destroy as many *amakhanda* as possible, thereby systematically reducing Zulu capacity to resist by destroying crops and livestock. Nos. 2 and 5 Columns were held in reserve to watch the borders, although No. 2 Column subsequently joined No 3 Column at Isandlwana on the morning of 22 January. In 1879 there were twenty-seven *amakhanda* in Zululand, thirteen of them close to Ulundi. The three columns would converge on Ulundi, assuming they could be effectively coordinated over the largely uncharted distances involved. The columns would operate along those axes considered most vulnerable to Zulu incursions into Natal.

In its timing the British invasion was well judged. Delaying military operations until the next South African winter (June to August) would mean the grass in Zululand would be too dry and have little grazing value for the vast number of transport oxen needed to sustain any advance. January and February would be wet and uncomfortably hot, but the grass would be fresh, and the Zulu inconvenienced by the need to gather their harvest. The rivers along Natal's frontiers would be high after the autumn rains and impede Zulu incursions. By the time they subsided in March, it was assumed the war would be over. Cetshwayo was also hampered by the fact that he had called up his regiments (*amabutho*) in September 1878 in response to British military preparations when crops should have been planted. It was also the end of an exceptionally dry season that had depleted large tracts of pasture and killed many cattle. Cetshwayo had little choice but to release the *amabutho* to their homesteads, but the harvest would inevitably be delayed. In the meantime, it would be difficult to feed a large number of men kept together for any length of time. Even if the

war was not prolonged, any action would have been followed by dispersion for ritual purification ceremonies, sharing of plunder, and recuperation (Laband, 1992).

The number of British regular troops available to Chelmsford was limited; the arrival of two more battalions in December 1878 still only gave him six infantry battalions augmented by a naval brigade. Added to this was the lack of mounted troops which was only partially offset by colonial volunteer units. This force - totalling some 6,669 men – was further rounded out by British efforts to capitalise on a general African hostility to the Zulu, which added a further 9,350 men to the invading force. The Natal Native Contingent was formed from African levies comprised of Christian converts, and followers of the Tlokwa subdivision of the Sotho (Thompson, 2006). Added to this were chiefs in receipt of British stipends, many of whom had been driven westward into Natal during the extensive migratory upheaval of the 1820s and 1830s known as the Mfecane, and 6,000 African pioneers, border guards and border levies. Later in the campaign, a carrier corps was also recruited to supplement ox-drawn transport and mules, many of which had been lost at Isandlwana (Bailes, 1980). The Zulu made overtures of their own to neighbouring tribal groups such as the Swazi to the north, the Sotho and Mpondo to the south, and the Mabhundu-Tsonga to the east but were rebuffed. So was an approach to the Pedi, even though Sekhukhune was also fighting the British (Laband, 1997).

The British were aware that they were outnumbered but hoped to offset this disadvantage by exploiting internal divisions among the Zulu themselves. It was believed that the ordinary Zulu were so disaffected with Cetshwayo's rule that there might not be any Zulu resistance once British forces crossed the frontier (Cope, 1999). Although it did not reflect the wider Zulu opinion, several prominent Zulu clan chiefs and *izikhul* (elders) opposed war and counselled appeasement at any price. Among the members of the royal house opposed to war was Cetshwayo's full elder brother, Hamu kaNzibe, heir to his uncle rather than his father under the Zulu system. Hamu was to defect to the British in March 1879. The so-called white chief, John Dunn, who had settled in Zululand and adopted Zulu ways, crossed into Natal with his followers even before the war began. But it would take the imminent prospect of the dissolution of the kingdom after Zulu military defeat to accelerate the willingness of other chiefs to safeguard their positions by negotiating with the British (Laband & Thompson, 1990).

The expansion of the invading force was vital given the fact that though Chelmsford possessed some knowledge of the Zulu system, he did not have precise information on the number of warriors at Cetshwayo's disposal. It was assumed Cetshwayo could call upon almost 42,000 warriors, though in reality the actual number who mustered at their *amakhanda* in January 1879 was probably closer to 29,000. Some 20,000–24,000 warriors appear to have been committed against Chelmsford and No. 3 Column at Isandlwana. A much smaller force was sent to oppose No. 1 Column crossing the Tugela (Thukela) at Lower Drift, and only limited reinforcements assisted the local clans facing No. 4 Column. A token force of elderly *amabutho* was retained at Ulundi as an emergency reserve. Cetshwayo discounted the risk of British use of Portuguese territory or indeed any coastal landing, although the British did in fact briefly consider this option (Laband, 1998).

By instructing his warriors to refrain from attacking unless they were attacked first, Cetshwayo sought to fight a limited war ending in negotiation. Aware that the British had enormous resources at their disposal, Cetshwayo hoped that a victory over the invading columns, especially one accompanied by Chelmsford, would enable him to threaten but not invade Natal and compel the British to negotiate. On their part, the British assumed the capture of Ulundi, the administrative and economic focus of Zululand, would end the war. They failed to recognize that it would at best only diminish Cetshwayo's prestige since there were other royal homesteads. Ulundi had no special significance in the Zulu polity and taking it would be more a signal of success to the British public than to the Zulu. The British, however, were correct in assuming that as the *amabutho* could not be kept together for long, Cetshwayo would be compelled to throw his army at the advancing columns in order to end the war quickly.

Despite his hopes to avoid escalating the conflict, Cetshwayo ordered an offensive when the British entered Zululand and immediately attacked the stronghold of the chief of the Qungebe clan,

Sihayo kaXongo. In order that he might continue to present himself as the injured party and to avoid further provocation, Cetshwayo still made it clear to his warriors that they were not to cross into Natal. Cetshwayo further warned them against attacking any entrenched position and instead bypass it in order to draw the British out into the open. The wisdom of this order was later borne out in the destruction of the camp at Isandlwana where the British had so tragically refrained from building entrenchments.

The Zulu way of war

The heart of the Zulu military system was the concept of grouping males according to age. The system appears to have derived from the Nguni practice of bringing boys together in circumcision groups. Between the ages of 14 and 18, youths would gather at *amakhanda* and serve for two- or three-years herding cattle, working the fields and being trained for war. At 18 they would be brought before the King and formed into a new *ibutho* with instructions to build themselves a new *ikhanda.* Led by appointed commanders (*izindunas*), *ibutho* served as army, police, and a labour force until marriage, when allegiance reverted to their clans. At that point a man established his own household (*imizi*). In some cases, an *ibutho* might be linked to a particular locality. In other cases, a new *ibutho* might be incorporated into an older one to maintain the latter's strength if the King wished to retain its identity. Marriage, which was conducted en masse, was not usually authorised until the warriors in a unit reached 35 or 40 years in age, thus maximising its length of service to the King. The *amabutho* reported for specific purposes such as the important and elaborate first fruits of harvest festival (*umKhosi*) held each December or January depending upon the waning of the full moon. Even when assembled at *amakhanda*, women supplied the warriors with food from their own homesteads. The women provided most of the agricultural labour force and were formed into female *amabutho* for marriage. Upon marriage, the warrior had a head-ring of hemp coated with grease (*isicoco*) sewn into the hair, apparently as a substitute for the former practice of circumcision. Married *amabutho* carried white cowhide shields rather than the coloured shields they carried as single men, although some of the conventions were breaking down by Cetshwayo's time. The shields were the property of the state.

The Zulu warriors were a citizen rather than a standing army whose members spent most of their time in a form of labour taxation (Colenbrander, 1981). Most *amakhanda* remained empty for much of the year unless the *amabutho* were mobilised, with the Zulu dispersing to their own *umuzi* (homesteads). Thus, Frere and others misunderstood and misrepresented the Zulu system as a standing army, and as a burden on the Zulu polity with its existence dependent upon "a constant succession of conquest" (Beckett, 2019, p. 24). There was unity and continuity in the Zulu nation but in reality, there were divisions within the polity. The Zulu economy rested largely on cattle, theoretically distributed through royal patronage. In practice, the individual's control over cattle was such that the Zulu were not dependent upon the King for the functioning of individual homesteads. Clan ties remained strong and individual chiefs were granted a measure of autonomy, especially princes of the royal blood (*abantwana*) and hereditary chiefs (*amakhosi*). Chiefs with territory along the borders of Zululand, such as Sihayo, increased their autonomy through contacts with Europeans, with trade goods such as firearms enhancing their authority.

The Zulu preference, in the absence of any actual experience of fighting European regulars, was for a pitched battle utilising traditional Zulu tactics. These were the *impondo zankhomo* (bull's horn manoeuvre) which reflected the ingrained Zulu desire for hand-to-hand combat. Essentially, the younger *amabutho* would form the left and right *izimpondo* (horns) of the impi, racing ahead of the main body or *isifuba* (chest) to encircle the opponents' flanks and draw them into the chest, itself supported by a reserve or *umuva* (loins). The Zulu did not advance in solid masses but in open skirmishing lines, though these could be 10-12 ranks deep. These tactics reflected a cultural approach to war very different to that adopted by British regulars. To a Zulu warrior, firearms appeared to offer no real military advantage over traditional weapons, which the Zulu assumed would give them victory in any fight in the open. The Zulu had not fought Europeans since 1838 and had not engaged in any battle since Cetshwayo had defeated his brother in 1856. They had

not adapted to military changes like the Pedi and the Sotho (Laband, 2008; Laband, 2009). In any case, firearms did not fit the hegemonic masculinity at the heart of Zulu culture. The warrior ethos demanded killing at close quarters as a matter of honour. While using a firearm at a distance did not result in ritual pollution, it was considered an inferior form of killing, unworthy of a warrior (Laband, 2014b). Each Zulu, therefore, carried several throwing spears (*izijula*), a knobkerrie club (*iwisa*), and a short stabbing spear (*ikilwa*), popularly known from the Arabic as an assegai. Despite their undoubted courage and ferocity on the battlefield, throughout the war the Zulu displayed the bankruptcy of their traditional hand to hand tactics. They were indignant at the continuing British refusal to fight them in the open. As one Zulu told the detained Dutch trader Cornelius Vijn (1880) after Kambula, "They are continually making holes in the ground and mounds left open with little holes to shoot through. The English burrow in the ground like pigs" (pp. 40-41).

Despite their preference for traditional weapons, the Zulu possessed firearms but did not rely upon them nor did they integrate their use into their battlefield tactics. Controlling Africans' acquisition of firearms formed part of the rationalisation for the British policy of confederation in southern Africa. It remained a concern in the Cape Colony and Natal from the arrest and trial of the amaHlubi chief, Langalibalele kaMthimkhulu, in 1873-74 through the Cape's Peace Preservation Act of 1878, to the Cape-Sotho 'Gun War' of 1880-81. The Xhosa and Mfengu had been effectively disarmed by the end of the Ninth Cape Frontier War (Storey, 2008). Zululand lay outside the control of the colonial authorities, and firearms, which conveyed prestige, had been available to the Zulu for many years. The number of weapons imported into Natal rose sharply between 1872 and 1875. Many were re-exported to Portuguese Mozambique before finding their way back to Natal. The Natal authorities made repeated efforts to prevent direct sales to Zululand and the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay were persuaded to impose a prohibition in 1878, but there was considerable illicit trade. Estimates of the firearms in circulation in Zululand in 1879 differ widely. Portuguese officials suggested 20,000 guns reached Zululand annually between 1875 and 1877. Most of these firearms, however, were percussion and even flintlock muzzleloaders. It is probable that the Zulu only had about 500-1,000 modern breech-loaders. The Zulu were unaccustomed to maintaining firearms in reasonable condition. There were few spare parts available, the quality of powder was decidedly poor, and few Zulu knew how to use their firearms' sights (Laband, 1992; Guy, 1971). A far higher proportion of the Zulu than the Natal Native Contingent, of whom only one in ten had firearms, had firearms at Isandlwana, but they played no part in the Zulu victory. The Zulu used firearms on occasion at Hlobane, Kambula and Gingindlovu. Only five Martini Henry rifles were recovered from dead Zulu at the latter, however, and the 800 or so taken at Isandlwana went largely unused (Hogan, 2013; Storey, 2008). Perhaps as a result of the movie *Zulu*, there is a persistent myth that the Zulu used Martini-Henry rifles taken from Isandlwana at Rorke's Drift. Four of the seventeen British fatalities died from gunshot and ten of the fifteen wounded were also from gunshot. The surgeon who subsequently examined the wounds reported they were "ordinary round bullets fired from smooth-bored guns" with low powder charges. Archaeological investigation in the late 1980s found evidence only of over-firing of bullets from older Zulu firearms (Beckett, 2019).

The clash of armies

The first major encounter of the Anglo-Zulu war on 22 January 1879 at Isandlwana was a decisive victory for the Zulu force. More than 20,000 Zulu warriors, commanded by Ntshingwayo kaMahole Khoza and Mavumengwana kaNdlela Ntuli, attacked and massacred a British force of fewer than 2,000 camped at Isandlwana mountain under the command of Colonel H.B. Pulleine. Contemporaries attributed the British disaster to Chelmsford's decision to leave the camp with the greater part of his force earlier in the morning. In addition, a further division of the defenders by Colonel Anthony Durnford who led much of No 2 Column out of the camp rather than remaining to defend it when the Zulu *impi* was unexpectedly encountered by a patrol led to a further diminishing of the British force. Durnford became a useful scapegoat to cover Chelmsford's

own errors of judgement and refusal to believe the reports reaching him that the camp was under attack. From the beginning, however, many held Chelmsford, responsible, primarily for his failure to entrench the camp. Among several excuses for his defeat, including the collapse of the Natal Native Contingent and the supposed failure of the ammunition supply on the firing line, Chelmsford suggested that the Zulu had prevailed "by force of recklessness and numbers" (Laband, 1994, p. 78). The losses sustained by the Zulu at Isandlwana undoubtedly deeply shocked Cetshwayo. There is still a debate as to whether the Zulu field commanders intended to attack Isandlwana on 22 January and, indeed, the *impi*'s precise location when discovered by British patrols reacting to reports of a Zulu presence. Cetshwayo later suggested that he had instructed his commanders to send a peace delegation to Chelmsford before attacking and that they were debating this when the *impi* was discovered. This appears unlikely although the principal commander, Ntshingwayo kaMahole, seems to have been undecided as to his immediate course of action and was waiting on events. There is equal debate as to whether the Zulu intentionally deceived Chelmsford into dividing his force in the early hours that morning and leading over half of it out across the plain to reinforce elements that had made contact with Zulu the previous afternoon and evening. The balance of evidence suggests that the Zulu had not observed Chelmsford's departure.

Certainly, the intended composition of the *impi*'s horns was disrupted by the suddenness with which the action commenced. Some have argued that the *impi* had been sufficiently doctored before leaving Ulundi to require nothing more but there were still some last-minute purification rituals to undertake. Cetshwayo appears to have subscribed to the view that pre-battle rituals had not been undertaken properly and that the *impi* should not had been allowed to disperse so quickly after the battle. The real reason for defeat was that the British firing line was too dispersed, too far away from the camp, with too few of the men available actually deployed to it, so that it was easily outflanked by the Zulu. Of the 1,774 defenders - British and African - at least 1,329 were killed (74 per cent): 858 Europeans of whom 710 were British regulars, and at least 471 African auxiliaries. Only 78 Europeans appear to have survived, just five of them regular officers and ten ordinary rankers of the 24th Foot. Having never encountered such firepower before, it says much for the Zulu's undoubted courage that they overcame it to push home their attack.

Some warriors from the Zulu reserve, who had moved to cut off the retreat route from Isandlwana back to Rorke's Drift, halted their pursuit at the Buffalo (Mzinyathi) River that marked the border with Natal. However, 3-4,000 warriors under the command of Cetshwayo's ambitious younger brother, Dabulamanzi kaMpande, continued into Natal. The Zulu seemingly intended a limited incursion to burn farms and steal cattle but came upon the tempting target of the mission station and supply depot of Rorke's Drift defended by only a handful of redcoats. The Zulu, who were comprised of the more elderly regiments, arrived piecemeal and exhausted. Nevertheless, the fact that 139 defenders of Rorke's Drift were able to fight them off for ten hours at the cost of just 17 British dead points to the tactical poverty of uncoordinated rushes on what were improvised defences, but which were still sufficient to neutralise Zulu superiority in numbers. Rorke's Drift added perhaps another 600 dead to those suffered at Isandlwana and there were approximately 300 more dead from the clash on the same day as Isandlwana between No 1 Column and the Zulu despatched to oppose it at Nyezane. It would be two months before Cetshwayo could summon the *amabutho* again. Fortunately, from the Zulu perspective, No. 1 Column simply sat down behind defences constructed at Eshowe until relieved by Chelmsford in April. The defence of Eshowe from which the Zulu kept some distance, meant that a third of Chelmsford's army "devoted their energies to little besides keeping themselves alive" (Bailes, 1980, p. 93). Isandlwana, meanwhile, had wrecked the invasion and there was no prospect of renewing it until substantial reinforcements arrived from Britain. Once the 'siege' at Eshowe was lifted and it was burnt to the ground, Chelmsford's forces then killed another thousand Zulu at Gingindlovu. Hoping to restore his reputation before his replacement Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived, Chelmsford launched his second invasion of Zululand in May 1879.

The activities of No. 4 Column in the north of Zululand, however, ended any prospect Cetshwayo might have entertained of compelling the British to negotiate. A series of raids were

mounted by the British from the column's camp at Kambula. The local Mdlalose clan were somewhat ambivalent in their loyalties to Cetshwayo, and some had defected, but the Qulusi remained deeply hostile to the British. Whilst well-armed and organised, and holding strong positions on Hlobane Mountain, the Qulusi were worsted in several British raids. Consequently, they asked Cetshwayo for assistance and given the threat posed by No. 4 Column it was agreed to send the main *impi* as soon as it had been reassembled (Laband, 1992). Some half-hearted attempts had been made at negotiation, but it was clear that the British had no intention of accepting anything less than complete Zulu capitulation (Laband & Thompson, 1990). Thus, the *impi* was sent to the north on 24 March 1879, its arrival coinciding with a major British cattle raid on Hlobane on 28 March. The latter went badly wrong with the Qulusi operating from caves and harassing the British as they withdrew down the precipitous Devils' Pass. The withdrawal route was then cut off by the unexpected arrival of the *impi*. The raiders - British, colonial troops, and African levies - suffered almost 200 dead and were forced back on Kambula.

Cetshwayo had clearly instructed his commanders on the conduct of the northern operation, the intention being not to attack the entrenched camp at Kambula but to "seize the camp cattle and so draw the white men away from their wagons and tents" (Laband, 1992, 149). Failing that, the *impi* would advance into the Transvaal with the same intent of drawing the British out from behind their defences. On 29 March, however, the Zulu again neglected to use their firearms when they were goaded by feints conducted by the colonial mounted irregulars and instead made mass charges conducted in a piecemeal manner. It may be that the success at Hlobane on the previous day had emboldened the younger warriors to overrule their commanders' instructions (Laband, 1992). Possibly over 2,000 Zulu died in the action and during the ruthless British pursuit that followed. Once more, it would take time to summon the *impi* for any further effort after Kambula and Gingindlovu.

There were further efforts made by Cetshwayo to negotiate as Chelmsford's plodding columns advanced towards Ulundi amid more Zulu defections. Left with little choice, Cetshwayo resolved to fight, although it is clear he held out little hope of success and tried to dissuade his warriors from attacking the British on 4 July 1879. This time the British were in the open but in a defensive square formation with nine-pounder artillery and Gatling guns. As at Isandlwana, the Zulu probably numbered around 20,000, some of whom used firearms with little success. Although they did come close to the square at one point, it is generally agreed that the Zulu no longer displayed quite the same reckless conduct as they had earlier in the war. A further 1,500 warriors were killed and Cetshwayo became a fugitive.

Conclusion

Although the war ended in defeat for the Zulu, the numbers alone can be deceptive. In the Nquthu district, where Chelmsford had originally crossed the frontier in January, menfolk had joined their regiments whilst women, children and the aged had gone into hiding. They had gone into hiding again during the second invasion in May and it was generally reported that the area was still largely deserted as late as October 1879. During the war, however, many parts of Zululand did not even see a British patrol and since most fled when the British approached, civilian casualties may not have been large. From a population of perhaps 250-300,000, the loss of 6,000 males in their prime equated to roughly 21 per cent of those engaged. Nonetheless, the estimated 14,000 cattle, 1,200 goats and 3,000 sheep carried off by the British represented perhaps only five per cent of the whole. Similarly, while 23 of 24 *amakhanda* were torched together with possibly 12,000 huts, the latter was barely one per cent of the total in Zululand. Many Zulu went hungry, but most had returned to their fields by August 1879 (Laband, 2000).

In the west and south-east of Zululand, where the British military presence was felt longest, the Zulu increasingly submitted. The south where there had largely been raiding activity submitted once the British entered it in force in September. Although never entered by the British, the north, centre and east of Zululand gave up once it was clear that the war was lost. Only in the north-west - an area of long-disputed territory between Zulu and Boer - was there any prolonged

resistance despite a heavier British wartime presence. Once it was clear that Cetshwayo's authority was doomed, most chiefs safeguarded their own position by pragmatic accommodation (Laband, 1992). A number found their reward in the post-war settlement, the British having no appetite for annexation and instead resorted to division. By recognising the chiefs and leaving the economic structure unchanged, the British succeeded in making the Zulu monarchy irrelevant to ordinary Zulu and ambitious chiefs alike. It was the latter's ambitions that then led to the unravelling of the settlement and civil war. Cetshwayo was restored to part of his kingdom in 1883 but died in February 1884. There was a Boer intervention on behalf of Cetshwayo's son, Dinuzulu, leading to the establishment of the so-called New Republic, which was then incorporated into the Transvaal in 1888. Meanwhile, Britain had annexed what remained of Zululand in 1887. By that time, the struggle for supremacy in southern Africa was defined by conflict between Briton and Boer, the Transvaal having regained its independence in the Anglo-Transvaal War (1880-81).

The Anglo-Zulu War was a clash of very different cultures, which pitted modern European firepower against traditional hand-to-hand combat. The Zulu had firearms, but for cultural reasons eschewed using even their outdated models in an effective manner. Other Africans had embraced firearms more effectively, although in the longer term, their resistance was also overcome. Nor did the Zulu attempt any kind of guerrilla struggle in the way that the Xhosa had done to prolong some of the Cape Frontier Wars. Whilst Cetshwayo had a realistic view of Zulu prospects in a war against the British and a realistic strategy for survival, his commanders and warriors persisted in the belief that they could overcome firepower through the use of traditional tactics. After the shocks of Isandlwana, however, the British were never going to negotiate short of complete Zulu capitulation. The Zulu way of war simply played into British hands.

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About the Author

Ian Beckett is a retired Professor of Military History from the University of Kent in 2015. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he has held chairs in both the UK and US. He was Chairman of the Council of the UK Army Records Society from 2000 to 2014. His publications include *Wolseley and Ashanti: The Asante War Journal and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley*, 1873-74 (History Press for Army Records Society 2009), *A British Profession of Arms: The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Oklahoma University Press, 2018), and *Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

The very marrow of the national idea: The Frontier Wars and the Australian curriculum

Alison Bedford
Martin Kerby
Margaret Baguley
Daniel Maddock
University of Southern Queensland

ABSTRACT

Prior to the 1970s Indigenous issues were largely absent from Australian history classrooms. Schools largely taught British and European history, an approach grounded in a hagiographic treatment of European settlement and the nation's experience of foreign wars. The wave of non-British post-Second World War migration and an increased focus on Australia's relationship with the United States, including its strategic importance as a Pacific nation, made a white, male, mono-cultural national identity increasingly difficult to maintain. Political parties from the Left and Right have repeatedly clashed over their competing conceptions of the core elements of Australia's national identity, which in turn has underpinned a sustained controversy over the development of a national history curriculum and the classroom practice it shapes. In particular, the question of how the Australian Frontier Wars can be taught within a socio/cultural context that celebrates foreign wars as the birthplace of the nation and considers European settlement to be an overwhelmingly benign process is one of the central controversies that has marred the development and evolution of the Australian Curriculum: History.

KEYWORDS

Frontier Wars, Australian Curriculum, History Curriculum, National Identity

CITATION

Bedford, A., Kerby, M., Baguley, M., & Maddock, D. (2023). The very marrow of the national idea: Frontier wars and the Australian curriculum. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 22-37. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.203

Introduction

As Sir Michael Howard, lauded as "Britain's greatest living historian" (Hastings, 2013, p. 13) and "Britain's foremost expert on conflict" (Thorpe, 2019) observed, "it is hard to think of any nation-state… which was not created, and had its boundaries defined, by wars, by internal violence, or by a combination of the two" (Howard, 1991, p. 39). Indeed, conflict is entrenched into "the very marrow of the national idea" (Samuel, 1998, p. 8). Australia is no exception; indeed, it is a nation that has installed its military history as the bedrock of national identity, a sacred parable above criticism (McKenna, 2010), and a grand narrative that emphasises the role of Australian military engagements and the Anzac spirit in shaping the nation (Lake, 2010). Nevertheless, the Frontier Wars fought against Australia's First Nations peoples, "one of the few significant wars in Australian history and arguably the single most important one" (Reynolds, 2013, p. 248), struggles to find a place in this "inviolable foundation story" (McKenna, 2014, p. 153). Until recently, the Frontier Wars rarely impinged on popular discussions of Australian history, with Gallipoli, Pozières, Passchendaele, Amiens, Tobruk, Kokoda, El Alamein, Long Tan, and a host of other foreign battlefields framing the nation's imagining of conflict. A visit to the battlefields of the First World War has become almost a rite of passage for Australians, yet the sites of First Nations resistance and massacre in Australia are only recently being more widely acknowledged.

The violence of the fighting on the Australian frontier was "widespread, well-orchestrated and committed continent-wide from occupation until far into the 20th century" (Daley, 2014, para. 6). Between 1788 and 1928 it is conservatively estimated that at least 22,000 men women and children, 20,000 of them Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, were killed either in official or non-official actions. The fighting involved atrocities that were "gruesome even by the standards of the day" (Rogers & Bain, 2016, p. 87). The growing recognition of the extent and nature of the violence has brought with it some significant challenges. At times, it is pervaded by a discourse of massacre rather than resistance. Similarly, the belated recognition of Indigenous service in the Australian military serves to bolster rather than challenge what some dismiss as a militaristic, nationalist ideology (Gibson, 2014). The question of how the Frontier Wars can be taught within a socio-cultural context that has traditionally celebrated foreign wars as the birthplace of the nation and considers European settlement to be an overwhelmingly benign process is one of the central issues that define the development and evolution of the *Australian Curriculum: History*.

The Australian curriculum – the political context

The development of the Australian Curriculum has attracted the attention of numerous researchers, including Baguley et al. (2021) Brennan (2011), Ditchburn (2012), Gerrard and Farrell (2013), Harris-Hart (2010), Marsh (1994), Reid (2005, 2019), and Yates et al. (2011). As these researchers found, a nationally mandated curriculum inevitably confronts significant challenges (Apple, 1993; Brennan, 2011) that reflect "a range of social, political and economic imperatives and ideological positions" (Savage, 2016, p. 868). It is further problematised in the Australian context by a demarcation dispute. The state and territory governments retained constitutional responsibility for schooling after Federation in 1901, one that they have often proved unwilling to either share or surrender to the federal government (Baguley et al., 2021). Nevertheless, from the late 1960s and 1970s, successive federal governments increasingly began to encroach on this prerogative (Kennedy, et al., 1995). In 1968 Malcom Fraser, then Liberal Minister for Education, argued in favour of the Commonwealth reducing unnecessary differences in the educational content taught across the various states (Reid, 2005). In the 1970s the Whitlam Labor Government began providing funding directly to schools (Bartlett, 1992), a move which did little to assuage what has been for many decades a pervasive suspicion of any attempt to centralise the control of education (Mueller, 2021). In retrospect, what followed appears as a slow but inexorable move toward a national curriculum, though this belies the challenge of reaching anything approaching a consensus. For the drive toward a national curriculum was never 'just' an educational issue, for it was shaped by economic and social agendas which reflected neoliberal

and social democratic aspirations (Meiners, 2017; Lingard, 2010). *The Hobart Declaration on Schooling* (MYCEETA, 1989), which included common and agreed goals for schooling in Australia is a case in point. In any other context it might have indicated a broad agreement about curriculum development, yet five years of intensive development followed, culminating in the 1994 national Statements and Profiles for eight key learning areas (Mathematics, Technology, English, Science, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), Languages other than English (LOTE), the Arts, and Health (which included Physical Education and Personal Development) (Kennedy, et al., 1995). In 1999, *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (MYCEETA, 1999) continued the process of centralisation by making government funding contingent on "recipient jurisdiction implementation of requirements" (Bezzina, et al., 2009, p. 547; Brennan, 2011).

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MYCEETA, 2008) subsequently outlined the agreed national purpose and role of schooling, central to which was the economic aims of both education and economic prosperity (Carter, 2018). By the time the Rudd Labor Government was elected in November 2007, the states and territories were offering a "wary and somewhat qualified" support for a national curriculum (Reid, 2019, p. 200). Julia Gillard, the Federal Education Minister and later Prime Minister, established the National Curriculum Board (NCB) in early 2008 comprised of representatives from each of the states and territories, who were tasked with developing Kindergarten (K)/Preparatory (P) to Year 10 courses in Mathematics, Science, History and English for a proposed rollout in 2011. The NCB became the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in December 2008. The current Australian Curriculum was, and remains, the responsibility of this independent statutory authority. Like the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), which developed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, ACARA eventually assumed an unprecedented policy development role (Savage, 2016). Policy documents and educational programs subsequently initiated throughout 2009 included the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF), the *Australian Early Development Index* (AEDI), the *Digital Education Revolution* (DER), and the *Building Education Revolution* (BER).

The Australian curriculum: History – the educational context

As many Australian researchers have noted, the past 35 years has witnessed a positioning of education in Australia as a "a site of contestation" (Fozdar & Martin, 2021, p. 132; Clark, 2010; Macintyre & Clark, 2003). Political parties from the Left and Right have repeatedly clashed over their competing conceptions of the core elements of national identity, which in turn helped generate a sustained controversy over the development of a history curriculum and the classroom practice it shapes. For as John Tate (2009) observes, "all articulations of 'nation' are inherently political, and inherently contestable, since unlike the 'state', the 'nation' has no obvious or objective borders, and so its boundaries, along with the inevitable corollary of who is included and who is excluded from the nation, depends on how the 'nation' is defined" (p. 97). As Tate (2009) further argues, "who is included and who is excluded from the nation, therefore, is by no means self-evident: it depends on who succeeds in advancing the dominant conception of 'nation' at a given point in time, including what ascriptive characteristics make for inclusion or exclusion" (p. 101). This has a particular resonance for those seeking to engage with First Nations issues in the history curriculum, for this group has traditionally been so marginal to the popular conception of nation that they were not compulsorily counted as part of the population until Australians voted to change the constitution on 27 May 1967.

Prior to the 1970s, First Nations peoples were only briefly mentioned in the curriculum as a homogenous group who are either the perpetrators or victims of frontier violence (Sharp, 2013, p.189) or as part of the natural world (Sharp, 2013, p.182) rather than a civilisation with its own long history. Issues were usually absent from Australia's history classrooms. Schools taught largely British and European history, an approach grounded in a hagiographic treatment of European settlement and the nation's experience of foreign wars. The legislative achievements of

the early Australian parliaments following Federation in 1901 are a case in point. They were essentially defensive: a white Australia, an Australian navy, compulsory military training, tariffs, and arbitration which were all geared to protecting the new nation's sovereignty, her racial unity, and her living standards (White, 1981). Nationhood was thereby defined as much by what it defended against as it was by what it stood for. As a white settler society, Australia embraced a perception of Britain as the "motherland" and Australians as part of a "wider community of Britons". In turn, this "created a powerful vision of the national identity for school children" (Jackson, 2017, p. 167). However, the wave of non-British post-Second World War migration, Australia's location as a Pacific nation, and an increased focus on the relationship between Australia and the United States altered how national identity was perceived. Britain, "once at the heart of definitions of citizenship and historical narratives, was quietly abandoned by an educational establishment that struggled to find a coherent identity to replace it" (Jackson, 2017, p. 181). First Nations peoples and histories have not readily found a place in this vacuum and have instead remained politically contentious.

Prior to the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in the late 2000s, each Australian state and territory was responsible for their own curriculum design, though First Nations history was usually addressed in the senior syllabi for Years 11 and 12 students. Educational developments in the state of Queensland are a useful case study. As late as 1987, the Queensland *Senior Syllabus Modern History* makes no direct acknowledgement of First Nations perspectives or experiences, instead noting only that:

> Students will be expected to acquire an understanding of the values and practices endorsed by the majority of Australians, and of the historical forces which have moulded them. Significant challenges to those values and practices should also be investigated. A key focus should be on the question of whether there is a distinctive Australian national character' embodying a distinctive Australian nationalism. (BSSS, 1987).

The suggested content betrays a lukewarm commitment to First Nations history. It includes "the destruction of Aboriginal society", "treatment of Aborigines" prior to the First World War, and a Local History Survey that includes the suggestion that "Aboriginal history in the local area could be a focus". *Unit 9: Imperialism and Racial Conflicts and Compromises* was likewise less than proscriptive in its suggestion that "A historical study of race relations in Australia" may include "Aborigines; the White Australia Policy; migrants in Australian society", each of which could serve as one of the nine possible topics (BSSS, 1987). The implication was clear – local First Nations experiences were firmly rooted in the past by being conceptualised as the "destruction of Aboriginal society" rather than an important contributor to contemporary political and social issues. This quarantining of First Nations history continues to be particularly destructive. As Amy Way (2022) argues, this "discourse of extinction" which pervaded settler-colonial thinking about First Nations peoples during the nineteenth century continues to find a place in some curriculum documents (p. 721).

During the 1990s more contemporary and inclusive conceptions of First Nations peoples began to emerge in the curriculum. The objectives for one Board of Secondary School Studies unit included "the continuing debate about how the history of Australia should be written, including the implications of the perspectives of Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders, women, different classes, different ethnic groups and people of various ideological beliefs; the debate about whether there is, or has been, a distinctive Australian character" (BSSS, 1995). There were also more opportunities for an exploration of the history of Indigenous peoples, with references to topics ranging from "Aboriginal cultures before European contact", to "contact and conflict between Aboriginal and European peoples", "Historiographical debates about Australia Traditional Aboriginal versions of the past", "Continuing debates about how Australia's history should be constructed", "'Establishment' histories reflecting Anglo-Celtic notions of cultural superiority and the primacy of 'development' and 'progress'", "the promotion of these histories as consensual and unproblematic" and "Historiographical challenges to establishment from

feminist, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, ecological and alternative ideological perspectives, particularly in recent decades". Notably, there was also reference to "The life of Aboriginal peoples in Australia in the early years after Federation with reference to government policies, other institutional influences and relations between Aboriginals and other Australians in various settings social and cultural life in Australia between 1901 and 1914" (BSSS, 1995). This represented a dramatic shift, not only in content but in the focus on historiography and the recognition of the differing perspectives evident in both primary sources and amongst historians.

As always, however, the discussion was never just about education. Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating (1991-1996) was enthusiastic though selective in his use of Australian history as an explanatory tool justifying contemporary political ambitions, notably closer engagement with Asia, Australia becoming a republic, and a 'reconciliation' between Australians of European origin and First Nations Australians (Macintyre & Clark, 2003; Watson, 2002). Keating may well be largely responsible for making history a political issue, but it was his successor, the conservative John Howard (1996-2007), who better appreciated the centrality of history to a battle of ideas between the 'black armband' and 'three cheers' view of Australian history. In simplistic terms, this clash can be characterised as one side alleging that the other has no pride in Australia's history, and the other that its opponents wish to censor Australian history and deny the truth about the history of Aboriginal dispossession and the White Australia policy (McKenna, 1997). Howard (1996) believed that "the balance sheet of our history is one of heroic achievement and that we have achieved much more as a nation of which we can be proud than of which we should be ashamed" (para. 94). His mobilising of Australian history as part of the 'history wars' was not merely a counterpoint to Keating's, for it was in fact "radically different". For while Keating "sought to accompany his modernising economic project with measures to modernise Australia's polity and cultural life, Howard sought to implement reassuringly conservative social and cultural policies, while continuing to pursue neoliberal economic reform" (Bonnell & Crotty, 2008, p. 152). In making sustained references to the Australian nation, and "its reputed qualities, characteristics and achievements", Howard referred not just to what "he believed already existed, and which also existed in the minds of his listeners but … also engaging in the further construction and articulation of that concept". Though he acknowledged that people should be "free to express their own identity" he believed that "there is a vast difference between tolerance, respect, understanding and indeed welcome for that diversity that now makes up this county and its unique identity and a government committed to elevate a whole range of different cultures, customs and values and accord them all equal status within the Australian way of life" (Liberal Party of Australia & National Party of Australia, 1988, pp. 92-93). British-Australian culture was, in this construct, the "core culture" into which other cultures should "blend" (Howard, 2006, para. 8).

As part of a "root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in our schools" intended to challenge the "postmodern culture of relativism where any objective record of achievement is questioned or repudiated" (Howard, 2006 a, para. 41), the Howard government initiated a National Inquiry into Teaching History (2000) and convened a National History Summit (2006) to begin drafting a national History curriculum. One of its main recommendations was that History should be a compulsory part of the curriculum in all Australian schools in years 9 and 10. The Australian History External Reference Group which was then commissioned to develop a Guide to Teaching Australian History in Years 9 and 10 achieved little given the Howard government's election defeat in November 2007. In April 2008, the Kevin Rudd Labor government established the independent National Curriculum Board followed in September by the appointment of four academics to draft broad framing documents in four subject areas: History (Stuart Macintyre), English (Peter Freebody), Science (Denis Goodrum) and Mathematics (Peter Sullivan). The following year saw the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) established to oversee the implementation of the national curriculum. The release of a draft national curriculum in March 2010 did not ease the tensions inherent in a process that was criticised by some as a form of "coercive nationalism" (Harris-Hart, 2010, p. 295).

The 2004 Queensland senior syllabus works as a political weathervane, as it was written amidst the 'History Wars' that would come to define the development of the first iteration of the Australian Curriculum and echoes many of the conservative concerns of the period. Opportunities to address First Nations experiences lacked detail, with *Theme 7: Studies of Diversity* suggesting a study of "Aboriginal heritage and role of Indigenous peoples past and present" as an option, and *Theme 15: History and historians* suggesting "Ownership and historical evidence: recovering, recording and interpreting evidence, for example, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history". As has been argued elsewhere, this

> perhaps reflects the influence of the History Wars in stymieing the process of reconciliation; as the explicit and implicit recognition of the negative impacts of imperial colonisation (i.e., invasion) present in the 1995 syllabus has been 'sanitised' into a politically correct rendering of "all groups of people". While there is a clear reduction in the explicit acknowledgment of First Nations experience, the recommended elements of the syllabus include "some study of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians". (Bedford & Wall, 2020)

This marked a return to a position which minimises both the degree of conflict and the extent of harm to First Nations peoples and cultures. The aforementioned history syllabus remained in place for the next 15 years without substantial revision. This is significant not just in educational terms, for Queensland was the site of the most violent colonial frontier in Australia, the most frequent reports of shootings and massacres of First Nations people, the three deadliest massacres of white settlers, the most disreputable frontier police force, and the highest number of white victims to frontier violence (Ørsted-Jensen, 2011). In 1886, one colonial official wrote that Queensland was "a comparatively uneducated community which has shown itself notably regardless of the commonest rights of humanity in respect of the black native tribes within its own territory" (Queensland State Archives, 1886). The frontier violence is inscribed on the land itself, with placenames marking sites of conflict. 'Massacre Inlet' in north Queensland and 'Murdering Creek' near Noosa are just two sites whose English language names commemorate frontier violence (Ryan, 2022).

In 2019, the Queensland curriculum underwent its most significant reform in more than 40 years. Reflecting the significant social change and ongoing political debates about both the content of the history curriculum and its teaching, the new syllabus explicitly engages with frontier violence, with the unit on the Frontier Wars being one of two compulsory Indigenous-focused topic options (the other is the Indigenous civil rights movement post 1967) (QCAA, 2019). The support materials for the syllabus make clear that links between the events of the period and contemporary issues (such as the renaming of the electorate of Batman in 2018, named after a grazier who had massacred First Nations peoples in Tasmania, and later negotiated a dubious 'treaty' with other first Nations peoples whereby he traded thousands of hectares of land for tools, blankets and food, thereby indelibly linking his name to the founding of Melbourne) are a suitable outcome of the study, which works to counter the 'extinction' narrative that was promoted in earlier studies of First Nations histories.

The Australian Curriculum: History (Version 9) - the educational context and the question of what is taught and how

This brief case study of Queensland's senior curriculum (Years 11 – 12) over time, which is not bound as stringently to the expectations of ACARA and covers a much larger time span than the national curriculum, is enlightening. It provides a different model indicating what is possible in terms of teaching young Australians about our foundational conflict – a lesson that the writers of Version 9 of the Australian Curriculum appear not to have learnt. Curriculum reform over time both mirrors and exposes how curriculum works as a political intermediary, navigating the dominant views of those in power at the time of its conception or revision. It is for this reason that

the teaching of history is also a vital consideration, as it is the classroom history teachers who daily must deal with curriculum reform and implementation across various iterations.

The most recent iteration of the curriculum, Version 9, was overseen by the conservative Liberal National coalition, who reduced the amount of content that needs to be covered, but increased coverage of post-colonial Australian history, with five of eight required units being framed around Australia's experience of or role in global events. One new topic in Year 7, Deep Time Australia explores pre-colonisation First Nations peoples cultures, knowledges and practices. While media and academic commentary has tended to focus on the heavy emphasis on post-colonisation Australian history and the debates about how history should be taught, less attention has been given to how First Nations history, particularly the approximately 130 years of frontier conflict that defines Australia's emergence as a federated nation has been addressed. For while the Frontier Wars has become a core topic in various state and territory Modern History senior syllabi, not all students select this subject, and the topic is only briefly addressed in Version 9 of the Years 7-10 Australian Curriculum in a Year 9 unit.

The curriculum is organised into three broad topics (or sub-strands) per year level, with two of these being compulsory in each year level. This design reflects the common practice of school offerings of HaSS (Humanities and Social Sciences), which delivers both History and Geography content often in a 'one semester each' model, which allows for one History topic per term to be studied in one semester. Each sub-strand provides several content descriptors which must be addressed, and within each content descriptor are a series of elaborations which provide suggestions and additional detail about what content may be included. These elaborations are optional. In Version 9, students now study one unit on pre-colonial First Nations culture, one on an ancient culture in Year 7; one on Medieval Europe, one on a non-European empire or culture in Year 8, and then four topics across Years 9 and 10 that cover colonisation and federation, World War I, World War II and 'Building Modern Australia' (ACARA, 2022a). Four of the eight compulsory topics are now focused on post-contact Australian history, which serves to distort students' understanding of Australia's role in global relations and further minimises the histories of other cultures and places (only one topic requires non-European history), including that of First Nations peoples. One unit that does focus on First Nations peoples covers important concepts such as deep time, culture, and relationship with Country, yet there is still a strong sense of their culture being presented in the past tense, with only a passing recognition of how cultural beliefs and practices have persisted and are maintained today.

The portion of the Years 7-10 curriculum that covers the Frontier Wars is included in a unit entitled "Making and transforming the Australian nation" (1759 – 1914), with one of seven content descriptors covering the period of invasion and expansion. Scope to address the Frontier Wars is given in the content descriptor "the causes and effects of European contact and extension of settlement, including their impact on the First Nations Peoples of Australia" (ACARA, 2022a), with the optional elaborations, which serve to position First Nations peoples as the passive victims of conflict, massacre, disease and ultimately 'destroyed'. The optional elaboration includes:

- "examining the effects of colonisation, such as frontier conflict and massacres of First Nations Australians, the spread of European diseases and the destruction of cultural lifestyles".
- "analysing the impact of colonisation by the Europeans on First Nations Australians such as frontier warfare, massacres, removal from land, and relocation to 'protectorates', reserves and missions".
- "investigating how First Nations Australians responded to colonisation, including through making important contributions to various industries that were established on their lands and waters, adopting Christianity and other settler religions" and a reference to the Stolen Generations.

The final elaboration is perhaps the most troubling of all as it implies that First Nations people did not resist colonisation, but instead were willing participants who joined their local church and found employment on sheep stations without any discussion of how this often-forced assimilation

was the result of deliberate government policy and action. The one mention of 'invasion' appears in the elaboration for the content descriptor "different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers, and First Nations Australians …" which reads "exploring the perspectives and experiences of First Nations Australians, including discussing terms in relation to Australian history such as 'invasion', colonisation' and 'settlement', and why these continue to be contested within society today" (ACARA, 2022a). The terms, particularly 'invasion', remain contested because the view of the Australian government is represented in the curriculum documents and subsequently in classrooms across the nation.

Some of the efforts to address First Nations history in the curriculum do not pay the dividends that one might expect. 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' is one of three Cross-Curriculum Priorities (CCPs) which are meant to be embedded across the curriculum, however, they are not assessable and are often not a core focus of teacher planning or delivery. The word 'invasion' does not appear in the Year 7-10 curriculum content descriptors, and only once in an optional elaboration and once in the CCPs. The only curriculum descriptor which specifically references frontier violence is, "The occupation and colonisation of Australia by the British, under the now overturned doctrine of *terra nullius*, were experienced by First Nations Australians as an invasion that denied their occupation of, and connection to, Country/Place" (ACARA, 2022b). There are two important points to note here- the term *terra nullius* is used far more regularly than it is understood, for there was in fact no legal doctrine that supported the claim that inhabited land could in fact be regarded as ownerless. It was not the basis of official policy, either in the eighteenth century or before, and appears to have only developed as a legal theory in the nineteenth century (Borch, 2001). Indeed, far from shaping policy from the early days of European settlement, it is more likely the reverse, with the establishment of the state of New South Wales playing a significant role in the development and subsequent use of the term. Secondly, the passive phrasing that positions British action as "occupation and colonisation … "experienced … as an invasion". These language games absolve the British of the act of invasion altogether, as it is mediated through the subjective "experienced as". The fact that despite the guidance from the ACARA First Nations Australians Advisory Group, invasion is almost absent from the curriculum document itself, and its relative obscurity in the CCPs shows how the curriculum continues to uphold the dominant narrative of genteel settlement perpetuated in earlier iterations of the Australian Curriculum.

It is not only the history curriculum content that is heavily contested, but also *how* it should be taught. The construction of a singular national narrative is particularly effective if taught in a didactic lecture style, where the teacher is positioned as a 'sage on the stage' and knowledge, accepted as truth, is transmitted directly from teacher to student. However, contemporary history pedagogy is characterised by a student-centred inquiry approach, which relies on critical thinking, questioning, and engaging with a range of perspectives and sources. The work of Peter Seixas (2006) has been particularly influential in this shift, as his conception of 'historical thinking' has come to pervade the curriculum and teaching of history in Canada, Australia, and the UK (Bedford, 2023). In Australia, architect of the first draft of the national history curriculum, Tony Taylor (2009), was also an advocate of a more disciplinary, inquiry-based engagement with the curriculum content. While teachers hold differing views about the balance between teacher-led content delivery and students actively participating in historical inquiry, the broad consensus is that there should be elements of both in effective history classrooms (Sharp et al, 2022). Yet while professional positions differ, political agendas come to the fore, with the same conservative voices who advocate for a singular narrative advocating for a knowledge transmission model of teaching. When conservatives use the term explicit instruction, they often do so inaccurately, as genuine EI does have some scope for student development of skill working towards independent application, albeit in a rigidly scaffolded process (Archer & Hughes, 2011). This presents a particular challenge when teaching contested histories that can have direct links to student's own lives. For example, many First Nations students have family members who were a part of the Stolen Generations or are the descendants of pastoralists who have since been implicated in frontier violence. This is

another deterrent to the teaching of 'hard history' as it can cause more harm if not taught appropriately and sensitively with the guidance of First Nations people.

There is a concerted effort amongst many teachers, teacher educators and researchers to ensure that First Nations perspectives and experiences are a part of the Australian schooling experience, with over 1000 articles and books published since 2018 on the teaching of the Frontier Wars, including in textbooks for secondary students. The Frontier Wars is also regularly featured as a topic at History teacher conferences. Yet as Nakata (2007) argues "it is not possible to bring in Indigenous Knowledge and plonk it in the curriculum unproblematically' (pp. 188-189). For example, Tyson Yunkaporta's popular 8 Ways pedagogy (2009), which foregrounds Indigenous ways of learning, and approaches that are specific to the teaching of the Frontier Wars using a demythologising pedagogy (Bedford & Wall 2020), exists in a socio-cultural context that too readily adopts an oppositional framing of Aboriginal and Western knowledge systems (Yunkaporta, 2009). As Daniel Hradsky (2022) argues, "only when Indigenous peoples control what, how, and why First Nations content is taught, can Australian education contribute to the decolonising process, and thus reconciliation" (p. 155).

The challenge facing teachers in ensuring students know about this key period in our national history is two-fold: not only is the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and experiences across the history curriculum difficult to navigate, but teachers also often lack the confidence to deliver this material. As Michelle Bishop et al. (2021) found, non-Indigenous teachers will often avoid covering topics which may offend students and families or which they do not feel qualified to teach, with one participant saying that "if you're not going to do it well, don't do it" (p. 202). This hesitation by some teachers to teach First Nations content in case they 'get it wrong' is exacerbated by the political climate which discourages them from attempting it in the first place.

Conclusion: Response to the Australian curriculum: history

The mixed response to the national curriculum reflects broader ideological concerns, particularly regarding the Frontier Wars and the associated issues of native title and the removal of Indigenous children from their parents. Conservatives bemoaned the interest in these issues as an assault on traditional Australian values while critics on the Left believed that the curriculum was not radical enough in its challenge to outmoded beliefs and assumptions about national identity (Brett, 2013). Taylor criticised the final version as being "too close to a nationalist view of Australia's past" (Topsfield, 2008, para. 10). Taylor (2009) characterised Howard's intervention in the curriculum as an attempt "to gain ownership of Australian history in schools and create their own neoconservative master narrative" (p. 317). In contrast, the Federal Opposition Education Spokesperson Christopher Pyne, a conservative, believed that there was "a seeming over-emphasis on Indigenous culture and history and almost an entire blotting out of our British traditions and British heritage" (quoted in Brett, 2013, p. 11). One of his successors, Alan Tudge argued that even when the curriculum was revised in 2021 it would lead to students being taught a negative view of Australia history, a statement that the James Melino, Victoria's education minister derided as "ham-fisted culture wars rubbish" (Visontay & Hurst, 2021, para. 2). Salter and Maxwell (2016) offer a more articulate though no less impassioned criticism of the concerns of people such as Tudge when they observed that it sought to "heap privilege upon privilege by recommending that a curriculum already steeped in the histories and traditions of the West be 'balanced' by adding even more Western civilisation to the curriculum" (p. 308).

That the discussion goes well beyond academic issues is hardly surprising given that school curriculum, as Kenny (2019) reminds us, is a cultural construction; one better understood as the 'nation's curriculum' rather than a national curriculum.

> The debates are not merely academic – they are debates about a nation's soul. About its values. About its beliefs. Curriculum is not a technical field, although there are technical aspects to it – but to confuse the technical and the cultural is highly problematic. It is one thing to produce a national curriculum – a technical

> task. It is quite another to capture a nation's soul by articulating valued knowledge, skills and beliefs that will benefit young people in the future. (Kenny, 2019, p. 121)

When people perceive that 'their' nation is underacknowledged, ignored or even threatened by the curriculum, they seek redress. Christian Schools Australia (2021) distanced themselves from the narrow phrase "Christian Heritage" and instead sought an acknowledgement of the "enormous impact of both Christians and Christian organisations on the shape of modern Australia and the framework of Judeo-Christian thinking and beliefs as the basis for the common values of our society". They suggested that the three cross curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and sustainability be augmented with a fourth that focuses on Western/Judeo influences. Conservative academics such as Kevin Donnelly (2021) were less restrained, lamenting that under the auspices of Leftist ideologues "Christianity is [being] banished from the public square and the state is sponsoring neo-Marxist inspired gender and sexuality programs" (para. 16). These views were amplified and twisted by those with an unapologetically reactionary agenda such as the private organisation ADVANCE (n.d.), which argues that radical politicians, bureaucrats, and inner-city elites were turning classrooms into "critical race theory training camps" that "cancel the teaching of freedoms that underpin Australian democracy, including freedom of speech, association, and religion". While some of the elective senior History syllabi now acknowledge and explore the Frontier Wars, as the Queensland example shows, this foundational conflict is not a compulsory topic for all Australian students. The Anzac legend and the benign nature of European settlement remain core tenets of a widespread conception of national identity. The inclusion of First Nations history cannot challenge their prominence in the wider imagination unless the national curriculum lays the groundwork for authentic change.

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About the Authors

Alison Bedford (PhD) is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in History curriculum and pedagogy and education research. Her own research interests include the social function of fiction, science fiction and history pedagogy. She is the Book Reviews Editor for the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*. Dr Bedford's publications are wide ranging. She has published a monograph, *In Frankenstein's Wake: Mary Shelley, Morality and Science Fiction* (McFarland, 2021), as well as a number of textbooks for both tertiary and secondary students, most notably *Teaching Secondary History* (Sharp et. al., 2021) and *Modern History Units 1-4* (Bedford, Martens, & Slavin, 2019) as a part of the Cambridge Checkpoints series. She has also recently co-edited *Unlocking Social Theory with Popular Culture* with Dr Naomi Barnes (Queensland University of Technology). Her work has been published in a number of journals, including *Historical Encounters* and *Agora*.

Email: alison.bedford@unisq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0001-6708-9896

Martin Kerby is an Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. His research interests include biography and artistic and cultural responses to conflict. Dr Kerby holds two doctorates in the field of biography. He has received numerous research awards including several ANZAC Centenary grants, both state and national (2014, 2015, 2017). Dr Kerby was a 2018 Q ANZAC 100 Fellow at the State Library of Queensland with his project was titled 'A War Imagined: Queenslanders and the Great War'. He was recently awarded a place on the highly regarded Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators (2020). Dr Kerby has published extensively including *The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914* (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009) with Palgrave Macmillan. He is also the Chief Investigator on a USQ Capacity Building Research Grant titled 'Counter Memorials/Monuments and the Australian Commemorative Landscape'. He is also currently the Chief Editor of Australian Art Education.

Email: martin.kerby@unisq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0003-4073-2559

Margaret Baguley is a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in visual arts. She has received numerous awards recognising the high quality of her teaching and research. She is currently the Associate Head Research for the School of Education. Her research interests encompass the arts, arts education, leadership, group dynamics and creative collaboration. She has an extensive number of publications including *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Arts Education* (Barton & Baguley, 2017) and *The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914* (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009). Dr Baguley is also a practising artist with 10 solo exhibitions and 47 group exhibitions with forty of these being invitational. Her most recent group exhibition received Australia Council for the Arts funding and she has been a recipient of grants from the Ian Potter Foundation, Craft Queensland, Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. During 2020 Dr Baguley was one of a team awarded a USQ Learning and Teaching Open Educational Practice (OEP) Grant for the project titled 'Exploring social justice, democracy, human rights and citizenship: Engaging tertiary students through an open history textbook initiative'. Dr Baguley was co-awarded a Princeton University Library Research Grant (2020) with Dr Kerby to undertake research on the relationship between the artist and author of the Mary Poppins series of books. Dr Baguley is currently elected Vice-President of Art Education Australia (AEA), the national peak body for visual arts education.

Email: baguley@unisq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0003-0098-6378

Daniel Maddock (PhD), has a background in internationally award-winning media production and a particular interest in visual and digital literacies and the use of media in pedagogical practice. Daniel is the Australian representative on the editorial panel for the world's first academic journal about cinematography - Cinematography in Progress. His PhD thesis on the practice of cinematography was nominated for the Chancellor's Medal for Excellence in PhD Research at Griffith University. Daniel's research focuses on the form of film and creative media and how it is constructed for meaning in addition to and in support of the media's content. Daniel sees visual literacy and linguistic literacy as elements of a whole literacy and therefore advocates for a deeper understanding of non-literary forms of communication and expression. Daniel has also published internationally broadcast and award-winning television drama, internationally award-winning short-films, and nationally broadcast documentaries.

Email: daniel.maddock@unisq.edu.au
ORCID: 0000-0003-2746-9098

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

Bolivian settlers and Toba Peoples: Appropriation of Indigenous lands on the Chaco Plains in the 1800s

Marcela Mendoza
University of Oregon

ABSTRACT

This article analyses settler encroachment on Indigenous peoples' lands in the Chaco region of Eastern Bolivia. It is an understudied story, rarely interpreted from a perspective inspired by settler colonial studies. My analysis explores policies promoted by the emerging Bolivian state to address its 'Toba problem' along the Pilcomayo River, where for three centuries hunter-gatherers ignored the colonial authority and continually defied the power of the new nation. The story is situated in the mid-to-late nineteenth century when administrators of the Republic distributed small tracts of land along the river with the intention of expanding ranching and consolidating the country's international border. My analysis focuses on the contentious interactions between Toba and ranchers in a marginal area of Bolivia. Describing 'settling' from a non-Anglophone perspective, this approach expands the framework of settler colonial theory, offering innovative ways to read Indigenous dispossession and extermination in the Bolivian Chaco.

KEYWORDS

Settler Colonialism, Bolivian Chaco Region, Pilcomayo River.

CITATION

Mendoza, M. (2023). Bolivian settlers and Toba peoples: Appropriation of Indigenous lands on the Chaco Plains in the 1800s. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 38-51.
https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.204

Introduction

Soon after independence from Spain in 1825, Bolivians confronted tension on the borders with Argentina and Paraguay which reflected a general ambivalence about their nation's institutions (Barragán Romano, Lema Garrett, & Mendieta Parada, 2015; Barragán Romano et al., 2015; Gordillo, 1877). The economic development of the administrative colonial district *Audiencia de Charcas*, which became the modern nation of Bolivia, focused on exploiting the mining resources of the Andean Highlands. Thus, the political centre of the emerging Republic was situated in the Highlands where colonial administrators had been able to harness the labour of sedentary agricultural populations.

During the early republican period, promoting the expansion of the nation's borders, Bolivian Minister Félix Frías (1845) identified the southeastern Chaco lowlands along the Pilcomayo River as particularly suitable for colonisation. The Toba, Weenhayek, Chorote, Tapiete, and other Indigenous groups lived there, but the region was viewed as marginal desert lands from the central administration, inhabited by an indeterminate number of peoples widely considered to be "savage" (Herndon & Gibbon, 1854). The region's economic potential was acknowledged, although it remained unexplored and unoccupied until the 1890s.

The existence of a boundary between conquered territories and unconquered territories such as the Chaco lowlands was indicated in colonial documents by the word *frontera*, or frontier or border. The *frontera* started on the fertile mountain valleys of the foothills between the Highlands and the Chaco plains and were fiercely protected by Avá-Guaraní warriors. The Avá-Guaraní, called *Chiriguanos,* were farmers who planted maize and other crops. They initially lived in villages with large longhouses, but later scattered into smaller and more defendable settlements. For centuries, they maintained an uneasy co-existence punctuated by mutual raiding with settlers who primarily raised cattle. The cattle destroyed the villages and maize fields, and in response the Avá-Guaraní killed the cattle and colonists (Langer, 2009). Meanwhile, mobile hunter-gatherer peoples mounted their own challenge to the advance of colonisation on the Chaco plains.

I developed below a historical account of the violent dispossession of the lands inhabited by the Toba, an Indigenous people who fiercely opposed the advance of settlers, and whose property rights were ignored by the Bolivian state. In the 1920s, just before the first hostilities that initiated the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay (1932-1935, c.f. Farcau, 1996; Niebuhr, 2018), many Toba families decided to cross the international border and settle on the right margin of the Pilcomayo River, in Argentina, in an area that they also considered their own. Their reasons for making such an important decision remain opaque to today's authors. From the viewpoint of the neighbouring Weenhayek people, the Toba were overpowered and expelled by the militias and the army (Alvarsson, 2012, p. 65). However, some Toba stayed in the area and a few live today in the Bolivian territory that they used to call as their own.

The early republican frontier

When small settlements and cattle-posts of *fronterizos* (frontiersmen) reached the outskirts of the Chaco plains around the town of Tarija, they were sometimes attacked by alliances of Toba and other warriors. Toba warriors had a history of undertaking "marauding expeditions, plundering, and murdering the surrounding populations" (Reclus, 1894, p. 876). The fear of 'savages' on the frontier was also a matter of numbers. The first national census of the Republic, published in 1847, identified 1,373,896 people "under the sovereignty of the Constitution and the laws of the Republic" and 760,000 *infieles* or non-believers (Dalence, 1851, p. 202). Later sources, for example the Bureau of American Republics (1892) and Keltie (1890) noted a further 500,000 individuals of mixed European and Indigenous descent known as mestizos. In addition, there was one million Indigenous peoples, one-quarter of whom lived in "a savage state" (Keltie, 1890, p. 386). The decline of the Toba population offers an insight into where colonial policy invariably led. Alcide D'Orbigny (1839) estimated that the Toba population of Bolivia in 1830 numbered almost 6,000

people. Franciscans Cardús (1884) and Pifferi (1895) later placed their number at fewer than 4,000. In the 1900 national census (Bolivia, 1902), Franciscan missionaries estimated that the overall population of tribal peoples in the Chaco region along the Pilcomayo River to be about 5,000. In 1912, Rafael Karsten (1970 [1923]) estimated that the number of Toba had declined to about 1,500. In 2012, the Bolivian population census listed only 86 Toba people, the majority established in a rural area of the Department of Tarija (INE, 2015).

Materials and procedures

Most of this research is drawn from nineteenth century publications about Bolivia written by state administrators, army officers, missionaries, and travellers. These are held in digital collections, for example, Internet Archive (www.archive.org), Hathi Trust Digital Library (www.hathitrust.org), the Repository of Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (http://repositorio.umsa.bo), or are accessible though interlibrary loans. Some documents were published by historians who produced edited collections and others were published by early twentieth century Bolivian authors. This article concentrates on the Toba living along the Pilcomayo River. In it, I study the arguments of scholars and government officials, and review state policies that (a) legally sanctioned the colonisation of Indigenous territories, (b) militarily supported the ranchers' occupation of Toba lands, and (c) justified the violence against Indigenous peoples during the mid-to-late 1800s. At the local level in the area around Pilcomayo, I explore the viewpoints of settlers, army officers, and missionaries towards the Toba. The perspectives of Toba people remain uncertain, beyond their obvious desire to check the advance of ranchers, willingness to engage in peace agreements, and grief at the abduction of young people. Thus, my analysis utilises an approach that combines historical and ethnographic methods to shed light on an understudied process of Indigenous dispossession, rarely interpreted from a perspective inspired by settler colonial studies.

A history of postcolonial dispossession in the Bolivian Chaco

The doctrine of uti possidetis

The first official map of the Republic of Bolivia, published in 1859 (Roux, 1993), represented the largest assumed extension of the State's borders. By applying the principle of *uti possidetis de jure* ("that who owns by law"), Bolivia transformed the administrative boundaries of the colonial *Audiencia de Charcas* into the international border of the Republic. Based on a legal precedent with its origins in Roman Law, the poorly defined administrative district previously governed by the Royal Court provided a blueprint for the extension of the new country (Fifer, 1972). Although there was no consensus as to where the eastern boundaries of the country should be drawn. Spaniards from Asunción, Paraguay, had settled the fringes of the Chaco plains in the 1540s, and the newly independent Republic of Paraguay disputed ownership of part of the Chaco region, including the northern margin of the Pilcomayo River's middle and lower course. Paraguayans based their claim on the principle of *uti possidetis de facto*, arguing that they had political and economic control of the area, while Bolivians had yet to occupy it.

For the new Republics, the doctrine of *uti possidetis* gave the expropriation of lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples a historical legality. Bolivian diplomat Santiago Vaca Guzmán (1881) argued that Bolivian nationality was thereby based on three principles: the right of possession or *uti possidetis* that defined its borders, the constitutional right that ruled its sovereignty, and the principle of balance of powers that ensured the country's independence and territorial integrity. Asserting political control over the Chaco or any other unoccupied region implied that the national territory was just a portion of land between the previous boundaries drawn by the colonial power. Bolivian administrators assumed that a cosmopolitan democratic state could function within any borders, disregarding the Indigenous people's cultural connections to their own homeland. The

tribal groups living between the Pilcomayo and Paraguay rivers thereby "belonged to the district" of the colonial *Audiencia* (Ríos, 1925, p. 23). The doctrine of *uti possidetis* ignored the deeper cultural significance of the land for tribal groups living in the new democratic postcolonial state. Bolivian scholars and lawmakers realized that effective possession of the Chaco region required occupation and colonisation of lands considered vacant during the colonial period and still beyond the control of the new state. In their quest for effective occupation, they ignored the land rights of the Toba and other mobile hunter-gatherers who lived along Pilcomayo River because their societies and cultures were viewed as inferior. The Indigenous peoples were not 'civilized' enough to have legal ownership rights to their homelands. Thus, the theory of the state's right to possession justified by *uti possidetis* was not applicable to mobile hunter-gatherers, for it was only applicable against them (Gilbert, 2016).

Distribution of 'vacant' lands

In 1832, General Francisco Burdett O'Connor, an officer with distinguished service during the war of independence, was appointed head of the recently created Department of Tarija, which included Toba territory. He quickly began to distribute land previously owned by the Spanish Crown. The government offered lots of one square league (one Spanish league measured approximately 5 km) as concessions to settlers. Grantees were required to establish ranches with livestock within a period of five years, otherwise the conditions of the land grant would expire (Lavandez, 1925). The legislation made a distinction between land owned by Avá-Guaraní agricultural communities on the mountain valleys of Tarija and land considered vacant or *res nullius* on the Chaco plains. Only 'vacant' lands could be granted to former Bolivian soldiers who were veterans from the War of Independence.

In the 1840s, during the presidential administration of General José Ballivián, the government developed a colonisation plan that included (a) exploring whether the Pilcomayo - a river originating in the mountains - could be navigated from the place where it entered the Chaco plains up to its mouth on the Paraguay River, (b) establishing colonies whose settlers would be protected by garrisons stationed on the riverbanks, and (c) enticing Bolivian settlers by granting them 10-year exemptions on taxes and mandatory service in the national army. It was a clever method for occupying land at little cost to the Bolivian government, but at great expense to Indigenous inhabitants of the plains. Military officers could receive lots of one square league and soldiers could receive lots measuring one-quarter square league near the forts where they served. This type of land grant to military personnel, however, was later annulled and soldiers were rewarded with pensions instead.

To attract *fronterizo* settlers—mostly poor Bolivians skilled in open-range cattle ranching and small-hold agriculture—to the Pilcomayo area, in September 1844 the government opened a register for settlers at their nearest police stations. Any citizen who wished to take responsibility for 'savage' individuals who had been abducted (called *cautivos* or captive individuals) from the Chaco tribes by army or militia operations could assign them to work in domestic service or ranching. This proposal was inspired by the old Spanish *encomienda* system that extracted labour from the Indigenous agricultural communities in the Andes and the mountain valleys. According to the 1844 government order, anyone could request authority over captured individuals, with the result that many Toba women and children were pressed into domestic service and the men were either captured or killed (Langer & Bass Werner de Ruiz, 1988). This period was marred by increased violence between ranchers who gradually occupied the area with cattle-posts and allied Toba warriors who opposed their encroachment. It was clear even at the time that the Pilcomayo might one day contribute to the prosperity of Bolivia, but government officials first needed (a) to ascertain whether large ships could navigate the river's entire course, and (b) to alienate or civilise the Toba tribe, whose annual incursions were wreaking havoc on the area and would become a persistent threat to new ranches. Though the area was recognised for its geopolitical significance - the border with Argentina was "no more than 50 or 60 leagues away" - from the Bolivians' point of view "no industry, no culture existed" (Anónimo, 1851, pp. 47-48)

In 1880 the government determined that 'vacant' lands could be sold to settlers or granted as compensation for Bolivians who had lost their assets because of the ongoing war with Chile (Lavandez, 1925). The so-called *Guerra del Pacífico* (War of the Pacific, 1879-1883) resulted in Bolivia's loss of access to the Pacific coast. It reduced the country's territorial limits and left it landlocked. In response to the nation's need to open access to the Atlantic coast for commerce, the government ordered an exploratory expedition from Tarija to Paraguay that would include building forts along the way and obtaining precise and detailed data on the land that would then be sold to settlers. New military garrisons would protect the area against the raids of the 'savage' tribes. In 1886, the administration of President Gregorio Pacheco created the land and colonisation office (*Oficina de Tierras y Colonización*), which almost twenty years later became the Ministry of Colonisation and Agriculture. The office was given authority to distribute land, collect statistics related to 'vacant' land, collect data obtained during explorations on colonisable land, and establish colonies without regard for the land rights of Indigenous peoples (Langer, 1989).

Cattle-ranches, forts, and mission-stations

Legislation sanctioned by the administration of General José María Achá in the 1860s created opportunities to establish large cattle estates in the Department of Tarija. Early in 1863, Aniceto Arce, chargé d'affaires for the Republics of Paraguay and Argentina, learned that the Argentines were organizing an expedition to explore and occupy the pastures around Pilcomayo River. The state government immediately directed the chief officer of the Chaco region to organize a military expedition that could reach the Pilcomayo before the Argentines (Valdez, 1878). The Bolivian expedition would travel on the river's south bank up to 150 leagues downstream, start a colony, and build a fort to prevent Argentina from claiming the right of first occupation. Parcels of land were promised to any volunteers willing to participate as well as neighbours of the city of Tarija who provided food and supplies for the expedition (Ortiz, 1863). In November 1863, a group of *fronterizos* and volunteer militia men, commanded by Colonel Andrés Rivas, helped in the construction of Fort Bella Esperanza. Rivas also enlisted some Avá-Guaraní workers, who had trained in Franciscan missions, and Toba and Weenhayek helpers from nearby tribal camps. Franciscan missionary José Giannelli—who was stationed at a mission-station built upstream for Toba Peoples in 1860— accompanied the expedition. Gianelli also enlisted the same workers to build a new mission-station for Weenhayek People near the Bella Esperanza Fort (Alvarsson, 2006). Both the fort and the mission were eventually abandoned but the initiative deterred the advance of the Argentines. Diplomatic negotiations set the south bank of the river as the international border between Bolivia and Argentina. The concern over borders was reflected in historian Sotomayor Valdez's (1878) argument that the administration needed to focus attention on the activities of neighbouring countries, not on the 'savages' who occupied the Chaco region, whose arrows were not at the service of any state but who were enemies of Bolivian and Argentine settlers alike.

Planning for the 1883 expedition to Pilcomayo River

Manuel Othon Jofré and other local leaders in Tarija conceived a plan in 1883 to advance the frontier over the 'vacant' land along the Pilcomayo. Their plan would facilitate acquisition of land for cattle ranching and ensure the safety of the large cattle estates near Tarija, already quite depressed due to the exhaustion of the pastures and frequent assaults by 'savages'. The Junta of Notable Neighbours of Tarija planned to use the funds raised by public sales of the land to support the exploration of new routes to Paraguay or for the building of forts. Construction of forts to colonise the area would, it was hoped, accomplish "the peaceful conquest of the wandering tribes" (Bolivia Ministerio de Hacienda, 1882, pp. 38-40). Wandering tribe was far from being the most negative assessment of the Toba. Officer David Gareca, who participated in the expedition to the Pilcomayo, characterised them as the "Chileans of the East." They deserved "war without a truce,

if possible until exterminating them" (Bolivia Ministerio de Hacienda, 1882, p. 55). Official correspondence blamed the Toba for their own demise: "They were victims of their own barbarism, no one else can be blamed. The same would happen in North America if an expedition set out, as fearlessly as ours did, to explore the country of the Redskins" (Bolivia Ministerio de Hacienda, 1882, pp. i-iii). These views were far from being an anomaly. Eulogio Raña, Subprefect of the Province of Gran Chaco, wrote a letter to the Prefect and Commander General of Department of Tarija in which he argued that these "savages will always be enemies of Christians, and progress, and civilization" and as such "the national government must require expeditions to annihilate the savage nations" (Bolivia Ministerio de Hacienda, 1882, pp. 44-455). Colonel Andrés Rivas, Subprefect of the Chaco, in a letter from Caiza to the Prefect and Commander General of the Department of Tarija likewise argued that "it is necessary to carry out other raids on the savages, if not to exterminate this [Toba] race, at least to intimidate and drive it away, so that the exploration and colonization that we propose can be carried out safely" (Bolivia Ministerio de Hacienda, 1882, p. 19).

A wide-ranging plan for colonisation

The system of colonisation conceived by Bolivian administrators included building forts and selling or granting small lots of land to settlers and military personnel, while also supporting the establishment of new Franciscan missions (Guzmán, 1886). Such a plan would achieve control of the Chaco, a region neglected since colonial times "because of hostile Indians or lack of interest" (Alarcón, 1905). Bolivian lawmakers and scholars envisioned developing a sort of *frontera viva* (live frontier) that could advance state dominion and sovereignty. They had in mind a broad objective: (a) affirming the doctrine of *uti possidetis de jure*, (b) encouraging expansion of international commerce, and (c) important geopolitical concerns related to potential clashes with neighbouring countries. In 1892, for example, Bolivian scientist Manuel Vicente Ballivián excluded the Chaco region from his estimates of the total territorial extension of the Republic because legal possession of the Chaco north of Pilcomayo was still contested by Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina (Bureau of American Republics, 1892).

By the turn of the twentieth century, local administrators had supervised construction of five forts on the Pilcomayo River area. The official 1907 report of the Office of Land and Colonisation stated that the forts were staffed by four squadrons of cavalry. The area remained "perfectly calm, and the periodic invasions of the savages have ceased. … Only one Toba chief, who acts as a link between the civilised and savage populations on both banks of the Pilcomayo, usually presents himself with hostile and aggressive pretensions" (Ballivián, 1907, p. 10). The same report claimed that "as for the conquered Indigenous population, efforts are being made to regroup them in urban centres and instil in them habits of sociability, giving them the means and facilities to build their houses and cultivate their fields" (Ballivián, 1907, p. 11). Encroachment by ranchers was extensive, but there were few estimates of the number of livestock because the cattle was kept "in the bush," nearly in a wild state, and was only rounded up for sale (Schmieder, 1926, p. 157). One ranch owner in the province of Chaco had managed to gather six thousand heads of dispersed cattle, one thousand five hundred mares, and three hundred two-year-old colts (Ballivián, 1907). Five years later, Mariano Aparicio, Subprefect of the Chaco province, estimated from data collected during his administrative visits to the settlements that the settlers owned about 20,000 heads of cattle; 4,000 horses; 2,000 donkeys and mules; 3,000 pigs; and 4,000 sheep (Aparicio, 1912-1913).

Encroachment and violence on Toba territory along the Pilcomayo River

The Toba

Franciscan Antonio Comajuncosa (1884) recorded Toba assaults on the grasslands around Caiza as early as the late 1700s. Those unexpected attacks cemented in the colonial imagination an

image of the Toba as "[c]ruel and bloodthirsty" (Olsson, 1899, p. 82). Because robberies and revenge-attacks continued to occur even on the ever-shrinking frontier, the Toba continued to generate fear in Bolivian settlers. A rare description published at the beginning of the twentieth century by the national office for *Inmigración, Estadística y Propaganda Geográfica* (Bolivia, 1903) observed that the Toba were "savages [who were] fierce and daring to the point of recklessness." When war was discussed, the women were "the ones who go around camp inciting the men to fight, brandishing the trophies of their previous victories, generally consisting of skulls or scalps" (pp. 119-120). Mounted warriors from different bands organised surprise-attacks on small colonial settlements and isolated cattle posts on the edges of the mountain valleys. Aiming at targets situated far away from their territory, they killed, plundered, and took livestock before returning to their camps.

The settlers and soldiers

Attracted by abundant pastures for their cattle, Bolivian *fronterizos* steadily encroached on the savannas. The cattle were roaming, almost wild, on open ranges near the posts. As Franciscan Angélico Martarelli (1918) observed, "instead of being colonised by men, the frontier has been colonized by cows" (p. 303). Complaining about the moral state of the *fronterizos* he described settlers who "in their customs and religious ignorance differ little from the savage tribes; tucked away in desolate woods and ravines, following their cows, scattered here and there in their shacks" (Martarelli, 1918, p. 124). The forts on the frontier were staffed mostly by recruits from the highlands commonly known as *cuicos*. For poor Bolivian men, participating in military service could earn them social and economic rewards, forge patronage relations, prove their manliness, and earn the opportunity for making claims on the State as veteran soldiers eligible for pensions. The obligation of serving in the national army had existed on paper since the country's independence, but the laws allowed for many replacements, and exempted from military service those Indigenous peoples of the highlands who were already paying tribute to the State. Conscription laws prescribed terms of five years or more of service (Shesko, 2020). The garrisons serving in the forts of the frontier, however, experienced very high rates of turnover and desertion.

General Manuel Rodrigues Magariños, who led the first military expedition to the Pilcomayo in 1843, ordered the commanders of forts on the frontier to refrain from violence directed towards the Indigenous peoples. Magariños wanted to avoid any unexpected retaliation from Toba warriors. Later, in his report on the unsuccessful expedition, published in local newspapers, Magariños included the names of Toba leaders who had approached him and received presents from the explorers. After another failed military expedition the following year, the Toba revolted against the settlers. Magariños' directive for army officers commanding forts in the Chaco made it clear that violence between the *fronterizos*, the soldiers, and the Toba was already widespread in the 1840s.

Officer J. Vicente Sosa expanded on Magariños' directive and sent it to the commanders on November 13, 1843, forbidding the commanding officers of the forts from killing "a savage who comes with the intention of making peace" (Langer & Bass Werner de Ruiz, 1988, pp. 265-266). Sosa reasoned that when 'savages' asked for peace, there was no legal basis to deny it to them. If the forts were shorthanded, and the frontiersmen and *nacionales*, whose work was vital, had to leave the garrisons to take care of their crops because of the approaching rainy season, then officers must welcome potential peace treaties. The treaties should contain conditions favourable for the Christians, so that they could work freely on their trades. Nevertheless, the 'savages' had to be watched because they were ignorant of the law of nations [*jus gentium*, Roman law applicable to all people] and therefore could never be considered reliable. Sosa explained how this peace was to be established:

> Have ten or twelve chiefs come to your fort and celebrate the peace agreement as it is customary among them, and demand guarantees from them, but also prevent the settlers from faulting the terms of the treaty. Let me know when you

> make a peace treaty, so that I can notify the superior authority and obtain approval. (Langer & Bass Werner de Ruiz, 1988, p. 266)

During the nineteenth century, the national army was small and received insufficient professional training. The military strength of the Republic, instead, consisted of well-organized militias, called Guardias Nacionales. In 1892 about 20,000 militiamen were serving the country, a number which could double in case of war (Appleton, 1893, p. 61). Nevertheless, the manpower of the National Guard had to be aligned to that of the Army. For example, on June 30, 1893, the recently organized Minister of Government and Colonisation (Bolivia, 1893, pp. 169-170) ordered that the troops of the national guard organised in some settlements of the south bank of the Pilcomayo "defend private property from very possible attacks by savage tribes, and to provide national service contributing to the government's colonisation plan, [these troops] should obey the [newly created] office of Superior Chief of Colonies." Thus, most accounts of violence on the frontier involved militiamen collaborating with soldiers.

Violence on The Frontier

Violence on the frontier escalated during the second half of the nineteenth century. Jorge Mendoza González (1933) estimated that "The outcome of military expeditions were several thousand victims, including the dead, the wounded, and the prisoners" (p. 235). Violence reached such a level of intensity that on April 6, 1876, the Ministry of Government in La Paz sent an emergency order to the sub-prefect of the Chaco commanding him "to refrain from exterminating the nomadic tribes" and limiting his actions to "safeguarding the assets legitimately acquired by the [Bolivian] inhabitants of the Pilcomayo riverbanks". These orders were approved by the President of the Republic, ostensibly "as an act of true humanity" (Sanjinés, 1876, p. 62). The settlers were less concerned with acts of humanity and more with their cattle. They suspected that Toba were stealing cattle from their ranches and assaulted their camps with the purpose of retrieving livestock, killing people, and abducting women and children. Toba warriors, sometimes allied with other tribes, responded in kind, robbing, killing, and abducting women and children to negotiate "prisoner" exchanges (e.g., Oviedo, 1884). Colonel Rivas (1882) observed that in the Chaco, it was very common for *fronterizos* to abduct Indigenous women and children "for speculation business," meaning what it would be called today "human trafficking." If militiamen and soldiers persecuting the 'savages' on the savannas were able to surprise some families, said Colonel Rivas, they "snatched the children to sell them in other areas, always preferring the little girls and young women, called *cuñas*. This has been the most serious reason why those Indians have a deep grudge and hatred towards the whites" (p. 12).

Official documents and letters published by Franciscan missionaries are often the most common evidence of violence on the frontier. For example, at the end of 1846, in retaliation for an alleged theft of cattle, volunteer militias from Caiza attacked the band of Toba leader Chocoriqui, killed nine or ten men, including Chocoriqui, and murdered all the families in the campsite. In another raid, militiamen attacked the camp of leader Imacá in Caranditi-Guasú, killed the men, took some women prisoner, set the campsite ablaze, and retrieved horses allegedly stolen from settlers. These raids were in the eyes of the Franciscan Alejandro Corrado, tantamount to a declaration of war. From July 1847 to January 1859, the names of thirty-one Bolivian victims of "the indomitable furore of the Toba" were recorded in necrology books of the parish in Caiza (Corrado, 1884, pp. 399-400). Émile-Arthur Thouar (1906) estimated that Toba warriors had killed more than 50 Bolivian men between 1882 and 1900 (p. 23). Franciscan Doroteo Giannecchini (1882), who participated in a military expedition commanded by Colonel Rivas, reported that Toba warriors killed one officer and one soldier, and stole 250 horses from the expedition. The theft was interpreted as a vendetta raid because the previous month militiamen on their way to join the expedition had killed the Toba leader Socóo and fifteen men and captured a Toba boy. Giannecchini (1882) witnessed the soldiers' immediate revenge: The soldiers shot and decapitated a Weenhayek chief and thrown corpses of thirteen Toba men into the river. Rivas

declared a war of extermination on the Toba, authorising soldiers and militiamen to "kill them [Toba] wherever they may find them" (Campos, 1888, p. 641).

Settler encroachment brought not only violence and cultural and environmental change to the frontier, but also epidemic diseases. Influenza, pneumonia, and smallpox ravaged the Indigenous population. For example, in 1880, smallpox spread among Avá-Guaraní and Toba families in the San Francisco Mission, and fifty-two people died (Calzavarini Ghinello, 2006, p. 1244). Epidemic diseases affected the settlers as well. Officer Cornelio Ríos was credited with using corpses of smallpox victims in a deceit "to save the Christians from the fury of the savages" (Ríos, 1925, p. 50). However, not all encounters were violent. Sometimes ranchers would approach Toba camps on their own and request help to handle the cattle posts or would bring goods to the families asking to trade for food. Toba men and women did the same when approaching ranches, forts, and mission-stations. However, few settlers and officers appear to have learned words in Toba. Franciscans did not produce a Toba grammar as they did for Avá-Guaraní language, possibly because few, if any, converted to Catholicism in the missions. Communication in the area used Avá-Guaraní or Weenhayek languages as the *lingua franca*. Toba women were instrumental in creating consensus to bring missionaries to the area. Women were often the brokers facilitating prisoner exchanges, because some women learned Spanish in the settlements working as (unpaid) maidservants for the settlers. Through time, some Toba women married *cuico* soldiers and lived in the colonies around the forts (Chervin, 1908). Some young Toba men began working as farmhands on the ranches. They started dressing with hand-me-down *fronterizo* clothing and learned to speak the local variant of Spanish. Importantly, during the last decades of 1800s, many Toba men began to migrate seasonally on the sugar cane plantations of the Argentine side of the border. Toba people made the trip to the plantations together with Ava-Guaraní families. At the end of the season, they brought back to the camps mules, goods, clothing, and occasionally also firearms received as payment for their labour.

Conclusion

Administrators and lawmakers in the emerging Bolivian Republic understood that claiming legal possession of the Chaco plains—an area beyond the control of the state—would require planning and investment. Nevertheless, it was considered a necessary geopolitical project because the unexplored plains would extend the national territory to the southeast up to the still unresolved international borders with the Argentine and Paraguayan Republics. Administrators presumed the economic potential of the Chaco savannas for breeding and raising cattle but acknowledged that the presence of mobile hunter-gatherers prevented the advance of settlers on the region. The tribes had to be subjugated to use their lands for farming. Toba warriors were singled out as the main obstacle to colonisation. The country's boom and bust cycles of economic development during the 1800s were punctuated by (a) exploitation of silver, tin, and rubber; (b) internal political instability; and (c) ongoing interest in exporting the riches of the highlands through the Pacific coast. During the mid-to-late nineteenth century, settlers on the Chaco frontier showed renewed impetus to colonise the area due to, according to Langer and Bass Werner de Ruiz (1988), (a) revamping of the mining economy, which increased demand for cattle in the mining centres on the highlands, (b) gradual consolidation of the political and military power of the Bolivian state, and (c) new firearms available to the settlers. Military forts and some private posts managed by volunteer militia protected the ranchers and conducted punitive expeditions. Franciscan missions opened in Tarairí Valley for Avá-Guaraní families and on the Pilcomayo for Toba and Weenhayek families.

As state representatives began consolidating their power, they supported the frontiersmen's appropriation of Indigenous lands on the margins of Pilcomayo by granting land title on small lots along the river. To contain or eliminate outright the threat of Toba resistance, lawmakers funded military expeditions and the construction of forts. Local frontiersmen formed militias to protect their ranches. Government officers also favoured establishing missions as Franciscan evangelism on the frontier had proven very effective at pacifying the Avá-Guaraní, although the missionaries

did not get similar results with the Toba. The history of the settlers' penetration on the Pilcomayo River area and the role played by militiamen and soldiers during the mid-to-late 1800s have been understudied. The Franciscans, who were their own chroniclers, wrote substantive narratives, leaving extensive records of their work. The missionaries' influence over Indigenous peoples and settlers in the area was considerable, but perhaps because the Franciscans' viewpoint was well documented, it enjoys a greater prominence than it might otherwise have enjoyed (Schmieder, 1926).

Through these initiatives, Bolivian state administrators secured not only control of the land and its resources, but also which side's history would be recorded. Nineteenth century government documents often concealed the violence towards the Toba and articulated a state sanctioned version of territorial occupation that ignored Indigenous peoples' rights to the land. During the earlier part of the century, Toba warriors were able to prevent the occupation of their territory. Small-scale cattle rustling, as well as the theft and smuggling of horses to northern markets, were profitable for a while. But the Toba were overwhelmed by the combined strength of military and militia forces. As a result, by the late 1800s, the extension of available land for hunting and gathering was shrinking, and the Toba were selling their labour on agricultural plantations in Argentina to contribute to the sustenance of the communities. By the early twentieth century, the Bolivian state had effective control of the Chaco region.

Since the 1930s, administrative documents and academic papers reported that the Toba people left Bolivia. Nonetheless, 86 individuals self-identified as Toba in the 2012 National Census, the majority established in a rural area of the Department of Tarija. The Toba have not participated in the Indigenous movements to reclaim legal property of their land, as the neighbouring Tapiete and Weenhayek did. In 1993, for example, the state granted the Weenhayek property of their territory along Pilcomayo River. Several Indigenous communities now uphold collective property of their land in the Tierra Comunitaria de Origen Weenhayek, (Colque et al., 2011, Peñaranda Barrios et al., 2011). A small number of Tapiete also have collective property of the Territorio Indígena del Pueblo Tapiete, near the town of Villamontes.

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Author's Note

All the English translations of publications in Spanish are my own interpretation of the texts.

About the Author

Marcela Mendoza is a research associate in the Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon. She has decades of experience studying the subsistence and sustainability practices, and social organization of hunter-gatherer societies in the South American Chaco. Mendoza studied the culture of the Western Toba Qomle'k in Argentina, investigating their family life, kinship, and the leadership of the bands. More recently, she has studied the history of other Western Toba groups located in Bolivia, whose language and culture appear linked to those of Argentina. Her anthropological investigations are used to contextualize oral narratives and strengthen current interdisciplinary analyses of Indigenous lifeways.

Email: mmendoza@uoregon.edu
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8163-8986

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

(Flint)lock, stock and two smoking barrels: A modern military interpretation of frontier economic warfare

Samuel C. Duckett White
Adelaide Law School and University of New England

ABSTRACT

Despite the recent upsurge of interest in the Australian Frontier Wars, the military tactics adopted by First Nations groups have consistently failed to attract the attention of scholars. What work that does exist often struggles to move beyond a characterisation of First Nations dispossession as a profound defeat, one that continues to resonate in contemporary Australia. Yet by utilising a centre of gravity analysis, a standard military appreciation tool, it is possible to identify compelling evidence that the economic warfare, as practiced along multiple frontiers in Australia by First Nations groups, was both sophisticated and remarkably effective. By utilising modern military analytical frameworks to assess Frontier Warfare, it is possible to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of First Nations tactics and identify lessons for modern military operations.

KEYWORDS

Centre of Gravity Analysis, Frontier Wars, Military Tactics

CITATION

Duckett White, S. C. (2023). (Flint)lock, stock, and two smoking barrels. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 52-62. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.205

Introduction

Despite the recent upsurge of interest in the Australian Frontier Wars, the military tactics adopted by First Nations groups have consistently failed to attract the attention of scholars. What work that does exist often struggles to move beyond a characterisation of First Nations dispossession as a profound defeat, one that continues to resonate in contemporary Australia. Yet as Nicholas Clements (2014) observes, "although they ultimately lost the war, [First Nations'] resistance against a technologically and numerically superior enemy was nothing short of extraordinary" (p. 17). By utilising a centre of gravity analysis (a standard military appreciation tool to identify the central concept that allows an enemy to win) it is possible to identify compelling evidence that the economic warfare, as practiced along multiple frontiers in Australia by First Nations groups, was both sophisticated and remarkably effective. By addressing it through the lens of a military appreciation process, it is possible to explore the under-analysed success of First Nations resistance as a case study to inform future military operations. Specifically, this article seeks to address economic warfare as a concerted, planned method of warfare by First Nations peoples against colonial expansion. Henry Reynolds (1982; 2006) and John Connor (2010) characterise it as the most effective form of resistance adopted by First Nations peoples.

Decentralised warfare (warfare that seeks opportunistic targets) has been practiced with great effect across the world, from the chariot detachments of Rameses II to the German Panzer units of the Second World War, to the jungles of Borneo, Malaya, and Vietnam and recently in the mountains of Afghanistan where the Taliban regularly use improved explosive devices. Such a decentralised approach to warfare is now formalised in the concept of *mission command*, an approach which empowers individual soldiers or groups of soldiers to make decisions in real time which are relevant to their environment and the task at hand. For example, First Nations peoples were aware that the small and dispersed white population left stock and crops a clear point of vulnerability. As a result, they availed themselves of every opportunity to target them in a manner that modern military theorists would characterise as the adoption of the three interrelated processes of tactics/techniques/procedures (TTPs). This approach was not lost on Governor Arthur Philip, either; in June 1790, he identified spearing of livestock, attacks on 'stragglers', and burning of cornfields as the three major strategic weaknesses of the colony (Gapps, 2019, p. 143).

Economic warfare is a complex phenomenon and is far from being a homogenous term that covers all types of conflict fought over resources. The 'maize wars' of early frontier conflicts, which were characterised by the competition over food that inevitably occurs when two societies seek to draw on the same limited resources, can lack nuance. Indeed, the use of the term 'economic warfare' in this context requires particular care, as each frontier brought with it its own complications, factors, and actors. For example, in 1829 in the colony of New South Wales, there were three major frontiers: the 'big man's' sheep frontier in Country Westmoreland (west of Sydney), the 'small man's' cattle frontier in County Argyle (south-west of Sydney), and the immigrant's mixed-farming frontier in the Hunter Valley (north-west). Each was an entirely different district with unique characteristics (Wright, 2011, p. 152). In Queensland (the northern, tropical colony on Australia's east coast) the nature of the terrain was different again and shaped tactics that were unique, both internally and with the other colonies. Jungle warfare negated the advantages of mounted troops, and as a result increased numbers of First Nations peoples that survived colonial expansions (Loos, 1982). Elsewhere in the state, such as the flat plains of western Queensland, mounted troops could be deployed which allowed a rapid advance on the frontier with a commensurate increase in massacres.

Failing to address military operations from military perspectives has led to a sustained debate as to whether the Frontier Wars even constitute warfare as it is widely understood in European contexts. This disagreement is exacerbated by the fact that "traditional indigenous society was not an internally hostile one" (Martin, 1989, p. 11). The controversy over nomenclature is further evident in the First Nations view of European settlement as primarily an infringement of resources, rights and sacred space rather than as a loss of sovereign territory. Instead, the First Nations peoples viewed their lands as an amalgam of these things, rather than as political entities

that could be diminished, enlarged, sold or conquered. This is evidenced in the fact that they usually employed containment operations only when certain resources – viewed as sacrosanct – were disturbed. For example, Lyndall Ryan (2020), who has spent decades analysing the origin of massacre events, explored an early phase of the Frontier Wars in the beachhead settlement of Newcastle:

> What you see, actually, is that it was the middens that were fought over most in Newcastle. If it was just trees being cut down, there doesn't appear to be as much, or really any, conflict. Nor with the mines in Newcastle. But when the middens were touched, then warfare broke out. These middens were tens of thousands of years old – they were being used to make lime – but they were sacred.

To Europeans, middens appeared to be simply heaps of discarded shells, but they were in fact deliberately placed to return fish and molluscs to Creator Spirits, and for that reason they sometimes doubled as burial grounds and signalling spots. They were also involved in inter-tribal feasts and corroborees (Uhlmann, 2014). Their real value was that they were markers of past, present, and emerging culture. Their value was thus not the land they occupied but their existence, one that would be defended by force.

All conflict across the Australian frontiers, however, was characterised by the use of economic warfare. As such, this article will be framed by an exploration of the military tactic of draining a targeted economy through financial and reputational costs, an approach that allows for a nuanced assessment that considers regional and situational differences.

First Nations tactics and the centre of gravity

The reality of any sort of campaign – military or civilian - along the Australian frontier has only become publicly palatable over the last twenty years despite clear evidence of uniformed and settler operations (Gapps, 2019). Early Frontier War studies were dominated by the issue of how to best classify the conflicts. Those who argued that the Frontier Wars never occurred relied, and still rely upon nebulous legal thresholds for warfare that are inherently political (McLaughlin, 2020; McLaughlin, 2009). They do not deign to confer belligerency status on First Nations warriors, claiming instead that their conduct constituted criminal acts – a 'crime wave' - by British subjects of First Nations heritage (Windshuttle, 2002). At the very most, historians who share this view characterise First Nations-settler conflicts as a type of 'irregular warfare'. Nevertheless, as military historian and scholars William Vacca and Mark Davidson (2011) note, the term irregular warfare "conflates tactical asymmetry with strategic difference. While the tactics employed by the belligerents may be different, the strategic objective is the same. Suggesting otherwise is both ahistorical and misleading" (p. 7).

The fact that First Nations Australians did not conduct operations in the European tradition of decisive, pitched 'battles to the death' does not render their form of warfare invalid (Kerkhove & White, 2021). What are known in military parlance as *guerrilla, resistance, insurgency, and militia* tactics (GRIM Operations) are a standard element of the history of warfare, even in Europe, home of the pitched battle (Harari, 2007). Others dismiss First Nations insurgencies for not reaching some nebulous casualty threshold necessary for "recognition", although such a qualification has never been identified much less adopted within historical scholarship (Grey, 1999, p. 25). Western battles have been won and lost without significant casualties, and furthermore, GRIM operations do not usually lend themselves to an easy quantification of casualties in the same way as a pitched battle between regular Western forces.

The use of economic warfare as a form of GRIM operations makes military sense. Under modern military doctrine, identifying and targeting an enemy's centre of gravity is the result of the military analysis process (MAP) (US Department of Defence, 2012). It is a scaleable process that goes from combat level to individual level, and staff level to joint level (C-MAP, I-MAP, S-MAP and J-MAP respectively). At the heart of all MAP is the centre of gravity, as the First Nations use of

economic warfare tactics recognised. The Centre of Gravity is "the source that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act" (US Department of Defence, 2002). In other words, it is the singular, main capability that enables the enemy to act. Once the Centre of Gravity of the adversary is identified, it is possible to target critical vulnerabilities, which – when exploited through a decisive blow – leads to defeat. Examples of centres of gravity include the freedom of action that an adversary may enjoy with a particular weapon system such as improved explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan and the use of rocket systems by the Ukrainians to target Russian logistics, or the morale of a target population which provides to their will to fight, which is why ISIS targeted the morale of the Yazidi people. It might be the freedom of manoeuvre the enemy enjoys in a particular environment such as the Viet Cong's ease of movement in jungle environments and within the local Vietnamese population during the Vietnam War. It may also be the economic basis of a society, which led to the targeting of industrial sectors in the Great War (Douhert, 1933), the sale of black-market oil or antiques in the Middle East, or stock and crops on the Australian frontier.

Targeting the economic basis of a society is a tactic that Europeans have utilised since the age of chivalry, as is evident in the concept of the *chevauchee*, a raiding method used in medieval warfare (White, 2021) The reticence to recognise First Nations tactics as concerted, military strategies is not accidental. As David Day (2001) argues, this approach "undercut any sympathy that their plight evoked amongst Europeans. It painted them as treacherous savages who did not merit the respect that they might otherwise have conceded to foes adopting more conventional methods of warfare" (p. 28). The following discussion of the financial and reputational costs to European official and semi-official forces during the Frontier Wars will highlight the sophisticated economic warfare pursued by First Nations peoples.

Financial costs inflicted by economic warfare on the Australian Frontier

The targeting of stock and crops and other items of value to colonists occurred at such a breadth and depth across multiple frontiers that it was clearly not merely a matter of theft but also an act of economic warfare. Military expenses were huge in the early years of the Sydney colony, which was the beachhead for British colonisation on the Australian continent. Since the landing of 1200 convicts and military personnel in 1788, there had been a state of "petty and sporadic warfare" with the First Nations (Tench, 1789, p. 137). The subsequent issuing and maintenance of equipment, troops, horses, and defensive positions was a large drain on early colonial governments (Gapps, 2019). The costs were compounded by a distinct lack of military preparation for the colony, due to a false assumption that the land was *terra nullius* – unpopulated and uncultivated. In early Sydney (1802) once the value of sheep was understood by First Nations warriors, over 200 sheep were "thrown down an immense precipice" with another 50 having "their eyes gored with spears" (Gapps, 2019, p. 77).

Events on the Hawkesbury River also demonstrate the effectiveness of these tactics/techniques/procedures (TTPs). In 1794, Colonel Francis Grose - the Acting Governor of NSW - granted land upland on the Hawkesbury River. As Connor (2010) notes, this was not without its challenges, for it "had been possible for the British and Darug on the coast to share the resources of Sydney Harbour, but the land on the Hawkesbury could not be shared. It could be used to grow yams or corn, but not both" (p. 10). Through relentless corn- and farm-raids and attacks on the Hawkesbury Settlement's supply lines, the Darug successfully forced the abandonment of the settlement in 1796 and again in 1804 ('Sydney News', *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, 2 June 1842). It was only in 1816 after nearly twenty years of disease had decimated the Darug population that settlers forced their way into the valley. Nevertheless, soldiers and sailors from the original military contingent who decided to stay in the colony and take land grants (the Veteran Company) were sufficiently degraded by First Nations resistance operations that they required reinforcements from regular troops from the 46th Regiment (Gapps, 2019). In April 1816, further First Nations resistance raids forced Governor Lachlan Macquarie to reinforce the settlement with the best troops of the 46th regiment, the light infantry

and grenadier companies. When their supplies ran out at the end of the month, and unable to survive off the land due to First Nations tactics, they returned to Sydney a degraded force element (Gapps, 2019).

This use of economic warfare was repeated across the various colonies. In the early years of the colonisation of Tasmania in the 1820s First Nations peoples destroyed 2,200 sealskins (items of clear value) and burnt 930 sheep in another raid (Reynolds & Clements, 2021). In a bid to control key terrain, the Government of Tasmania declared martial law and attempted to cordon and search the entire island through the establishment of a 'Black Line'. The failed six-week operation cost the colony one-half of their normal annual budget (Reynolds, 1992). In western Victoria, over 1,300 sheep were burnt after being herded in a swamp ('Sydney News', *Port Phillip Patriot and Melbourne Advertiser*, 2 June 1842). Like other attacks, the aim was to starve out the colonists and create fear in the populace, an approach that had both financial and opportunity costs that placed a considerable drain on government budgets. Indeed, by the time Queensland, the site of some of the most brutal fighting, became a self-governing colony in 1859, there had been a shift from military to paramilitary forces. This was the result of a combination of pressures, including the slow arrival of military reinforcements from Britain due to distance and the Napoleonic Wars, frustration with repeated requests for more troops, and the speed and ease at which local militia forces (in accordance with the British tradition of decentralised home defence) could be raised (White, 2021).

The impact of this economic warfare exerted a considerable influence on public attitudes. Comparisons were often made between the money spent on 'imaginary' external threats such as France and Russia and 'real' internal threats. A correspondent in *The Queenslander* in 1887 observed that:

> There are thousands that can be spend in Defence Forces, to protect the inhabitants of this country from the invisible, perhaps imaginary, but for certain distant enemies; but we cannot afford to keep an efficient body of police to keep in check the enemy we have at our door, the enemy of every day, that one that slowly but surely robs us and impoverishes us (26 November 1887, p. 4).

Despite these types of misgivings, the economic cost to the new colony remained exorbitant. Of the initial State budget in 1859, 6% of Queensland's income was allocated to the Native Police (Queensland Government Authority, 1909). In contrast, the Australian Government currently spends 2% of GDP on the Department of Defence (States lost the right to hold military forces after the Australian Constitution came into force in 1901).

In addition to the official government costs, the financial impact of successful First Nations economic warfare was felt by the settlers themselves. Sheep and cattle constituted a critical vulnerability in the settlers' economic centre of gravity. They were also easily targeted due to their large number and their large range whilst grazing. Moreover, shepherds were often convicts with little interest in their master's economic success. In contrast, horses and oxen, which were far less numerous, were more closely observed. In Victoria, each sheep cost £3 to purchase and transport to the Port Phillip District (Learmonth, 1853). Given that a cook made £11 a week in 1850, each sheep represented a substantial percentage of a weekly wage for many workers of this time. Their loss could deeply affect pastoralists, whose entire finances were committed to their agricultural ventures (Hibbert, 1987). First Nations warriors were well aware of this vulnerability, as this newspaper report from the Albert River area in Queensland attests:

> The blacks on the Albert River have for some months past been exceedingly troublesome, and have on various occasions driven away sheep from the station at Kerry, belonging to Mr. Francis Clarke… On Saturday, the 15th instant, a flock of ewes, on the above station, was attacked, and several driven off, the blacks at the same time threatening the shepherd, who was unarmed, and was under the necessity of offering them flour and tobacco, in order to induce them to spare the remainder of the flock… Mr. Clarke has already lost upwards of two hundred sheep by these and similar depredations of the blacks… Similar losses have been

> experienced by other gentlemen in the same district, and from a similar cause (*Moreton Bay Courier*, 1848, p. 2).

The loss of part, let alone an entire flock would have rendered many 'runs' (pastoral properties) inoperable, and indeed many were eventually abandoned on account of frequent raids. The flock or herd was sometimes killed en masse, scattered into the bush, or both, with First Nations warriors "driving everything before them and killing cattle in all directions" (The Argus, 1851, p. 14). At other times, they moved from one run to the next, inflicting similar damage within a short period (Kerkhove, 2004). Although some of the meat was eaten, there are many accounts of flocks and herds being killed by scores or hundreds and left to rot. This again highlights that First Nations warriors were not stealing food; they were taking deliberate actions against an identified centre of gravity.

Though they have largely disappeared from the national consciousness, the names of First Nations leaders have not completely disappeared from the historical record. Mingburne, for example, succeeded in driving back settlers from his domain in western Victoria for quite a few years. The financial costs were often too much for individuals to absorb. As one squatter in 1845 noted:

> after wasting two months in the vain hope that some decided steps would be taken (by the authorities and police) to preserve the lives of my men and my property, I returned to the Bogan… I collected my cattle and drove them to a station on the Lachlan River. … A few months afterwards, it appeared that the gentleman to whom I handed over my Bogan station… was (himself) obliged to vacate it with a loss of 500 head of cattle. (Balfour, 1845, p. 20)

In targeting flocks, First Nations warriors effectively undermined the colonies' centres of gravity and thereby restricted their expansion. Settlers themselves were well aware that these large-scale killings and thefts were intended to drive them off the land. For example, an early west Victorian settler recalled how:

> Mingburne (a headman) discovered that by burning the grass and spearing their sheep and cattle they could disturb the white men more effectually than by fighting them; and with that discovery a new species of warfare commenced between them and was carried on so persistently that a partially civilised blackfellow known as "MacJullooh' Joe " burnt out three settlers on the Glenelg during one summer (*Border Watch*, 5 June 1880, p. 3)

The First Nations warriors were therefore pursuing a style of economic warfare well suited to the context in which they found themselves. Newspaper reports indicate that the colonists were aware of the tactics being used against them and the vulnerabilities they exposed:

> Mingburne, the king of the black fellows, carried on a long and bitter warfare with Mr. Monro, often destroying has stock, his buildings, and his grass; and in the end forced him to quit Upper Crawford, where Mingburne again reigned monarch of all be surveyed (*Border Watch*, 5 June 1880, p. 3)

The destruction of pasture indicates that First Nations fighters understood the importance of grasslands for the survival of the pastoral economy. Connor (2002) noted that the Nyungar people of Western Australia attacked "not only with the spear, but the torch; the most dangerous of all weapons in a country so full of combustibles" (p. 78). Fire had a twofold effect, for it was both psychologically shocking, and it affected the soil. Further, it was economically more damaging to light large-scale fires than to kill livestock, on account of Australia's fragile soils. Leached of nutrients by millions of years of sun and rain, Australian soils were not renewable in the same manner as the soils of the British Isles (Diamond, 2005). Consequently, aggressive firing severely curtailed any district's carrying capacity for stock, even if it equally devastated the First Nations economy which similarly relied on grazing animals. Although settlers were not at first aware of this, they were certainly vocal about the threat First Nations attempts to 'burn them out' posed to

stock, pasture, and buildings. This process was exacerbated by the destruction of crops by First Nations peoples, who would destroy crops rather than raid them for food. For many acres, whole crops were pulled up on such a scale and frequency that the survival of settlements – such as Nundah in Queensland – were imperilled (Moreton Bay Courier, 1847). 'Runs' were constantly sold and resold, and the 'edge' of the frontier waxed and waned due to losses from stock raids. Some districts were abandoned for years or even decades. When the first wave of pioneers entered central Queensland, they were doubtful that they had the capacity to retain the region for "the loss of property from the depredations of the blacks has been more than can be endured by even our richest squatters. Every day complaints reach us of loss of sheep and cattle" (Brisbane Courier, 1867, p. 2)

First Nations attacks on stock and pasture relied heavily on movement both through 'scrub' – a form of bushland that is impenetrable except on foot. First Nations groups therefore made use of a form of war that was 'regular' before modern supply chains tied force elements in place, joining such illustrious names as the Athenian strike forces of the Peloponnesian war; the Scandinavian raids (*vikingr*), the Bushveldt Carbineers in the Boer War, the operations of the Chindits in Burma, and the mobile strike forces utilised in the Vietnam War which all used the same tactics to undermine the enemy. These are classified as *strike force operations,* which are an effective method of undermining an enemy's freedom of movement and freedom of action which hampers any attempt to control the battlespace and theatre of operations. Importantly, in conducting their strike force operations, First Nations warriors were not limited to the bush on the edge of and beyond the frontier but could rely on the operational tactic long used by guerrilla forces and popularised by Mao Zedong, who opined that the insurgent must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea. In other words, although First Nations fighters were clearly delineated from the settler population through their ethnicity, insurgent 'movement' within settler society was still possible because so many 'sole traders,' fishermen, boatmen, domestic servants, shepherds, pastoral workers (and all Native Mounted Police troopers bar the officers) were First Nations. There are several examples of 'friendly' First Nations workers (especially women and children) acting as informants/spies and signallers for resistance groups. Nevertheless, a significant portion of First Nations workers were extremely loyal to settlers. In fact, many Frontier War casualties on the settler side were First Nations, both because resistance fighters viewed them as traitors and because they were perceived to be more expendable and their deaths far less likely to lead to repercussions from white authorities.

Reputational

Reputational cost is harder to quantify than economic disruption, but it often had a tangible impact on the course of frontier conflict. Critical vulnerabilities existed in the supply lines of the settlements, the arterial highways of the day. Until the 1870s, long convoys of bullock drays delivered most of the essential goods required by the giant pastoral holdings and farms that formed the 'edge' of the frontier, such as tools, weapons, seed stock, medicines, and food supplies. The drays also carried the mail that included orders and directives which pastoralists and police required to occupy new territories or 'punish' First Nations groups. Equally, they carried saleable produce back into the larger settlements. The frontier pastoralists and farmers depended on sale of their produce to continue operating. Until the period between the 1860s and 1890s, when roads and railways began to appear, horses, stagecoaches and trains played only a limited role in colonial transportation and communication, with the exception of horsemen, who doubled as messenger-mail men. Impeding the traffic of bullock drays was a means of disrupting, isolating and even starving out new settlers. Across Australia, bullock drays were regularly targeted through ambushing and sacking individual drays; fencing (closing) the roads they traversed (*Brisbane Courier*, 23 December 1869), frightening or harassing the teamsters, dispersing the bullocks when they were camped overnight, or setting large packs of dogs upon drays (Lergessner, 2008). Targeting command/control/communication (C3) networks – such as the officer class who make decisions, or the actual communication systems (smoke, carrier

pigeons, electronics, radio waves) is a highly effective, traditional approach to insurgency warfare seen across a spectrum of small and large wars.

In contemporary military doctrine, to *degrade* means reducing the effectiveness of a capability. To *undermine* is to weaken someone's capability, morale, loyalty or reliability by affecting their military, cultural, economic, societal or political strength. First Nations resistance in many instances degraded and undermined a fledgling colonial economy. Evidence is often ambiguous and is usually based on a comparative analysis of Frontier growth rates, although these could be affected by other variables such as terrain and climatic issues such as drought. Yet as Ray Kerkhove (2014) has remarked, the 'slow drip' of 'tiny warfare' was substantial for a small and dispersed European population, which in turn discouraged further expansion. 'Tiny attacks' in Tasmania killed over 369 colonists by 1828, approximately 6% of the population (p. 4). In Southeast Queensland, as much as 8% of the population were killed in the first decade of settlement while in other areas of Queensland the total rises to nearly 30% (Burke et al., 2020).

The number of casualties and the reputational damage thereby inflicted served to slow rather than prevent colonial expansion. Nevertheless, all over Australia, there were attempts by First Nations groups to destroy the fledgling pastoral industry by killing the shepherds and moving the flocks from place to place and keeping them overnight in natural enclosures (hilltops and valleys) or in brush yards. Many military and para-military incursions were in vain. Squatters would hunt for months to re-assemble their scattered flock or locate its secret hiding spot, and then battle with or negotiate with a First Nations group to ensure (or enforce) the safe return of at least some of the flock, only to find the flock that could be recovered had been deliberately maimed. As was so often the case, newspaper reports provide compelling evidence that the colonists were well aware that this was a tactic rather than a unique event:

> News has been received of the murder of a shepherd by the blacks at Mount Elphinstone. A flock of sheep belonging to Mr Alexander Evans has been driven off - two hundred of them have since been recovered, most of them crippled and rendered useless by the blacks. (Northern Argus, 6 Feb. 1869, p. 2)

Like the First Nations tactics as a whole, the mutilation of stock had psychological and reputational effects. In some cases, the animals' bodies were deliberately littered around the fields or had their organs and heads staked on poles and trees to terrorise the colonists, as this example from the McIntyre River region of north New South Wales shows:

> A horse belonging to a squatter named Dight was killed, the head was taken off and its entrails were hung from bush to bush... Seventy-five head of cattle were found slaughtered and between a quarter and half of the original herd was damaged. None of the carcasses has been taken away for food. The Bigambul stuck the hearts of two heifers on poles facing each other, similar to gateway posts (Reynolds, 1992, p. 62).

This may well have been a formal declaration of war, although the literature on these customs is limited. Nevertheless, the reporting of the mutilations was sure to have had wider ranging reputational consequences for both First Nation warriors and colonists. It also highlights that newspaper readers of the time were aware that they were engaged in a war, and many understood that First Nations warriors were attacking points of vulnerability. Two years after Queensland became a separate colony in 1859, the Northern Australian reported that:

> So injurious to the best interests of the colony do outrages by the blacks become, in deterring settlement and keeping out capital, that we look upon them as the worst evils of our position, and as the greatest barriers to the development of our resources. If there be in Queensland at the present moment one subject, which more than any other is of the highest importance… that subject is the better protection of the frontier districts. (*Northern Australian*, 6 December 1861, p. 5)

The impact of sustained attacks was equally widely acknowledged. A settler at Mackay in north Queensland whose property had been attacked twenty times was an example of what defeat meant:

> Three or four days ago, Mr. R. Martin relates that he came across the tracks of a large mob of blacks whilst riding within a mile of the homestead, and from the terrified appearance of some of the cattle at once concluded that his run had for the twentieth time been the scene of gashed and mutilated beeves [beef cattle]. His loss he has not yet discovered… To such a length have these depredations on runs, where shelter is found in the thick scrub and ranges, been carried on by the blacks, that it is almost inconceivable the losses sustained by the victims of them. (*Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser*, 24 August 1867, p. 2)

This scenario was repeated on countless other frontiers, as was the awareness that any defeat of colonial forces or successful challenge to European settlement constituted the infliction of reputational damage. Thomas Darling observed the fractured remains of a 'frontline' in northwest NSW, along which settlement had quite obviously been defeated:

> On the 4th January 1840, the party crossed the neutral ground between the western squatters and the aborigines, and here, in the shape of burnt and broken buildings, ruined stockyards, and pathways grown with grass, they received abundant proofs that the whites had been compelled to give way before the blacks (Darling, 1905, p. 13)

Military and quasi-military forces were relied upon to respond to First Nations economic warfare operations. The advent of Federation in 1901, and the drafting debates surrounding the new Constitution demonstrate the ongoing fear of First Nations warriors. A key aspect of Federation was the creation of a singular command of the military, with one common system of taxation (Quick & Garran, 1908). The responsibility to defend white Australia against First Nations groups (particularly in the less populated states of Queensland and Western Australia) was clearly articulated in Section 119 of the Constitution: "The Commonwealth shall protect every State against invasion and, on the application of the Executive Government of the State, against domestic violence". The term 'domestic violence' comes from the American Constitution, which was concerned with fears of slave revolts; the term 'domestic violence' as opposed to 'insurrection' allowed for military force to be used against those (slaves) who did not have the legal right to commit riots (not being legal persons). So too under the Australian Constitution, First Nations peoples were not recognised as legal individuals, yet their military impact on Australian frontiers was widely acknowledged.

Conclusion

The financial and reputational cost of First Nations warfare is only slowly being recognised despite the plethora of evidence. The pacification of the Sydney Basin took nearly forty years: twice the time spent by Western forces in Afghanistan and ten times the length of the Great War. That First Nations continued a tradition of warfare (economic warfare, strike force operation and 'tiny wars') that pre-dates the pitched battle by millennia is remarkable, given the geographic separation of the Australian continent for nearly 10,000 years. The tradition of warfare in Australia, now often forgotten, was clearly in the minds of the self-governing colony on the advent of Queensland's separation from New South Wales. John Watts MP, at the opening of the new Queensland Parliament in 1861, conceded that "the people of this colony must be considered to be, as they always have been, at open war with the Aborigines (*Queensland Guardian*, 4 May 1861, p.2).

Once alerted to the colonial perspectives, from speeches and diaries through to newspaper reports, the dismissal of First Nation's resistance as something less than war becomes untenable.

To deny that colonial centres of gravity in expanding frontiers was repeatedly and deliberately attacked, across the continent and across generations is to deny the colonial experiences and understanding at the time. Understanding and accepting the violent colonial experiences of the past is necessary for *makarrata* (truth-telling) and to inform the Australian public about critical modern issues, such as whether to constitutionally enshrine First Nations Voices to Parliament, or to become the final British colony to sign a treaty with its First Nations population. By re-evaluating the colonial experiences, Australians can approach modern issues demonstrating what the Wiradyuri call *yindymarra winhaganha* – a process of self-reflection to better the world we live in.

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About the Author

Samuel C. Duckett White has served as a Royal Australian Infantry Corps and Australian Army Legal Corps officer in a range of tactical, operational and strategic level postings. He currently supports Special Operations Command as a Major. He is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Adelaide Law School & Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of New England. The opinions and errors remain his alone and do not reflect any affiliate organisations.

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

Settler colonial violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa

Janne Lahti
University of Helsinki

ABSTRACT

This article takes a comparative approach to settler colonial violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa. The Anglo invasion of central Arizona in 1864 and the German conflict against the Herero in 1904 highlights the nature of frontier violence and identifies similarities and differences across two points in space and time that have seldom been compared by historians. Those writing of the US-Apache conflicts have failed to look to colonial theaters around the world, their transnational attention focusing instead on the borderlands of United States, Mexico, and independent Indians. Similarly, research on the violence in GSWA has not engaged systematically with international parallels and has instead focused on identifying possible links between GSWA and the Nazis and the Holocaust. This article seeks to address these shortcomings by analysing the comparative strands of settler colonial violence.

KEYWORDS

Apache, Arizona, German Southwest Africa, Herero, Yavapais, Settler Colonialism, Settler Colonial Violence

CITATION

Lahti, J. (2023). Settler colonial violence in the American Southwest and German Southwest Africa. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 63-72. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.206

Introduction

On August 28, 1864, King Woolsey, a noted local rancher and prospector, wrote to the Governor of Arizona Territory to report on a punitive expedition he was leading in central Arizona. In it he noted that he was confident there were many Indians in the vicinity and that he and 36 volunteers had "determined to hunt them" (*Arizona Miner*, September 7, 1864). They searched the north side of the Salt River in response to the theft of livestock by Yavapais and Apaches angered by the disruption of their economies by settler encroachment on their lands. The expedition did not, however, seek out the specific Indians who had stolen Woolsey's cattle. Instead, they killed any Western Apache and Yavapai they could locate – man, woman, or child. This reflected more than a desire to mete out punishment. It was in fact part of a broader desire to destroy an entire people whose very existence was enough to draw settler fury.[1] Woolsey had in fact already conducted several such one-sided onslaughts in early 1864, often with devastating cost for the Apaches and Yavapais.[2] For many settlers, Woolsey, originally from Alabama, was an energetic and respected member of the growing white settler community. He was also a merciless killer, who deceived and slayed defenseless Apaches and Yavapais during 'friendly' talks, used strychnine to poison them, ambushed their sleeping villages, and advocated the killing of women and children (Lahti, 2017). Woolsey was both an advocate and participant in the violence. On one occasion, he killed an Apache, hung the corpse to a tree, and left it dangling along a busy travel route. There the scorched body remained and for months served as a menacing and grim welcome for all travelers (Browne, 1869).

This violence was not simply a response to stock raiding. Woolsey's aim was to destroy the Indigenous Apaches and Yavapais to allow unfettered access to their lands. The very existence of the Yavapais and Apaches was enough to challenge this vision, fuel settler anxieties, and seemingly justify their extermination. Woolsey's response blended vigilantism, massacre, and treachery with more organised punitive expeditions during which he did not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. It was, as Woolsey conceived it, a war of annihilation, one which necessitated the targeting of both people and their material base.

The experience of the Yavapais and Apaches was far from being an anomaly for there were numerous other instances where violence erupted as settler societies sought to remove or exterminate indigenous populations. For example, in German Southwest Africa (GSWA) the Hereros, angered by continued intrusions on their land, stormed settler ranches in January 1904. Among those facing the Herero resistance was Silesian Victor Franke. An experienced German officer, he had served in GSWA since 1896, and was a competent and respected member of the settler community, much like Woolsey. He was religious, practical, and considered relatively humane. Yet he too was a ruthless killer who had gained a measure of fame by squashing the Herero at Omaruru in early February 1904. His diary at the time contained stories of killings of the wounded and unwounded, of the armed and unarmed. Franke openly described how a Herero prisoner "is questioned and then … shot from the back at a moment when the unfortunate man suspected nothing" (Franke, 27 February 1904). Later that year Franke took part in the Battle of Waterberg and in the subsequent merciless pursuit of Herero survivors into the Omaheke Desert. Destitute Herero men, women, and children who sought to surrender to escape from hunger and lack of water were summarily shot or executed. One eyewitness described how the Germans killed "women and children along the roadsides. They bayoneted them and hit them to death … words cannot be found to relate what happened; it was too terrible" (Gewald & Silvester, 2003, p. 117). Even Franke grew disgusted by the widespread killing of captured women and children (Franke, 12 and 20 August 1904; Hull, 2006, pp. 47-48).

Colonial violence in the American Southwest and in German Southwest Africa have seldom been compared by historians. Those writing of the US-Apache conflicts have failed to look to colonial theaters around the world, their transnational attention focusing instead on the borderlands of United States, Mexico, and independent Indians. The studies of the generations-long struggle between Indigenous powers, the Spanish Empire, Mexico, and the US for mastery of the current US-Mexico border area have usually stressed Indigenous resistance and their unique

military cultures. Violence in the Southwest borderlands of North America was perpetrated by state and state-sanctioned forces, Indigenous polities, corporate mercenaries, and private people and ranged from individual acts of murder to mob lynching and ultimately, genocide. This violence was understood as both a destructive energy and a constructive tool integral to building often ambiguous identities as settlers (See Barr, 2007; Blyth, 2012; DeLay, 2008; Hämäläinen, 2008; Jacoby, 2008; Lahti, 2017; Zappia, 2014).

Similarly, research on the violence in GSWA has not engaged systematically with international parallels. Rather, scholars have focused on identifying a specific German military culture and tracking specifically German forms of extreme violence (Hull, 2006). In addition, there has been an understandable though limiting focus on identifying possible links between GSWA and the Nazis and the Holocaust (See Fitzpatrick, 2008, pp. 477-503; Madley, 2005, pp. 429-464; Zimmerer, 2011; 2004). Others have stressed the local aspects, the conditions on the ground, the environment, and particular circumstances in determining the genesis and shapes of violence in GSWA (Kuss, 2017). Still others have emphasised racism and emotionality in a campaign marked by failure and frustration in which shame and fear fueled the escalation of violence on the part of the Germans (Häussler, 2021). This article seeks to address these shortcomings by analysing the comparative strands of settler colonial violence in the Anglo invasion of central Arizona in 1864 and the German conflict against the Herero in 1904. These episodes showcase the intensities and trajectories of violence at two points in space and time when the momentum of settler colonialism drove the acquisition of territory and the dispossession and murder of indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, these episodes are pertinent for understanding colonial durabilities in our present time. In fact, both show how colonial violence and its wounds remain relevant today. Namibia and Germany have engaged in negotiations over the Herero genocide since 2015. This has featured calls for repatriation of human remains the Germans took for scientific research during the violence. It has also witnessed calls for formal apologies and monetary compensation, and for recognition and healing of past wounds. While some initiatives have been taken, much still remains unsettled (Lahti, 2022). In North America, the discussion around colonial violence has recently resurfaced in relation to Indigenous boarding schools and their burial grounds. But the onslaught the Western Apaches and Yavapais faced in the 1860s has gone largely unnoticed. Yet, important questions remain to be asked about genocide and the nature of US-Indigenous conflicts of the 1800s, and there is a need for detailed case studies of colonial violence and their unsettled legacies (Madley, 2015; Madley, 2016; Ostler, 2016).

Peripheral settler destinations

Neither Arizona nor GSWA were particularly dynamic settler colonial sites on a global scale. Their subjugation was rather tentative, uncertain, and gradual; far removed from James Belich's conception of a "settler revolution" characterised by supercharged, exponential growth in places such as California, Texas, or Australia (Belich, 2011, p. 9). While hundreds of thousands of settlers travelled to these destinations in a short span of time, and tens of thousands ventured to South Africa or Algeria, only a small trickle found themselves in Arizona or Namibia. But there was an identifiable increase in settler activity in these areas, and in both places, it was tied to violence.

Driven by the belief that white settlers were destined to dominate the continent, the US removed the lands stretching from Texas to the Pacific Ocean from nominal Mexican rule relatively easily in a short and aggressive war in 1846-1848. Yet asserting US rule on the ground and nationalising the large territory wrested from Mexico proved much harder and led to many prolonged conflicts, nowhere more so than in Arizona. As the 1860s dawned, Arizona's non-Indigenous population stood at a meager 6,000 people, of whom many were Hispanics. By way of contrast, in 1860, California had a population of 370,000 people, Texas over 600,000, and New Mexico 93,000 (US Census Office, 1872). Dominated by parched deserts, elevated plateaus, limited rainfall, and rugged mountain ranges, Arizona was an uninviting destination for white settlers. Its interior could not be reached through navigable rivers, its roads were few, and the railroads did not cross it until the early 1880s. In addition to being sparsely populated, the area also felt foreign

to white settlers due to a long Spanish presence and the omnipresence of several independent Indigenous communities, including the loosely connected cells of Yavapais and different Apache bands, clans, and families. While they did not recognise US sovereignty over them, they were also not the villainous raiders that dominated the settlers' fears. In fact, their economy relied on hunting, gathering of wild plants, and farming of corn, pumpkins, and other crops along streams in the deep valleys that cut their high timbered ranges (Record, 2008).[3]

Acquired as a protectorate in 1884, the German sphere of influence in Southwest Africa rested on a series of protection treaties with local Indigenous communities, and gradually advanced inland from the coastal area. Within this massive landmass, flanked by the Namib and Kalahari deserts in the west and east, the central highland plateau was potentially useful for cattle ranching and possibly some farming with irrigation (Jones, 2021). And while many in Germany wanted to divert the emigrant flows from the Americas to Germany's own colonies, they saw GSWA as the only even remotely suitable place for that purpose. In addition, the plateau was a highly contested ground between the pastoralist Herero and the Nama to their south. The German presence remained weak, with few traders, some missionaries, and limited government presence in the form of an imperial commissioner (governor after 1898) and a handful of soldiers. In all, only around 2,500 Germans had settled in GSWA by 1902 (Häussler, 2021; Leanza, 2020; Drechsler, 1980).

Despite the limitations of their newly won territory, neither Germany nor the US seriously contemplated giving up. Instead, in both places the potential of the land for extractive industries and permanent white societies supported by mining, ranching, farming, town building, and railroad construction appeared attractive possibilities. In both places, however, Indigenous communities stood in their way. In Arizona, a mining rush was a catalyst for an expanded frontier conflict. In GSWA, it was an Indigenous uprising.

Punishment

In April 1863, Joseph R. Walker's party found gold in the San Francisco Mountains of central Arizona, a Yavapai-Western Apache homeland formerly free of settlers. As news spread across the US, it led to a rush of white prospectors. Many of them were Californians, actual 49ers, their offspring, or admirers thirsting for new bonanzas and used to confronting Indigenous peoples (Madley, 2016). In 1864 Arizona was established as a territory distinct from New Mexico. Prescott was made the new territorial capital and Fort Whipple became a base for US troops, with both situated at the center of Yavapai-Western Apache country. What nonviolent accord there existed at the time the Walker party first arrived evaporated by the year's end as settlers quickly outnumbered Yavapais and Apaches around Prescott. In settler rhetoric, these Indigenous groups constituted a serious threat as wild raiders and murderers who had to be eradicated. The local paper articulated the settler outlook on May 25, 1864, when one writer observed that: "We favor the extermination policy or the complete overthrow of their power." Advocating the destruction of an entire society, this writer was careful to point out the higher aims, as he saw them. Killing will not be done "for thirst for blood" but for the sake of "peace and prosperity of the country" (*Arizona Miner*, May 25, 1864). Violence was thereby positioned as an integral feature of white settlement.

While neither the Yavapais nor the Western Apaches had engaged in any kind of systematic armed resistance, white settlers believed themselves to be under siege and at the mercy of marauding savages who prevented access to the land. In a letter sent from Fort Whipple in February 1864, Joseph Allyn observed how "repeated depredations" by the Indians had "thoroughly aroused the animosity of the settlers that a war of extermination has in fact already begun." Now, "Indians are shot wherever seen." He also added that "perhaps" extermination is "the only way to deal with Indians, at any rate settlers seem to think so." In any case, once extermination began, it was "too late to go back" (Nicholson, 1974, p. 68).

The Hereros were likewise confronted by an increase in settler encroachment on their lands. By the turn of the century many Herero leaders had already sold parts of their lands, mainly to cover the losses caused by the Rinderpest cattle fever epidemic of the 1890s. Recognising that nothing would satisfy the German appetite for land and tiring of German harassment, bullying, and killings, the Hereros revolted in January 1904 at Okahandja. It was very much a local uprising, a limited affair, which the Germans turned into a general conflict (Gewald, 1999). Until this time, German efforts had been marred by self-doubts and frustrations arising from their inability to impose their will on the indigenous population. Stories, often false, of white settlers being killed, mutilated, and raped, and of an impending settler annihilation only fueled settler fear (General Staff, 1907). Soon reinforcements began to arrive from Germany, so many in fact that soldiers outnumbered the settlers. In GSWA, settler violence began with punitive expeditions, not unlike those Woolsey and his settlers conducted in Arizona forty years earlier. Punishment was designed to emphasise the futility of resistance. As Lieutenant Otto Eggers observed, "All those familiar with the land are of the view that colonisation is impossible without teaching those impudent Hereros a lesson they are not likely to forget" (Kuss, 2017, p. 162). From the earliest days of the war, violence was deemed necessary, perhaps even desirable.

What constituted punishment in GSWA and Arizona was wholesale killing. Writing in May 1904, Governor Theodore Leutwein (1904) made it known to his superiors that in the field "nonwounded Herero have not been taken at all" and only few wounded had been captured before being court-martialed and executed (p. 68). One German account described the capture of a "number of the murderers" who were then "sentenced to death by hanging and hung from the nearest tree as a warning example" (Auer, 1911, p. 46). Another eyewitness recalled how a German unit had met two "very old" Herero women warming themselves at a fire. One of the soldiers dismounted, walked to the women, and shot them (Gewald & Silvester, 2003, p. 115). In Arizona, the methods were much the same. When settlers found any Apaches or Yavapais, they killed them indiscriminately, poisoned food supplies, summarily executed prisoners, and robbed and mutilated, spreading terror as they went.[4] One witness noted how settlers looked on "full of satisfaction" as "the skull and brains" of wounded Apaches – men, women, and children, even small babies – were smashed "to smithereens" with large rocks One of the settlers in this group also shot and scalped an elderly "gray-headed" Apache "squaw" (Conner, 1956, pp. 219-221; p. 232).

One of the things that set individual settlers and soldiers apart was the question of killing women and children. Franke was disgusted by the practice, Woolsey openly embraced it, while generals James Carleton, commanding US Army in Arizona, and Lothar von Trotha, in charge of German troops, went out of their way to forbid the practice. In his correspondence with Carleton, Woolsey admitted that they would have killed even more women during a punitive campaign if they could have just found them. Woolsey's stance was brutally simple. He would kill any Apache and Yavapai he could, stating that "For my part I am frank to say that I fight on the broad platform of extermination" (King Woolsey to Gen. James Carleton, March 29, 1864, quoted in Jacoby, 2008, p. 116). Carleton, like most regular US Army officers, was a moral conservative guided by a strict sense of honor, and thus did not share Woolsey's mentality. He instead insisted in his orders that while it was morally acceptable to slay Indigenous men at first sight, women and children should not be killed deliberately but be allowed to surrender unharmed.[5] In GSWA, Trotha wanted no prisoners, but made it clear that Herero women and children should be driven back but they should not be killed intentionally. Yet, as Isabel Hull (2006) observes, "because killing of women and children was one of the strongest taboos operating in modern armies, an order explicitly forbidding it would only be necessary if the taboo had already been massively broken" (p. 49).

In Arizona, Yavapais and Western Apaches avoided contact with settler outfits and retreated into the high mountain ranges hoping their enemies would struggle to locate them. By mid-1864 they needed to abandon their usual camp locations, and farming sites, as well as cease random livestock raiding. They simply went hungry and hoped the settlers would not find them. In GSWA the odds were much more even, at first. Germans seemed to be on the receiving end in most of the major skirmishes between combatants. The Hereros could field sizable armies numbering in the

thousands and they were ready to fight, unlike the small cells of Yavapais and Apaches who were wholly unprepared for sustained warfare. Ambushed by the Herero at Klein Barmen in March 1904, one German soldier wrote how it was "impossible for us to retreat" as his outfit was being fired on from two sides. Anguished, he continued that "just then the black devils came running from the entire length of the mountains like a swarm of ants." After seven hours of confusion and chaos, the firing finally stopped. It had been a terrible day for this German unit. "I cannot describe how we felt. Our little mounted company of thirty men had paid the price today. Five men dead; two men wounded" (Mansfield, 2017, pp. 64-67).

Yet setbacks like these only further fueled German fears and resentment. But no German victories emerged during the Spring campaigns. And yet, like Jan-Bart Gewald suggests, the Herero were holding back. They were not prepared for all-out war but sought diplomatic solutions. Between mid-April and August, they did nothing. They undertook no offensive actions, and they did not sabotage German telegraph lines, or over-extended supply lines. Instead, they expected negotiations with the Germans, and withdrew northward towards Waterberg Mountain (Gewald, 1999). The Germans were not, however, interested in negotiating. Berlin forbade Leutwein from seeking a negotiated solution before replacing him with General Lothar von Trotha, who they tasked with crushing the Hereros

Annihilation

Assuming command of the military operations from Governor Leutwein, Trotha pushed for a standing battle, thinking it would break the Herero resistance. Trotha had his battle at Waterberg on August 11, 1904, but it was not the kind of crushing victory he had expected. Disappointed, Trotha's next step called for forced deportation pursued through relentless chase and annihilation (Drechsler, 1980). German troops were to drive the Herero into the Omaheke Desert so that "they must forever leave the land," Trotha reasoned. Any who showed up in areas controlled by the Germans "with, or without a gun…will be shot." Trotha intended that such a policy would ensure that the Herero "nation as such should be annihilated, or, if this is not possible … expelled from the country." As German troops pushed forward, they would meet and destroy the Herero "gradually," group by group (Trotha quoted in Gewald, 1999, pp. 172-173). As one eyewitness observed after Waterberg, all Hereros found by the Germans "were killed without mercy" (Gewald & Silvester, 2003, p. 115). Those who avoided that fate found themselves bereft of livestock and cornered by German patrols occupying waterholes and key passageways to the south. While Trotha continued to seek battle, the Herero forces were in such desperate condition that they did anything to avoid the Germans, retreating deeper into the desert, seeking to slip across German lines, or attempt to reach the British territories. Their resistance had evaporated and most just wanted shelter, food, and water. Many wanted to surrender, but instead the Germans drove Herero women and children back into the desert. As one German officer observed, the "great majority perished" when "driven to the sand" of the Omaheke (von Estorff & Kutscher, 1968, p. 117).

Surrender was likewise impossible in Arizona. In settler minds there was no space for the Yavapais and Apaches in the new order. It would not be until the early 1870s that President U.S. Grant's *peace policy* provided the Apaches and Yavapais with a reservation in Arizona. But in 1864, after crushing punitive campaigns, the US Army was experimenting with other forms of extreme violence. It was planning for a massive, coordinated offensive combined with removal, a form of total annihilation that would destroy the Indigenous material base and the environment they depended on. General James Carleton, commanding the California Volunteers, a Union force securing the Southwest against Confederate threat in the Civil War, turned his focus on the Indigenous peoples soon after reaching the borderlands in Summer of 1862. Carleton's command had overpowered the Mescalero Apaches in New Mexico in 1862-63 and Navajos in northern Arizona the next winter, killing people and livestock and destroying dwellings, crops, and goods. In 1864 Carleton made plans for the forced removal of the Apaches and Yavapais to a distant reservation at Bosque Redondo in eastern New Mexico, on the edge of the Great Plains, where he

was already gathering the surviving Mescaleros and Navajos. In his own words, the goal was the "utter extermination" of Western Apaches in an all-out war so that he could ensure "a lasting peace and security of life to all those who go" to Apache lands "to search for the precious metals." His methods, outlined in the General Orders dated May 1, 1864, pressed for "a serious war; not a little march out and back again" – the latter Carleton saw as typical of punitive operations – that would bring "lasting results" against the Apache "bands of ruthless murderers." Carleton continued that every settler who had a rifle must take the field to aid the California soldiers. The troops would execute a massive pincer movement, encircling and squeezing Apaches and Yavapai homelands, from Tucson and Prescott, and from several army posts all the way from New Mexico. Thousands of soldiers and residents would start the war on May 25, 1864 and persist in the field for at least sixty days. Carleton demanded that each unit "strive to outdo all the others" in "energy, perseverance, resolution, and self-denial." In doing so, the Apaches would comprehend they cannot "hold out against us." All Apache men large enough to bear arms would "be slain wherever met," while the enemy food supply and material belongings would be ruthlessly destroyed.[6] However, Carleton's plans never materialised, as he lacked the resources and the manpower. Punitive campaigns, however, wreaked havoc for years to come.

Conclusion

By 1875 all Yavapais or Western Apaches still alive had been forced to reservations. 1864 had proved to be a turning point. Before that Yavapai and Western Apache families could usually sleep through the nights peacefully, plan and organise ceremonies, farm, and gather wild plants when they were in season, and find game to hunt in their mountains; thereafter, they were hunted and killed relentlessly, retreating higher into their mountains, scrambling for safety. After 1865 they were easy prey for settler outfits and the US Army units who targeted them for total annihilation. Violence had 'opened' Yavapai and Apache lands for the settlers. Similarly, growing numbers of German settlers arrived in GSWA after the violence had marginalised the Herero (Leanza, 2020). By 1908, all surviving Hereros were forced into camps, from where they were used as forced labor, or exiled into neighboring British territories. Germans then laid claim to all Herero lands and controlled them via set of ordinances such as a native register, mandatory pass-badge, and travel permits.

Violence grew from and reflected settler designs and anxieties, their quest to claim and master the land for mining, ranching, and farming purposes, to replace the Indigenous peoples, transplant white cultures, and build prosperous settler futures in what they perceived as a vast, unfamiliar, even terrifying land. In settler eyes, the Herero, Yavapais, and Apaches were obstacles preventing settler takeover and development of the land. The events of 1864 and 1904 showcase how settler colonialism gained in intensity through extreme violence such as punitive expeditions, hangings, random shootings, destruction of villages, coordinated campaigns, battles, and pure annihilation by any means. Arguably, these extreme forms of collective violence exhibited the broader tendencies of settler colonial takeovers during of the age of global empires. Across North America, Africa, Australia, and Asia invading Europeans killed and replaced peoples who challenged their plans for domination. Settler colonial conquest was not liberation and subjugation was not betterment. Of course, this does not mean that violence prevailed everywhere, all the time. Or that it was the same everywhere. But violence was at the heart of settler histories. Replacement did not happen by itself.[7]

These settler histories remain contested around the world as shown by the Black Lives Matter movement and the calls for decolonization of Western modes of knowledge and histories. The tense rethinking of the violent colonial past in Namibia is reflected, for example, in the toppling of colonial monuments. Most prominently, the Reiterdenkmal, an equestrian statue celebrating German victory over the Herero and German settler presence on African soil, was removed by the government in 2013. Occupying a key location at the heart of the capital Windhoek, the statue, set up in 1912, celebrated settler violence for a century (Lahti, 2022). There is no comparable monument in Arizona that would specifically address the violence of the 1860s. But the wounds

remain raw as they do in Namibia. This is shown, for example, in the ongoing struggle over Oak Flat, a proposed copper mining operation that would forever demolish sacred sites of the Western Apaches. Surely, settler violence and its legacies remain unresolved in our times.

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Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the funding from Academy of Finland.

About the Author

Dr. Janne Lahti works at the University of Helsinki, Finland, as an Academy of Finland Research Fellow. He has also taught at the University of Arizona and recently at Free University Berlin's Global History Program. He has been awarded the Fulbright Fellowship, Huntington Library's Mayers Fellowship, and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions Distinguished Visiting Fellowship in Perth, Australia. His research focuses on global and transnational histories of settler colonialism, borderlands, the American West, and Nordic colonialism. He has authored six books, including *German and United States Colonialism in a Connected World: Entangled Empires* (Palgrave, forthcoming 2020), *Cinematic Settlers: The Settler Colonial World in Film, with Rebecca Weaver-Hightower* (Routledge, 2020), *The American West and the World: Transnational and Comparative Perspectives* (Routledge, 2019) and *Wars for Empire: Apaches, the United States, and the Southwest Borderlands* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2017).

Email: janne.lahti@helsinki.fi
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3475-1542

Endnotes

[1] On Indigenous perspectives on settler violence in central Arizona, see Nancy Wright, John Sippi, and Joshu interviews, folder 34, box 3, Grenville Goodwin Papers, Arizona State Museum, Tucson.

[2] For eyewitness accounts, see William J. Fourr, "A Young Man's Life in the West," 190-95, file 5, box 1, William J. Fourr Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson; War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (OR), Series 1, vol. 34, part 1, 121; vol. 48, part 1, 901.

[3] On Western Apache subsistence, see also Sherman Curley and Anna Price interviews, both in folder 33, box 3; Walter Hooke interview, folder 34, box 3, Goodwin Papers, Arizona State Museum, Tucson.

[4] For accounts of these killing sprees, see "A Young Man's Life in the West" manuscript, 150-89, 202-09, 226, file 5, box 1, Fourr Papers, AHS; Timothy Braatz, Surviving Conquest: A History of the Yavapai Peoples (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 82-90.

[5] On Carleton's orders for the campaigns against the Mescaleros, Navajos, and Western Apaches, in which all he made it clear that no women or children would be killed intentionally, see OR, Series 1, vol. 15, 579-81; vol. 34, part 3, 387-89.

[6] OR, Series 1, vol. 34, part 3, 387-89; Indian Tribes and their Treatment, US Senate Report No. 156, 39th Cong., 2d sess., Serial 1279, 172-73, 176-81.

[7] See, for example, the "Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia" project at https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/ (accessed August 23, 2022).

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

Australian children's picture books, the Frontier Wars, and Joseph Campbell's hero with a thousand faces

Margaret Baguley
Martin Kerby
Alison Bedford
Mia O'Brien
University of Southern Queensland

ABSTRACT

Frank Uhr and Debra O'Halloran's *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* (2019) is one of the few children's picture books that explore the Australian Frontier Wars. In terms of message, the author and illustrator subsume First Nations' resistance into the nation's broader celebration of its participation in foreign wars. In terms of medium, they use the overwhelmingly conservative genre of picture books to deradicalise a potentially controversial topic, one that they frame using Joseph Campbell's conception of the monomyth. Campbell's development of the monomyth, widely referred to by his major work *The hero with a thousand faces* (1949/2008) was drawn from his sustained academic study of comparative mythology. He found a similar pattern emerging in a multitude of story forms, fairy tales, songs, and sonnets, and within sacred writings, dreamings, and monologue accounts. The canonical narrative arc of the hero's journey has three core elements. It begins as the hero receives a 'call to adventure' and leaves the ordinary world (Separation or Departure). He or she enters an extraordinary world that requires engagement in a range of trials and challenges (Initiation), before returning home to the ordinary world, irreversibly transfigured (Return). *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* is framed by this trajectory, thereby ensuring a familiarity that belies the reader's lack of knowledge as to its origin. The author and illustrator thereby avoid too overt a challenge to the ideological and genre-based expectations of their readers.

KEYWORDS

Battle of Meewah, Children's Literature, Frontier Wars, Joseph Campbell, Monomyth, Picture Books

CITATION

Baguley, M, Kerby, M., Bedford, A., & O'Brien, M. (2023). Australian children's picture books, the Frontier Wars, and Joseph Campbell's hero with a thousand faces. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 73-83. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.207

Introduction

On 13 September 2021 the annual commemoration of the Battle of Meewah was held at Bill Gould's Lookout, Tobruk Memorial Drive, in the Queensland regional city of Toowoomba, Australia.[1] The event was organised by The Friends of Multuggerah, a community group dedicated to the memory of an Indigenous guerrilla leader of the Jagerra nation, who in 1843 united warriors from across several different groups to challenge the increasing encroachment of Queensland pastoralists. Although it was not a decisive victory in a broader sense, given that the dispossession of First Nations people was slowed rather than halted, the battle is historically significant as it constituted the first major setback to white settlement in Queensland (Kerkhove & Uhr, 2019). The commemoration of Meewah and the skirmishes associated with it are part of a long overdue challenge to the widespread and erroneous perception that there was no organised warfare on the frontier. The violence in Queensland, for example, was protracted, and continued into the 1890s. It was marked by well documented atrocities that were "gruesome events – even by Australian frontier standards … as always, however both the settlers and the police worked in the interests of pastoralism, and ultimately of colonial and imperial governments" (Rogers & Bain, 2016, p. 87).

Such was the extent of the violence, and the degree of official agency, there is a compelling case for it to be considered genocide (Richards, 2008). Regardless of whether it constitutes state sanctioned genocide, or "societally-led genocide", it is clear nonetheless that there was considerable public support for a policy of extermination (Palmer, 2000). There is a growing awareness, that claims such as those made by Keith Windshuttle (2003) that "there was nothing on the Aborigines' side that resembled frontier warfare, patriotic struggle or systematic resistance of any kind" are flawed (p. 26). For as Stephen Gapps (2018) argues, the raids conducted by Sydney's First Nations people "had all the hallmarks of guerrilla warfare: raiding and retreating and engaging the enemy when in a superior situation" (p. 5). Too often, however, research into the Frontier Wars has focused on the actions of the settlers and groups such as the Native Mounted Police (Kerkhove, 2021). Indigenous tactics such as communication networks, the co-ordination of allied groups, and the use of what in a European context would be described as military intelligence, have not received commensurate interest (Kerkhove, 2023; Kerkhove, 2020; see also article by Samuel White in this issue). As a result, "the vigour of Aboriginal resistance [is] forgotten… Tribesmen and women [are] pitied rather than respected" (Reynolds, 2013, p. 14). Too often they are dismissed as the passive victims of colonial expansion "whose fate was simply to suffer and to die" (Reynolds, 2020, para. 20).

The ceremony in Toowoomba was, nevertheless, a relatively effective and at times poignant challenge to the hegemonic narrative of terra nullius and the benign European settlement that it facilitated.[2] It was hampered, however, by the perceived need to balance the desire to radically challenge this narrative with a respect for the nation's war time history, which remains a bedrock of national identity. The failure of the Australian War Memorial, arguably the nation's most important cultural institution, to commemorate the Frontier Wars is the most public example of this tension. Alan Stephens (2014) is far from being the only Australian historian to see this silence as "historically dishonest" (para. 1), an impediment to reconciliation, and a conscious decision by officialdom to ignore "pre-Federation indigenous warriors who fought invaders for their homeland, their families, and their way of life" (para. 19). As Terry Garwood (1993), then director of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria wrote in the early 1990s, "Whatever the fate of the ANZAC legend, Aboriginal people were given no place in it. Their contribution to the defence of Australia has been excluded through neglect" (p. xi). Even the well-intentioned efforts to recognise First

Nation's soldiers who served in the Australian Defence Force after Federation in 1901 are problematic. For they can minimise, or even obscure, the proud tradition of resistance to British invasion, of which the Battle of Meewah is only one example (Gibson, 2014). As Stephen Garton (1996) observes, the Anzac mythology continues to exert an artistic tyranny over Australian war commemoration, and indeed, even what events are worthy of being remembered. Nevertheless, when it is handled sensitively, as it is by groups such as The Friends of Multuggerah, it is possible to create a "cohesive historical narrative in which both the frontier wars and Gallipoli feature as key moments in Australian history can create new and constructive understandings of our past" (Bailey & Brawley, 2008, p. 33).

The choice facing the organisers, many of whom are passionate First Nation's people driven by a desire to commemorate their ancestors' resistance and their spiritual connection to the land, is whether to integrate their commemoration with wider commemorative practices such as Anzac Day or to carve out a distinct ideological position with its own rituals of commemoration. As with many commemorative projects, they chose compromise over conflict. The result is an integration of both approaches: a traditional welcome, the playing of the didgeridoo, and an address by a Gomeroi woman were very much in keeping with the day as a First Nations commemoration. Other rituals were drawn, it would seem, directly from the traditional Anzac 'liturgy', the nation's de facto national day which though outwardly secular is widely characterised as an expression of displaced Christianity (Billings, 2015). The wreath laying, one by members of the 25/49 Battalion, a local unit with a long association with the region, and one by a visiting school group, a one-minute silence, the distribution of symbolic handmade Sturt Desert Peas rather than poppies, and the use of the phrase 'lest we forget' make use of familiar symbols and ritual acts. A short address by an officer of the 25/49 battalion recognised Multaggerah's status as an Indigenous warrior of considerable repute, but also contextualised his achievements within the framework of First Nations servicemen and women in the Australian Defence Force. Multuggerah's victory with all its radical potential was thereby subtlety merged into an otherwise hegemonic European narrative.

As this article will show, Frank Uhr and Debra O'Halloran's (2019) *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain*, one of the few children's picture books that explore the Frontier Wars, makes the same compromise. In terms of message, the author and illustrator subsume First Nations' resistance into the nation's broader celebration of its participation in foreign wars. In terms of medium, they use the overwhelmingly conservative genre of picture books to deradicalise a potentially controversial topic, one that they frame using Joseph Campbell's ubiquitous conception of the monomyth, or as it is more widely known, the hero with a thousand faces. This is a familiar motif, for though Campbell's hero is traditionally driven by specific situations and circumstances, his innate opposition to oppression, immorality, and the inflictions of evil ensure the framework's relevance across human cultures, time, and space. Modern children's picture books are a particularly effective vehicle for this approach, both because it is familiar and for the didactic potential it offers. For *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* does not threaten the belief system of many of the adults who buy the book or the children who read it. Instead, it reassures them that though the picture book is 'modern' it does not seriously challenge traditional understandings of Australian history and identity, while nevertheless still highlighting a previously overlooked experience of frontier violence and resistance.

Children's picture books

The children at the commemoration in Toowoomba will almost certainly have been exposed to picture books, which comprise an important part of a child's early literacy experiences. They offer numerous benefits for young children that are often quite divorced from historical accuracy, ranging from the creation of a framework for building empathy, tolerance, and friendships, reinforce social-emotional wellbeing, problem-solving, and the acquisition of conflict resolution skills (Kemple, 2004), acquiring new vocabulary (Crowe, Norris, & Hoffman, 2004), expressing themselves with appropriate semantic and syntactic usage (Prutting & Kirchner, 1987), increasing

their sense of belonging and self-affirmation (Botelho & Rudman, 2009), and developing a range of personal, social, and intellectual benefits (Browne, 1996). In addition to these benefits to socialisation, children's picture books are profoundly ideological, constructed as they are "by a particular people for particular reasons, at a certain time" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 10). Stories that touch on foundational events tied to a nation's history, such as wars, can make a significant contribution to the creation and maintenance of a "national soul" (Hazard, 1983, p. 11). This contribution to childhood development is particularly significant as picture books are usually chosen by parents or family members, and as such are an important indicator of contemporary attitudes and morals (Kerby, Curtis, Bedford & Baguley, 2022; Kerby, Baguley, Bedford & Maddock, 2022; Macdonald, 2022; Baguley & Kerby, 2021; Kerby & Baguley, 2020; Kerby, Baguley, & MacDonald, 2017; Flothow, 2007). Writing in a Canadian context, Jerry Diakiw (1997, cited in Brown, 2003) concurs, noting that "our identities, our attitude to people of different races, our sense of self and therefore probably our sense of national identity or lack of it are largely fixed by the end of elementary school" (p. 43).

Depending on the quality of a picture book, it has the potential to "look beneath the bitumen of public rhetoric" (Spittel, 2017, p. 203) and explore "the unruly tussle between popular and unofficial road of remembrance" (Scates 2015, in Spittel, 2017, p. 204). This credibility ensures that it has the capacity to challenge hegemonic power structures and to develop attitudes that subsequently inform a child's identity (Goscilo, 2014; Frank, 2002). Yet like the Anzac mythology more broadly, a picture book remains vulnerable to being co-opted into serving "differing ideological and political interests" (Darian-Smith & Hamilton, 1994, p. 2). As Clare Rhoden (2012) argues, this use of war literature didactically for either nationalistic or pacifist purposes is an ethically contentious practice, noting that several educational specialists such as Robert Jeffcoate (1990), Jan Kociumbas (1997) and Kate Agnew and Geoff Fox (2001) deem it "inappropriate" (p. 5). It is important, therefore, that as more authors engage with the Frontier Wars, as surely, they will, their approach will be subject to close interrogation. For as is the case with children's literature generally, picture books are often "specifically identified as telling the truth" (MacCallum-Stewart 2007, p. 178); the question remains, however, as to what truth they are telling.

In addition to the expectation that they should be "sanitary, benign, and didactic" (Tribunella 2010, p. 102), picture books are also remarkably conservative; in a recent audit, ninety-nine percent of picture books used in Australian early childhood classrooms were identified as promoting dominant cultural viewpoints (Adam, 2019; Adam & Barratt-Pugh, 2020). The use of Campbell's conception of the hero therefore turns potentially traumatic history into a "universal of human experience" (Stephens, 1992, p. 238) rather than a narrative grounded in an historical event. It also facilitates an approach that Esther MacCallum-Stewart (2007) identifies in Great War literature as the "parable of war". It is an "emotive, literary retelling … based on a series of texts and cultural shifts rather than on historical perspectives". This is particularly important given the ideological impact of literature on children as it "privileges recent political and ideological beliefs rather than the actual events. This erases subtleties of distinction and contrasts in behaviour and/or belief" (pp. 177-178).

A familiar rhetoric and framework

Uhr and O'Halloran's exploration of the Indigenous resistance leader Multuggerah in the medium of a children's picture book skirts rather than confronts the uncertain place in Australia's history occupied by both their protagonist and the war he fought. The book is better understood as a celebration of First Nations warriors as proto-Anzacs whose battlefield prowess is framed by Joseph Campbell's 'Hero's Journey' as a universal human experience of adventure and transcendence. Campbell is unlikely to be a name familiar to any of Uhr and O'Halloran's readers, and indeed only a few of the purchasing public, yet the familiarity of the framework is comforting when used in a book intended for children that touches on issues of war, death, and genocide. Campbell's development of the monomyth, widely referred to by his major work *The hero with a*

thousand faces (1949/2008) was drawn from his sustained academic study of comparative mythology. He found a similar pattern emerging in a multitude of story forms, fairy tales, songs, and sonnets, and within sacred writings, dreamings, and monologue accounts. The canonical narrative arc of the hero's journey has three core elements. It begins as the hero receives a 'call to adventure' and leaves the ordinary world (Separation or Departure). He or she enters an extraordinary world that requires engagement in a range of trials and challenges (Initiation), before returning home to the ordinary world, irreversibly transfigured (Return). Joshua Cruz and Nadia Kellam (2017) refer to this as the "archetypal trajectory" in which Campbell's hero follows a universal structure or collective template across several stages (p. 174). *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* is framed by this trajectory, thereby ensuring a familiarity that belies the reader's lack of knowledge as to its origin. The author and illustrator thereby avoid making too overt a challenge to the ideological and genre-based expectations of their readers.

Separation of departure

In keeping with Campbell's first stage, Multuggerah is positioned as a hero who is predisposed to potential adventure or a call to adventure by his dissatisfaction, deep dismay, and experience of struggle and turmoil. Multuggerah is "worried for his people's future" given the continuing encroachment of Europeans and their flocks of sheep. The picture book opens with a large image of Multuggerah, who is described only as "a First Nations Leader from a long time ago". This opening partially unmoors Multuggerah's story from its historical context, for while Campbell's hero is driven by specific situations and circumstances, his innate opposition to oppression, immorality, and the infliction of evil empathetically resonate across human cultures, time, and space. The observation that "Multuggerah did not like sheep, nor did he like the men who put them on his country" references a specific situation. The next piece of text counters that specificity and encourages empathy by noting that they "spoilt the country, scared away the native floods, and fouled the water", thereby casting Europeans as the antithesis of the landscape, interlopers who have no place in the natural order. This has a particular resonance given that the Australian landscape is a powerful symbol of historical continuity (Kerby & Baguley, 2023) with artistic renderings of it "remaining the most iconic and popular … in Australian culture" (Radford, 2007, p. 23). Multuggerah's decision to meet six leaders from surrounding groups to orchestrate attacks on European settlement appears an understandable reaction to readers immersed in a culture that venerates battlefield courage and sees the landscape as an equally central component of national identity. That he meets them on "his sacred mountain" only serves to emphasise the First Nations peoples link to the land and the altruism of their motivation compared to the destruction wrought by European settlement. The war that they wage is not one of conquest, for the land is at the basis of all Australian First Nations relationships, economies, identities, and cultural practices. It is believed that "by 'feeling' the land … a person is 'made' or really exists" (Kohen, 2004, p. 229). The call to adventure generated by this turmoil has been heralded by what Campbell would have characterised as an encounter with forces not fully understood, in this case, a culture and an approach to the landscape that is vastly different to that espoused by First Nations peoples.

Initiation

The second stage of the hero's journey is the 'road of trials', which is the most substantive component of the monomyth. It can take the form of a myriad of ordeals and tests, perilous journeys, complexity and betrayals, and the appearance of miraculous or supernatural phenomena. In this case, however, Uhr and O'Halloran do not employ a figure as a symbolic guide. Instead, it is the landscape that acts as a talisman. It protects Multuggerah's warriors as they protect it. In contrast, the illustrations by O'Halloran show the settlers dwarfed by the landscape, milling about on the periphery of the Frontier, or tied to makeshift roads swathed in darkness. While this landscape offers succour to Multuggerah and his warriors, in contrast, the settlers' engagement with the landscape is more in keeping with a Great War sensibility, one which was

characterised by the "sharp dividing of landscape into known and unknown, safe and hostile" (Fussell, 1977, p. 76).

The First Nations' leaders identify the reliance on bullock drays to carry supplies as a point of weakness to be exploited. By stopping the drays on the mountain pass, Multuggerah and his warriors hope to force the settlers to "move away to other lands" (Uhr & O'Halloran, 2019). Significantly, they do not seek to gain ownership of the land, for theirs is not a war of conquest. They do not conceive of the landscape as another enemy to confront. It is portrayed throughout the story as a living character, one that is a valuable ally in their resistance to colonial intrusion. In contrast, during the Great War, the battlefields of Gallipoli and the Western Front were, like the Australian Outback, positioned as "new lands to be claimed" rather than protected (Hoffenberg, 2001, p. 114). As a key component of the national imagining of the Great War this positioning of landscape as a powerful symbol of historical continuity is regularly used in Australian picture books.

Given Henry Reynolds (2013) astute observation that for First Nations' Australians, the Frontier War was their Great War, Uhr and O'Halloran can draw on very powerful beliefs about landscape and the place of the 'hero' in the national story. As the Official Historian and founder of the Australian War Memorial, Charles Bean helped establish in the national psyche a "cult of the individual as hero, who because of the influence of the bush and his frontier background is already a natural soldier who has only to pick up a rifle to be ready for battle" (Pugsley, 2004, p. 47). Though Multuggerah and his warriors pick up spears rather than rifles, they successfully ambush the settlers and their supply drays before retiring to their "sacred mountain" from where they repel an attack. They do not fear the landscape as an unexplored and dangerous place. As both author and illustrator are clearly aware, though the landscape possesses a physical nature, it is also, as Tuan (1979) observes, a construct of the mind. Nevertheless, Multuggerah and his warriors must travel a road of trials as they defend their land and seek to eject European settlement.

The return

Given that the victory at Meewah was a short-lived success, Uhr and O'Halloran must restrict their vision to the immediate aftermath. Though Campbell's framework allows for a return to the ordinary marked by further adventure or continued vexation, Uhr notes only that "All the First Nations leaders were happy, and Multuggerah wished them all a safe journey home, knowing that they had won on the day". The short postscript indicating that Multuggerah was killed three years later leading a raid on a Station is the only evidence that the completion of the hero-quest does not end with Multuggerah's return home to share a boon for the potential benefit of all. This self-imposed narrative limitation allows the author and illustrator to frame the events of the book using Campbell's monomyth without acknowledging that in this case, the hero's quest is a literary rather than historical success. This reflects Uhr's background as one of a small number of predominantly white historians who have made a significant contribution to rediscovering the historical story of Multuggerah. While his research conforms to the broad expectations that history is factual, his work on *Multuggerah and the Sacred Mountain* is, in contrast, motivated by an unashamedly didactic purpose:

> Multuggerah came to me as a hero that kids could aspire to [be]. I grew up in a white society where our heroes were Ray Lindwall and people like that. The aboriginal kids don't have their own heroes and I thought we could endorse [Multuggerah] as a hero. (Uhr, interview, 20 September 2021)

The book was in fact first conceived of as the first in a series, one which would add fictionalised events and lift Multuggerah "even further up the scale of hero" (Uhr, interview). Indeed, Uhr was determined to make his story generalisable; the decision to use the descriptor First Nations rather than linking Multuggerah explicitly to a particular clan or tribe "makes him Australian as opposed to just [belonging to] a clan from the Lockyer Valley" (Uhr, interview). This extended to Uhr's view

of where the story fits into the broader history of the region and the nation; it should be "a dual history. It's an Australian history. Not an Aboriginal history or a white history" (Uhr, interview). What the First Nations people would make of their victory being repurposed as a dual history is open to question, but the very broadness of the narrative as Uhr and O'Halloran conceive it, allows for the use of Campbell's monomyth within the framework established by the Australian reverence for actions on the battlefield.

Conclusion

The Meewah commemorations in Toowoomba differ from traditional Anzac Day ceremonies conducted in towns and cities across Australia in one very important way. They are conducted in situ, on a battlefield, rather than using the cenotaph, or empty tomb, as a symbolic connection with those who fought and died 'somewhere over there'. As one of the First Nation organisers observes, however, the "whole country was a battlefield". Australians have tended to look abroad when linking conceptions of nationhood with heroes who made their name in battle; First Nations people do not have to look anywhere near as far. In addition to acting as "repositories for reconstructions of the past, Australian war histories [such as children's picture books] indoctrinate adolescent readers into the Anzac tradition, thereby maintaining the dominance of Anzac in the Australian national psyche" (Potter, 2016, p. 38). Australian picture books that explore conflict are more than just literature, for they become "textual monuments" that act "as points of reference through which younger generations can learn about, and (re)imagine anew, cultural memories associated with the Anzac Legend'' (Allan, 2013, p. 138). By using Campbell's monomyth to frame their narrative, Uhr and O'Halloran explore a battle and a conflict that has as yet exerted little impact on this process. However, the familiarity of the framework acts as an entry point for the reader exposed to the story of Multuggerah for the first time. From there, it may well make its way into the national mythology. For though the conceptualisation of the hero's journey by Campbell is probably unknown to many purchasers of the book, the children who subsequently read it can read complexly (Duncum, 2021). The familiarity of the journey therefore allows for a deep engagement with the story as it is reminiscent of a wide variety of books and films with which potential readers are already fully immersed.

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About the Authors

Margaret Baguley is a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in visual arts. She has received numerous awards recognising the high quality of her teaching and research. She is currently the Associate Head Research for the School of Education. Her research interests encompass the arts, arts education, leadership, group dynamics and creative collaboration. She has an extensive number of publications including The Palgrave Handbook of Global Arts Education (Barton & Baguley, 2017, Palgrave MacMillan) and The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). Dr Baguley is also a practising artist with 10 solo exhibitions and 47 group exhibitions with forty of these being invitational. Her most recent group exhibition received Australia Council for the Arts funding and she has been a recipient of grants from the Ian Potter Foundation, Craft Queensland, Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. During 2020 Dr Baguley was one of a team awarded a USQ Learning and Teaching Open Educational Practice (OEP) Grant for the project titled 'Exploring social justice, democracy, human rights and citizenship: Engaging tertiary students through an open history textbook initiative'. Dr Baguley was co-awarded a Princeton University Library Research Grant (2020) with Dr Kerby to undertake research on the relationship between the artist and author of the Mary Poppins series of books. Dr Baguley is currently elected Vice-President of Art Education Australia (AEA), the national peak body for visual arts education.

Email: margaret.baguley@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0098-6378

Martin Kerby is an Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. His research interests include biography and artistic and cultural responses to conflict. Dr Kerby holds two doctorates in the field of biography. He has received numerous research awards including several ANZAC Centenary grants, both state and national (2014, 2015, 2017). Dr Kerby was a 2018 Q ANZAC 100 Fellow at the State Library of Queensland with his project was titled 'A War Imagined: Queenslanders and the Great War'. He was recently awarded a place on the highly regarded Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators (2020). Dr Kerby has published extensively including The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). He is also

the Chief Investigator on a USQ Capacity Building Research Grant titled 'Counter Memorials/Monuments and the Australian Commemorative Landscape'. He is also currently the Chief Editor of Australian Art Education.

Email: martin.kerby@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4073-2559

Alison Bedford (PhD) is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in History curriculum and pedagogy and education research. Her own research interests include the social function of fiction, science fiction and history pedagogy. She is the Book Reviews Editor for the Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies. Dr Bedford's publications are wide ranging. She has published a monograph, In Frankenstein's Wake: Mary Shelley, Morality and Science Fiction (McFarland, 2021), as well as a number of textbooks for both tertiary and secondary students, most notably Teaching Secondary History (Sharp, Dallimore, Bedford, Kerby, Goulding, Heath, Von Guttner, & Zamati, Cambridge, 2021) and Modern History Units 1-4 (Bedford, Martens, & Slavin, Cambridge, 2019) as a part of the Cambridge Checkpoints series. She has also recently co-edited Unlocking Social Theory with Popular Culture with Dr Naomi Barnes (Queensland University of Technology). Dr Bedford's work on History pedagogy has been published in a number of journals, including Historical Encounters and Agora.

Email alison.bedford@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6708-9896

Mia O'Brien is currently Associate Head Academic Transformation in the School of Education, University of Southern Qld. Previously Director, Initial Teacher Education (Griffith University), she has extensive experience in the design, delivery and accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs. Mia has extensive experience in university leadership, having completed multiple leadership terms as Coordinator, Community Engagement & Industry Partnerships, Coordinator, Professional Experience, Initial Teacher Education Director, and as Chief Investigator (CI) in ARC Discovery and Linkage Grants. Mia has lead the implementation of many industry linked strategies for innovative university program design and delivery. O'Brien's research focuses on the intersection of pedagogical innovation, wellbeing and creative practice in the context of learning in, through and about work. As academic lead of the Wellbeing Strand within the Masters of Education (GU) she developed courses and professional learning initiatives in positive psychology in education.

Email: Mia.O'Brien@unisq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0468-3393

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

Popular violence and 'lay religion' in centre-west Mexico during Mexico's Cristero war (1926-29)

Mark Lawrence
University of Kent

ABSTRACT

This article suggests that the Cristero insurgency of 1926-29 was a form of lay religious violence inimical not only to the Mexican Revolution but also to the interests of the Catholic civilians and hierarchy the rebels claimed to represent. By the same token, Cristeros shared with their Revolutionary enemies a habit of plebeian vigilantism which was informed by economic and politico-religious mobilisation underway since 1910. Focusing on the mestizo and indigenous populations in the states of Zacatecas, Durango and Jalisco, this article shows how the external conflict presented by the Church-state crisis of 1926 was used as a pretext for localised disputes concerning land and pillage. The Cristiada of 1926-29 thus deserves to be understood as part of the pattern of popular protest over land, property and autonomy which had been unleashed by the onset of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. This article concludes with an explanation of the military and political relevance of the Cristero conflict today.

KEYWORDS

Cristero, Defensa, Ejido, Mexican Revolution, Indigenous, Aurelio Acevedo, Catholicism, Vigilantism, Lay Religion

CITATION

Lawrence, M. (2023). Popular violence and 'lay religion' in centre-west Mexico during Mexico's Cristero (1926-29). *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 84-94.
https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.208

Introduction

The period 1910-40 was tumultuous in Mexican history. The armed phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) was followed by fragmented attempts by Revolutionary politicians to assert Federal control and modernisation in the face of military rebellion, resistance to social reform, two major religious revolts known as the Cristiada (during 1926-29 and a more dispersed effort during 1932-40), and ongoing, albeit often unacknowledged, agency from Mexico's indigenous populations. The Cristero revolt was a popular convulsion made in protest against President Calles's enactment of the Mexican Revolution's anticlerical constitution of 1917. It was ultimately the most violent and divisive episode in Mexico between the 1910 Revolution and the ongoing Narco Wars. Mexican clerics suspended worship on 31 July 1926, one day before the implementation of a federal law regulating the internal affairs of the Catholic Church. The so-called Calles Law applied the penal code to non-juring priests, bringing the secular public sphere of the state into the private sphere of orphanages, schools, and asylums to ensure they displayed no religious icons or concealed chapels. The Catholic hierarchy's response meant that churches remained nominally open yet without any religious services. Religious practices became a private matter in areas of Federal government control, as most of the Church hierarchy and priesthood refused to support the Cristero rebels openly. But religiosity was openly flaunted in areas controlled by the Cristero rebels (Meyer, 2007).

For most of the twentieth century this religious civil war was sidelined by Mexican scholarship in part because of its 'historia broncina' ('statue history' or focus on political and military elites) approach to the past, and in part because neither the Catholic hierarchy nor the post-Revolutionary state (1940-2000) welcomed inquiries. The gruelling conflict was by some measures the bloodiest episode of twentieth-century Mexico, and it offered little glory either to the patricians of the Revolution or to the equivocations of the Catholic Church. Civil wars, to quote an eminent political scientist, "often refuse to speak their name", being instead euphemised as "troubles", "emergency" or "violence" (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 17). The fact that militancy came disproportionately from lay Catholics (both through political mobilisation and force of arms) and footsoldiers of the Revolutionary state (militia, conscripts, and candidates for land redistribution known as 'agraristas') gave the Cristiada a plebeian and localised quality which for several decades received little serious coverage in official history. The actual fighting, while scattered, was bloody and terrible. Balladeers wrote *corridos* about the conflicts. These beloved folk songs told tall stories via a familiar and comfortable medium for the locals[1]. Catholic apologists within and without Mexico catastrophised the Cristiada as a collective martyrdom, or as a form of sacred history forced upon the faithful as a result of the extremist, even satanic, anti-clericalism of the incumbent president Plutarco Elías Calles (McCullough, 1928). This view exonerated the Catholic hierarchy from the atrocities and counter-atrocities, placing the blame squarely with the Federal government, and allowing Mexican bishops and the Vatican to pose as peacemakers once the armistice known as the 'Arreglos' was agreed in June 1929. Secular writers, for their part, dismissed the Cristiada as an aspect of fanaticism or, in the case of Marxist historians, the result of a false consciousness bred into the rural proletariat by the counter-revolutionary alliance of priests and landowners. The religious revolt was a last gasp of a reactive defence of traditional values threatened by economic modernisation and the unfolding of the revolutionary state (Lawrence, 2020).

These binary interpretations were challenged from the 1970s, thanks to the pioneering work of historian Jean Meyer and the breakthrough of regional studies. In part this academic interest conforms with a wider reappraisal of right-wing movements stretching back to the popular royalism of Latin America's independence wars (Echeverri, 2018). Jean Meyer argued that the Cristero revolt had wide-ranging plebeian support, which was at odds not only with the Mexican Revolution's appeal to the masses but also with a lukewarm Catholic hierarchy (Meyer, 2009). More recently, regional historians have stressed how vertical transactional power relationships dictated local allegiances in favour of or against the Cristeros, often surpassing the importance of faith, class, or ethnicity (Guerra Manzo, 2015; Brewster 2003). The very nature of Cristero militancy has been complicated by research into passive acts of economic and Catholic protest,

including the cultivation of miracle stories and lay religious innovations in response to the Church's formal suspension of religious services in protest at the Calles regime's anti-clericalism (Butler, 2008). Amidst this new research, the military history of the Cristero War remains somewhat underdeveloped. This shortcoming can partly be explained by the halo effect of sacred history which, along with an overall tendency for veterans writing memoirs to downplay the horrors of war for the sake of their readers[2], has clad Cristero military history in the ill-fitting clothes of political, social, and cultural history.

Blending assorted primary and historiographical evidence from the western heartland of Mexico's Cristero War, especially from the archive bequeathed by one of the leading Cristeros, Aurelio Acevedo, this article will argue that Cristero militancy amounted to a kind of self-righteous vigilantism which was spawned by economic and religious mobilisation and inimical towards attempts by Cristero leaders to win over support. Focusing on the mestizo and indigenous populations in the states of Zacatecas, Durango and Jalisco, this article shows how the external conflict presented by the Church-state crisis of 1926 was used as a pretext for localised disputes concerning land and pillage. The insurgent rallying-cry of 'Long Live Christ the King!' (Viva Cristo Rey!) was a performative appeal to material interests far removed from its theological claims. The Cristiada of 1926-29 thus deserves to be understood as part of the pattern of popular protest over land, property and autonomy which had been unleashed in 1910. The material interests motivating opposition to the Mexican state offers parallels to the drugs war underway since 2006 in the former Cristero states of Michoacán, Guerrero, Jalisco and Zacatecas.

The mobilisation of Catholic politics

The Mexican Revolution underway since 1910 had unleashed not only the secularising impulses of land reform (mostly, the ending of the pseudo-feudalistic hacienda system) but also a resurgent Catholicism relying on modern political media and mobilisation in defence of incumbent private property. The liberal Maderista phase of the Revolution (1911-1913) energised the Catholic Party (PCN), especially in rural areas of the west, and lay organisations propounded Social Catholic doctrines. Religious youth activism expanded, the Cristo Rey monument established in Guanajuato in 1923 became a focus of nationwide mobilisation, and a Catholic stoicism flourished amongst young migrants and middle classes in the cities (Weis, 2019). Meanwhile, the pendulum swings of politics and armies during the armed phase of the Revolution kept the land question alive for at least three reasons. Veterans of campaigns demanded land and the intellectual Luis Cabrera in 1912 published an influential plan to produce communal landholdings ('ejidos') inspired by pre-Columbine traditions. All the while the emerging Revolutionary state entrenched its support in the economic and logistical hubs of the cities, allying with urban working classes while rural grievances, with some exceptions (such as the state of Morelos in the wake of the Zapata revolution), went unaddressed (Knight, 1986; López Beltrán, 1987).

The persistence of Mexico's iniquitous land situation thus coalesced with Catholic political mobilisation. In the early 1920s the Catholic newspaper *La Restauración* railed against one of the central policies of the Mexican Revolution, the provision of communal landholdings ('ejidos') to the rural proletariat. Blending classism and racism, the Catholic daily warned against 'Indians and drunks' getting hold of land (González Navarro, 2000). Pleas during the 1920s to Zacatecas large landowners (hacendados) to redistribute land fell on deaf ears. Social Catholic activism supported the creation of smallholdings, albeit either via state purchase of lands or via various forms of leaseholding, sharecropping or emphyteusis from existing hacendados, as well as support for the Raiffeisen system of affordable credit: in other words, anything short of the 'Bolshevik' expropriation beloved of Catholic black propaganda. The first Catholic Workers' Congress, meeting in 1922, offered homilies about the selfish rich and the moral lapses of the poor, but none of this amounted to a concrete programme (González Navarro, 2000). The question of the land thus resonated in pulpits, press and podiums even while any systematic solution was disavowed. As late as 1934, the Zacatecas Cristero leader, Aurelio Acevedo, approved an invective against the Federal government's programme of establishing ejidos. The Federal government, according to

Acevedo, was interested not in helping the rural poor but in nationalising them along with Mexico's natural resources. The deleterious influence of the philosophers and of the spirit of the Enlightenment loomed large on Mexican revolutionaries, whose aim was ultimately to hand the country either to Bolsheviks or to the Anglo-Saxon "enemy of our race", the United States (CESU, ARA 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 14, 1934 Invective from Cristero propagandists).

The dissemination of counter-revolutionary and xenophobic propaganda sanctified attacks on property deemed suspect, as well as acts of abduction and killing. Cristero violence alienated not only communities in the insurgents' path, but also the rebel authorities in the Cristero capital of Huejuquilla (Jalisco) who were at pains to be accepted as a regime-in-waiting rather than a front for brigandage. In October 1927 the political wing of the Cristero revolt, the National League for the Defence of Religious Freedom (LNDLR), issued its 'Manifesto to the Nation', offering such peace terms as a return to the 1857 Constitution minus its anti-clerical Laws of Reform and a proposal to buy out rather than expropriate large landowners. By the start of 1928, a full year into the organised Cristero revolt, the Cristeros proclaimed the substitution of the Revolutionary Constitution of 1917 with a theocracy based on divine right: "to God, King of the Universe, and to all Civilised Nations of the Earth" (Lombardo Toledana, 1990, pp. 30 & 57; Bailey, 1974, pp. 234-235; González Navarro, 2000, p. 411). The Cristero statelet carved predominantly out of parts of rural Jalisco and Zacatecas was placed in official mourning, puritanism pervaded all culture that was not liturgical, and as much as half of all revenue levied on civilians was dedicated to the war effort (González Navarro, 2001; Bailey, 1974). The Catholic statelet developed its political culture austerely. By 5 June 1928 a political convention ratified the constitution along with war aims in the form of the 'Ordenanza General del Movimiento Cristero' (Hernansáez, 2008; González Navarro, 2000).

But contested frontier areas were subjected to pillage thinly veiled by claims to create the kingdom of Christ on Earth. The famous cry of 'Viva Cristo Rey!', as Alfonso Gómez-Rossi has recently argued, originated in an affirmation of the recent Papal encyclical *Quas primas* (1925) regarding the eternity of the kingdom of Christ in the the wake of the downfall of so many royal houses since the First World War. But in insurgent mouths the cry transcended theology to sanctify acts of violence, to bond the Cristero brotherhood of arms, and above all to affirm the plebeian nature of Catholic counter-revolution vis-à-vis an often-anguished leadership (Gómez-Rossi, 2022). Most Mexican bishops were either neutral or opposed to the Cristero revolt and local priests mostly stayed out of the conflict. As Aurelio Acevedo recalled, "the very Fathers forbade us to fight for Christ, for the religion our fathers taught us and then reaffirmed for us in baptism, confirmation and our first communion" (Meyer, 2007, p. 70). This patriarchal void was in part filled by women, traditionally more devout in religious observance, and foreshadowed by the examples of female agency in Catholic resistance in the Vendée and Spain's War of Independence (Tone, 2007). Cristero activists often cited the counter-revolutionary example of the Vendée as inspiration. For women, who were mainly excluded from fighting roles, giving refuge to the refractory priests was an accessible way of acting against the Revolution. Women also smuggled ammunition and intelligence, sheltered fugitive Cristeros, hid sacred objects, and acted as nurses. (Vaca, 1998; Fallaw, 2013; Schell, 2007).

Cristero men, for their part, enacted the kingdom of Christ in violent ways. The rallying cry 'Viva Cristo Rey!' ushered victims into immortality, as the final words of Cristero militants facing firing squads attested, along with the promise of martyrdom to followers of the cause. A boy attending religious classes in the Cristero capital of Huejuquilla told his mother: "You know heaven, mummy? It's really easy to get there. All you need to do is shout 'Viva Cristo Rey!', and then they kill you" (de la Torre, 2020, p. 107). At the less exalted extreme the cry excused acts of pillage, hence the rhyme "Long Live Christ the King and bring me the best ox!" ('Viva Cristo Rey, traeme el mejor buey!'). A kind of "lay religion", to use Matthew Butler's (2009) phrase, emerged in response to anti-clericalism and secular culture (pp. 271-306). To this day the words carve out a conservative fiefdom in rural areas of Jalisco where the Hollywood-style letters 'Viva Cristo Rey' flaunt the hillsides in a new form of conservative mnemonics. Aurelio Acevedo, resentful of a post-

war Catholic historian's excoriation of the Cristeros as bandits, affirmed a type of lay religion. The Cristeros were not angels, but flesh and blood, yet "there was never a more restrained revolution or armed movement in history" (Lawrence, 2020, p. 26). Cristeros in thought and action resented being called fanatics and instead represented their political positions as a result of common sense and broadly shared intuitions. Since these truths were considered self-evident, they barely required further definition.

Lay religion in action

Aquinian just war theory, along with the Federal anticlericalism collapsing the distinction between criminality and respectability, emboldened Cristero fighters to take to the hills and to target the lives and property of suspected collaborators and beneficiaries of the Calles regime. The paradox of outlawry lay in the military utility of irregular tactics versus the insecurity they generated amongst the civilian support base. As Victoriano Ramírez, charismatic Cristero commander known as 'El Catorce', confided in his campaign memoirs: "we Cristeros suffered fewer losses than the other side because we offered combat in locations of our own choosing, and when these were not ideal, we took to the hills, because all the hills were our refuge" (Hernández Hurtado, 2009, p. 129). But the burden faced by civilians in their path, even when they were in sympathy, gave Cristero authorities repeated anxiety at how their rapacious troops turned communities neutral or even hostile to their cause. At the same time, the inability of the Cristeros to control railways or any reliable external lines of supply made the policy of 'living off the land' logical. To a large degree the rapacity affected predictable targets. As in the religious insurgencies of Napoleonic Europe, Cristeros occupying new settlements burned municipal archives and other public buildings representing state authority (Hernansáez, 2012).

But the burden presented to civilian communities by confiscation and impressment of men of military age was tolerated only when the Cristero side was mostly accepted as the legimitate and preponderate power. Indiscrimate violence against areas known to be loyal to the Federal government was the other extreme of irregular civil war.[3] The parts of Zacatecas state bordering the Cristero heartland in Jalisco were subjected to such protracted raids that the pro-government paramilitaries (Defensas) developed a strong morale based on a sense of armed revolutionary citizenship as much as hopes for awards of land as part of the Federal government's agro-military social pact. The gradual militarisation from 1927-29 of the Cristero irregulars under Enrique Gorostieta's supreme command did not alleviate the insecurity in disputed areas of control. By spring 1929 Cristero forces were on the offensive in most parts of the centre-west. But this success was caused largely by the withdrawal of most regular Federal army units to face down an uprising of disgruntled generals headed by Gonzalo Escobar. Revolutionary paramilitaries left behind continued to fight well, resolute in the knowledge that volunteers were more likely to be subjected to Cristero atrocities than conscripts. By the time the Escboar rebellion had been crushed, regular army units returned to bolster the beleaguered paramilitaries and force the Cristeros to agree an armistice largely on government terms (Fallaw, 2012).

The alienation of communities via violence from outsiders was even more developed further north-west in the indigenous regions of the state of Durango. Mexico's indigenous population for a long time was sidelined as being 'apolitical', either as defiant outsiders or as recipients of mestizo state-building (Lynch, 1991). More recent research has shown indigenous agency in revolutions and counterrevolutions, whether as allies of state-building, resisters or as factions in intra-indigenous conflict (de Jesús Torres Contreras, 2009; O'Hara, 2010, pp. 224-242). As Nathaniel Morris has recently shown, the dynamics of the conflict in the indigenous regions were far removed from the Catholic religiosity of legend. The nationwide closure of churches in summer 1926 and the exile of priests had barely any effect in indigenous areas of the Gran Nayar, especially amongst the Tepehuano (O'dam) tribe. Here there were either few or absolutely no priests to exile, and traditional authorities controlled the churches physically and spiritually, keeping them open throughout. Instead, inter-village conflicts during the 1920s and 30s were motivated by issues such as blood feuds, factional conflicts centred on land reform, the question of autonomy versus

the expanding regulation of the Mexican state, as well as general hatred of government schoolteachers. In the Sierra Tepehuana, Cristeros amnestied by the 'Arreglos' of 1929 were even charged by the State with the promotion of 'socialist education' under the Federal government's school reforms in the 1930s. In other communities, however, the same 'conservative' groups that had earlier backed the Cristero rebels once again opposed the compulsory education of their children in government schools, the imposition of revolutionary or nationalist symbols in spaces that represented their political and cultural autonomy, the state's attempts to turn the costumbre (traditions) that defined their lives into meaningless 'folklore,' the colonisation of their lands by mestizo settlers, and the support of local caciques for all of these threats (Morris, 2020).

The 'lay religion' of the indigenous Cristiada therefore amounted to a traditionalising defensive action against the Mexican state, in which tribes sometimes joined the momentum of the Cristero rebels, and sometimes that of the government, according to the needs of protecting their political and religious autonomy. Non-indigenous Cristeros, for their part, understood how the actions of outsiders ended any hopes of winning over non-committed indigenous to the holy cause. In June 1928 Cristero troops marching through the Tepehuano region of Huazamota (southern Durango) were reminded not to steal or kill cattle in their path, "otherwise what has already happened to the maize harvest will happen to meat" (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 58, 1 June 1928 letter from Juan Capistrano in Zacatecas to Quintanar in Huejuquilla). The pleas fell on deaf ears. Even after the armistice of 1929 armed bands continued to plague the Tepehuano region, creating local food shortages, and poisoining indigenous attitudes towards outside authorities and the stated policy of amnesty of wartime wrongdoers (Lawrence, 2020, p. 144).

Rebel policing of rebel wrongdoing

The activism of lay Catholics and Cristero militants in this wartime environment alienated religious authorities in ways which historians have already observed. Refugee priests striving to be inconspicuous resented the passionate Catholicism of their flocks, knowing that this could invite Federal reprisals or lead to unwelcome theological innovations. The cultivation of popular martyrs led to their pseudo-canonisation by lay religion, displacing the Catholic hierarchy even further (Vázquez Parada, 2012; Butler, 2004). But the Cristero authorities also resented the absence of religious counselling for young fighters on campaign. In spring 1928 one of the elite Cristero forces (Valparaíso regiment) operating in rural Zacatecas was bereft of priests to serve as chaplains. A Cristero activist wrote to the clandestine 'Venerable Episcopal Sub-Committee' in Mexico City pleading for priests to be assigned for the regiment's spiritual and moral needs. Previous appeals had fallen on deaf ears, and local priests shied away from joining the soldiers on campaign. Activist Aurelio Acevedo wrote: "If you do not grant us priests we shall have to lament the irredeemable degeneration of our soldiers to such a degree that they will no longer be a liberation army, but a gang of outlaws with all the attendant characteristics" (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 45, 17 March 1928 letter from Aurelio Acevedo).

The crisis had been obvious since the summer of 1927. The Federal government, anxious to suppress an insurgency which since the start of the year had escalated to a civil war, resorted to reconcentration mandates in areas permeated by Cristeros. Civilians in affected areas were issued with sometimes as much as several weeks' and sometimes as little as two days' notice to leave, often via unreliable airdrops of leaflets. The risk of reprisal in such front-line areas in Mexico's centre-west intimidated sympathisers with the Cristero cause from displaying open support. The reconcentration measures carried out by the Federal Army were glumly obeyed by Catholics in insurgent zones, with the well-to-do usually securing motorised transport and better lodgings in fortified cities ahead of the mass of the rural poor marching on foot. Anybody caught in the 'free fire' zones after the reconcentration order had expired could be shot on sight (Bailey, 1974). Any priests still present in targeted areas usually followed the reconcentration orders. Far from the fanatical priest-led bands of legend, few priests joined the Cristeros on campaign.

The lukewarm attitude of men of the Church troubled the Cristero leadership. The Huejuquilla authorities informed the commanders of the buccaneering Valparaíso regiment that priests throughout the centre-west were remaining in their own parishes. The only substantial offer of chaplains had arrived from Jesuits based abroad who "had written to us to come and seek martyrdom in Mexico" (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 91, 1 May 1928 letter from provisional govenrment at Huejuquilla to C-in-C of Valparaíso regiment). Cristero elites' faith in the correcting and moralising presence of priests appeared to have overlooked two decisive objections. First, priests themselves knew that they would be prominent targets for vengeful Federal forces in operation against Cristeros. In April 1927 foreign press reports of priests being used as human shields on troop trains vulnerable to ambush scandalised Catholic opinion in the USA (*New York Herald Tribune* April 28, 1927). Equally, Cristero combatants often resented the worthiness of priests in their midst. They condemned acts of pillage and blasphemy. They also tended to be easy hostages for Federal authorities to torture and interrogate in the event of being captured. The priest Norberto Reyes in the custody of the Federal authorities wrote to the commander of the Cristero Valparaíso regiment pleading with him to surrender his force. The commander replied that his men would "continue offering their lives for the holy cause", that all Mexico was against the tyrant Calles, and that he forgave the priest because "he was clearly uttering the words of his captors" (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 18, undated (1928) letter Valparaíso regiment commanders José Sánchez and Francisco de la Torre to priest Norberto Reyes).

Amidst all the pre-war Catholic homilies about charity and the rights of property, once the insurrection began in 1926, Cristero 'lay religion' amounted to confiscation. A kind of Cristero land reform reverted to the 'divine punishment' of robbing and expropriating landowners on the government side. Ironically, it was left to the marauding whims of Cristero soldiers to initiate land redistribution at gunpoint. Thus, a Colonel operating in the Valparaíso countryside (Zacatecas) authorised the redistribution amongst local landless labourers of confiscated land. But the rebel commander eschewed any Revolutionary justification: land would be awarded exclusively according to 'need', and only because it had been confiscated from absent members of the enemy Defensa Social (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 38, 25 February 1928 letter from Aurelio Acevedo). Anxieties about cross-infection of Revolutionary concepts commonly excoriated as 'theft' colour Cristero correspondence from the region. By April the provisional Cristero government at Huejuquilla (Jalisco) ordered a free corps called the 'Valparaíso regiment' to submit to Commander-in-Chief Gorostieta's formal military structure forthwith, because "it is not categorically forbidden to permit the existence of mobile free corps, knowing how in certain cases these have debilitated the public interest" (CESU, ARA, 3/4/14-17, Sección Militante Cristero, Subsección LNDLR, CD y CE, Serie: Propaganda, No. 56, April 1928 letter from Aurelio Acevedo). The Cristeros, like many religious insurgencies before and since, dissipated the appeal of their stated aims on the experience of their militancy.

Conclusion

The Mexican Revolution, according to a leading expert, "did not claim universal validity and it was not designed for export … it had no great intellectual founding fathers and was not utopian in any sense" (Knight, 2010, pp. 228-229). The 'this-worldliness' identified by Alan Knight also applies to the Cristero counter-revolution of the 1920s and 1930s. Notions of counter-revolution as a conscious political process, as advocated by Joseph de Maistre, or as a 'lay religion' encompassing passive resistance, as identified by Matthew Butler, do not fully explain the dynamic generated by violence in front-line areas of the Cristero insurgency. Armed Cristeros invading government-held areas pillaged and even killed according to a mix of self-righteousness whipped up by Catholic mobilisation, opportunism, and the patterns of 'logical violence' explained by Stathis Kalyvas. In doing these acts veterans thought they were part of a transcendent order righting wrongs and

making sense of the world. While revolutionaries introduced new principles for organizing society (based on abstract rational ideas), the Cristeros saw themselves as men of action relying on customary sources of political legitimacy, especially religion. As such their 'can-do' attitudes frequently alienated their own political leadership and embarrassed the Catholic hierarchy. They also poisoned attitudes amongst conservative civilian communities in their path, including indigenous regions who learnt to see the Soldiers of Christ as just another outside threat to be channelled or resisted. The Cristiada, discounting the ongoing narco wars, was Mexico's last plebeian revolt. It was hardly surprising that elites in military, clerical and political garb were so keen to agree an armistice over the heads of the Cristero fighters in 1929 and to demonize the second revolt of embittered diehards in the 1930s.

What, then, of the significance of a religious revolt almost a century ago to contemporary affairs? The ending of one-party rule in Mexico in 2000 represented something of a rebound for the Cristero worldview. The victorious campaign of President-Elect Vicente Fox openly flaunted the symbols and imagery of the Cristeros of the interwar period. Neither Mexican Revolutionaries nor Cristeros burdened themselves with too many international comparisons. Yet the military aspects of Mexico's 1920s and 1930s bear comparison to irregular conflicts elsewhere, from the Dutch suppression of holy war in Aceh (Indonesia) to the British Commonwealth defeat of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. The plebeian and terroristic features of Mexico's holy war sheds light on the low-key civil war ravaging parts of the country today. The narco war underway since 2006 is characterised by militarised policing by the Mexican state, and by a glamourised cult of narco strongmen replete with worship of the *Santa Muerte* and coercive control of populations in their sway.

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About the Author

Dr Mark Lawrence is Senior Lecturer in Military History at the University of Kent. He is known for his work on European, especially Spanish history, as well as Mexican history. His most recent book, *Anglo-Hispania beyond the Black Legend: British Campaigns, Travellers and Attitudes towards Spain since 1489*, was published by Bloomsbury in November 2023. He started his career at the University of Liverpool, and has since held positions at Sheffield, Newcastle, and a visiting position at the Universidad de Zacatecas. Lawrence is the author of several articles and books, including the award-winning *Spanish Civil Wars*, published by Bloomsbury in 2017 (published in Spanish as

Las guerras civiles españolas by Alianza in 2019). He is also author of *Spain's First Carlist War, 1833-1840* (Palgrave, 2014), of *Nineteenth-century Spain: a New History* (Routledge, 2019), and of *Fighting Cristeros* (Bloomsbury, 2020). He has edited a global history of guerrilla warfare and is currently completing a trans-Atlantic study of the Napoleonic Wars. Since 2019 he has been a co-editor of the Small Wars and Insurgencies journal. He is the creative director of a documentary on Mexico's Cristero Wars (La Cristiada - A Civil War: Think Kent Discovers Film and Panel - YouTube) and regularly discusses his research in international media outlets, including RTVE's La Historia de Cada Día.

Email: m.r.lawrence@kent.ac.uk
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5722-7503

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

The *Force Publique* and frontier warfare in the late 19th Century Congo Free State

Mario Draper
University of Kent

ABSTRACT

During the late 19th Century, the *Force Publique* of the Congo Free State (1878-1908) found itself engaged in almost continuous fighting. Its campaigns against indigenous peoples, mutineers, interloping African Empires, and wars of expansion against the Mahdists, constitute some of the most diverse examples of frontier warfare of the period. They nevertheless remain largely unknown compared to the colonial campaigns of Britain and France, despite offering similar lessons. This article will explore the means through which the *Force Publique* learnt from experience and developed a colonial military tradition independently – though with many degrees of similarity – from its colonial neighbours. In doing so, it will reflect on the degree to which there were inherent overlaps in European approaches to late 19th Century frontier warfare.

KEYWORDS

Congo Free State, *Force Publique*, Frontier conflict

CITATION

Draper, M. (2023). The *Force Publique* and frontier warfare in the late 19th Century Congo Free State. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 95-105. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.209

Background and context

Among the myriad colonial campaigns examined and distilled by historians, those conducted by the *Force Publique* of the Congo Free State (CFS) in the late 19th Century have tended to be overlooked.[1] Survey studies, such as Thomas Pakenham's *Scramble for Africa* (1992) and Bruce Vandervort's (1998) *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa*, devote a few lines to the major encounters of the period, but generally skirt around the military implications in favour of the diplomatic. This is hardly surprising given the nature of these undertakings. What is perhaps more surprising is that, except for a very limited number of specialised studies on the Congo-Arab War (1892-1894), there is next to no attempt to situate the *Force Publique*'s experience of frontier warfare within the wider sphere of colonial military art as developed in a British and French context.[2] Yet, the varied nature of its multifarious campaigns against opponents ranging from indigenous tribes to interloping African empires, and from wars of conquest to counter-insurgency operations, means there is ample opportunity for historians to draw useful comparisons.

Students of British and French colonial campaigns will be familiar with the strategic, operational, and tactical principles championed by the likes of Callwell and Lyautey – to name but two. 3 Their writings represented the supposed culmination of colonial military traditions that were decades, if not centuries, in the making. This gave aspiring officers in Britain and France a blueprint to follow, regardless of the many variables encountered on imperial service. The importance of offensive action, morale, flexibility, and preparation were thus ingrained. This provided a degree of familiarity with the rhythms of colonial warfare that facilitated a ready acclimatisation and the further propagation of approaches such as the 'tache d'huile' (oil stain); 'hearts and minds'; and 'butcher and bolt' (Beckett, 2001; Rid, 2010; French, 2011; Porch, 2013). Not all colonial powers enjoyed such ready-made traditions, a fact easily overlooked, both at the time and in subsequent scholarship. This article offers an insight into how counter-insurgency methods developed and were appropriated by newcomers to the field, demonstrating how professional/technical knowledge was (and can) be transferred across borders whilst equally being adapted to suit local conditions.

Establishment of the *Force Publique*

The *Force Publique* had only just been created by the time Callwell published his first treatise on colonial warfare in RUSI in 1887. It was established in the wake of the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, which recognised the personal rule of King Leopold II of Belgium over the CFS on the basis that it remained a free trade zone. The recruitment of an army capable of securing the borders of these 1 million square miles of territory was, therefore, a priority (Gondola, 2002). In time, the *Force Publique* grew from a humble 200 men in 1886 to 3,186 in 1891, and 19,026 in 1898, reflecting its increasing centrality in the pacification, exploitation, ejection, and expansion projects that made King Leopold II one of Europe's wealthiest men (Gann & Duignan, 1979).

Initially, the *Force Publique* relied on mercenaries from beyond its borders to fill its ranks. These so-called 'coastal volunteers' (mainly Haoussas, Liberians, and Zanzibaris) were soon joined by indigenous recruits until annual levies virtually obviated the need for foreigners altogether (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952). Throughout, preference for perceptibly loyal, reverent, and martial races – not dissimilar to British and French colonial recruitment practices – emerged (Military Report on the Congo Free State, 1904).[4] Haoussas were supposedly ferocious in battle, while Bangalas were more deferential (*Le Soir*, 5 August 1955). The Batetela were particularly favoured until three mutinies in 1895, 1897, and 1901 compelled the *Force Publique* to focus its recruitment efforts beyond the Lualaba-Kasai region (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952). Recruits were engaged for seven years and trained along European lines. Armed with the latest Albini precision rifles as well as Nordenfeldt and Krupp artillery pieces, they constituted a powerful military presence in the region.

Nevertheless, the *Force Publique* still found it expedient to raise local auxiliaries to support their military operations. Indigenous chiefs, keen to benefit from co-operation with the CFS (even if just temporarily) often provided thousands of men skilled in reconnaissance, pursuit, and local fighting methods. The Zappo-Zap and Ngongo Luteta's former 'Arab' Batetela are two good examples of such mutually-beneficial relations – that is until Ngongo's ill-advised summary execution for alleged atrocities in 1893 (Vincent, 2015; Draper, 2019).[5] These allies not only helped to redress the inevitable numerical shortfall of the *Force Publique* but offered greater tactical and operational flexibility that complemented the rigidity of their own Europeanised native forces. Often more difficult to control, auxiliaries were given freer rein when on expedition, conducting razzias and engaging in all manner of "dirty work" that the *Force Publique* preferred to ignore (Marechal, 1992, p. 234). In many ways, they served the same purpose as British and French native contingents in Asia and other parts of Africa and reflected an organic extenuation of what might be termed the irregular colonial military tradition (Spiers, 1992; Porch, 2013).

These native forces were commanded by a handful of white officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). The majority were, unsurprisingly, detached from the Belgian Army through the *Institut Géographique Militaire*, and benefitted from dual-pay for the duration of their time in Africa. Although imperial service was strictly 'ignored' in terms of metropolitan seniority, (as is further evident in the complexities of neutral Belgium loaning officers to a 'foreign' state), these men bore the unique distinction of having experienced active service, which did them no harm in the eyes of the king when it came to promotions (Draper, 2018). For those wishing to escape the trammels of European society and the boredom of sleepy garrison towns in Belgium, the allure of adventure and advancement in the Congo proved difficult to ignore (*Le Soir*, 5 August 1955). In total, the Belgian Army furnished 648 officers and 1,612 NCOs to the CFS between its founding in 1878 and its annexation by the Belgian government in 1908.

The presence of Scandinavians (126 officers and 25 NCOs between 1878 and 1914) and Italians (112 officers and 120 NCOs between 1885 and 1922), not to mention smaller numbers from elsewhere in Europe and the USA, completed its transnational composition (Gann & Duignan, 1979). Almost none of these officers and NCOs had any colonial military experience when they first set foot in Africa. What little they knew had been acquired through chance encounters and personal study. New arrivals were expected to learn on the job; often thrown in at the deep end on account of their dispersal in small numbers across the vast colony. When it is considered that there might only be, on average, around 350 white officers and NCOs in *Force Publique* service at any one time (for example, 122 in 1891 or 517 in 1913), it was not inconceivable that they might be split into groups of two or three and given a fair degree of autonomy and responsibility from an early stage in their colonial careers (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952). Of course, more experienced senior officials were on hand to offer guidance. Officers and NCOs did reengage for multiple tours in the Congo with, for example, individuals such as Baron Francis Dhanis (the hero of the Congo-Arab War come 1894 and the villain of the failed Nile expedition of 1897) being described as "an old African […] speaking all the languages of the country like they were his own" (*Le Soir*, 5 August 1955). Such local knowledge was an essential tenet in the strategic direction of the *Force Publique* as well as the administrative and commercial extension of the state apparatus it conveyed. After all, the environment in which it operated possessed innumerable challenges in terms of geography, climate, communications, and indigenous relations. Mastery of these elements could often be the difference between success or failure in military operations.

Challenges encountered and deaths beyond the battlefield

West Africa was long considered the white man's grave and proved to be a constant drain on human resources. The CFS was no different. Extremes in climate, challenging living conditions, and disease-carrying insects resulted in an annual mortality rate among officials of roughly 15% in 1890 (Gann & Duignan, 1979). In purely military terms, the mortality rate was much higher. Of the 2,260 Belgian officers and NCOs who served the CFS before 1908, 662 (or 29%) perished

whilst on imperial service (Vanderstraeten, 1985, p. 14). While deaths in battle contributed to this elevated figure, deprivation in terms of food and medicine during long and arduous expeditions often accounted for a much greater proportion of fatalities. Indeed, throughout the 1891/92 Vankerchoven expedition in the upper-Uele region, combat accounted for just one of the 18 European deaths. Of the remainder, two were killed in accidents and 15 died of sickness. This pattern repeated itself until the Mahdist campaigns around the turn of the century where, for the first time, deaths in battle outstripped all other causes (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952).

The key to limiting wastage was preparation; the absence of which could prove disastrous. Many an expedition came to a calamitous end due to poor planning, which usually manifested itself in an absence of adequate provisions. The most famous example befell the ill-fated Nile expedition of Baron Dhanis, whose 3,000-strong column mutinied in 1897 when on the verge of starvation after more than 100 days of exhausting marches through impenetrable and largely unknown rainforest (Janssens, 1979). On other occasions, the *Force Publique* was simply forced into action before adequate preparations could be made. Captain Michaux's initial counter-insurgency operations against the 1895 Lualuabourg mutineers were hampered by the meagre resources of the surrounding country. Not only had it been devastated by the recent Luba civil war (present day south-central Democratic Republic of Congo) and persistent Angolan slave runs, but the mutineers themselves effectively implemented a scorched earth policy as they traded space for time (De Boeck, 1987).

Topography, therefore, could prove equally as challenging as the climate. Situated, as the CFS was, in the heart of Africa and extending from the mouth of the Congo River in the west to Lake Tanganyika in the east, and from British and Portuguese possessions of Northern Rhodesia (present day Zambia) and Angola in the south to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (present day South Sudan and Sudan) and French Equatorial Africa (including present day Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, and Republic of Gabon) in the north, the lay of the land could vary enormously. From savannah to dense rainforest, bush country to swamps and mountains, this was a land of juxtapositions. Whereas some areas might provide an abundance of food that could sustain military operations with relative ease, others were completely devoid of it. Good communications, bases of operations, and friendly relations with the indigenous peoples were essential to overcoming these natural obstacles.

Whereas the Congo basin possessed some 10,000 miles of navigable waterways, overland communications were sorely lacking, particularly on the relatively unexplored peripheries of the colony. The importance, therefore, of controlling key intersections and river crossings became self-evident and was reflected in the number of European settlements at these points. Trading, military, and missionary stations could be found along most of the region's key arteries linking the state capital of Boma to Stanley Falls (Gondola, 2002). Dirt tracks and forest paths transacted the region and connected some local communities but roads, in a European sense, were virtually unknown. Railway construction, too, was limited, not least on account of its exorbitant cost. In the west of the colony, it took the best part of nine years to lay the first 300 kilometres of track linking Matadi to Leopoldville which served to circumvent the impassable rapids at Stanley Pool (TNA WO/33/316, Military Report on the Congo Free State, 1904). The movement of men, goods, and information took time and became a defining characteristic of military operations in the region.

Concentrating forces against an often-ephemeral foe, therefore, was no easy task. During the Congo-Arab War of 1892-1894, Dhanis, Chaltin, and Michaux worked hard to coordinate efforts against multiple threats emanating from the various Arab chiefs situated throughout the Maniema region. Although forced to operate independently on occasion to secure the initiative through offensive action, the ultimate aim was to consolidate disparate *Force Publique* detachments for more decisive action (Draper, 2019). Internal disputes between the Arab chiefs often prevented them from concentrating their forces fully, offering an unparalleled opportunity for the *Force Publique* to defeat them in detail and bring the war to a successful conclusion within three years (Marechal, 1992).

Of course, the concentration of manpower was only half the problem. Equally as important was access to stores and ammunition. Consequently, it is no surprise that military stations were targeted by the enemies of the CFS, particularly the Batetela rebels who possessed *Force Publique*-issued Albini rifles. Commandant Michaux expressed concern that the Lualuaborug mutineers had gained access to at least 25,000 cartridges from the outset of the revolt, which all but prevented him from launching an immediate counter-offensive (Michaux to Gillain, 6 July 1895, in Verbeken, 1958). It was, as he put it: "a whole new Arab war once again and this time even more serious than the first as they are now armed and ready" (Michaux to Gillain, 6 July 1895, quoted in Verbeken, 1958, pp. 68-69). Likewise, the sheer size of Dhanis' expedition to the Nile in 1897 afforded the mutineers access to 3,000 rifles and over 300,000 cartridges (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952). This not only enabled them to keep State forces at bay for years but equally to exacerbate the violence of internecine wars through employment as guns-for-hire. In the end, denial of materiel resources – in the absence of any other strategic target of value – proved as effective in defeating the disparate groups of Batetela mutineers as did military force. Still, it took more than 25 engagements and cost the lives of 20 Europeans and thousands of Africans before the final remnants of the Ndirfi mutiny surrendered to Captain Anderson near Lake Tanganyika in 1901 (Janssens, 1979).

Firepower and the Development of a Colonial Doctrine

Firearms and their use were a key component of frontier warfare in the CFS. The introduction of firearms into sub-Saharan Africa dated back to the 17th Century through contact with European traders. Over time, the monopolisation of violence through ready access to increasingly potent weapons, as well as a rudimentary domestic industry that manufactured or at least modified existing pieces, contributed to a veritable military revolution between competing militaristic societies (Reid, 2012). As such, the introduction of direct European influence at the point of a gun simply accelerated processes already well underway in the region and contributed to an escalation of gunpowder politics – i.e. the use of armed force to settle local issues (Macola, 2016). When coming to blows with enemies, therefore – be they indigenous rebels, *Force Publique* mutineers, Zanzibari Arabs, or the Mahdists – firearms were a common feature. Indeed, it is recognised that by the late 19th Century, the use of firearms had been incorporated into tactics across the board.

A training manual from 1904 entitled *Les marches et le combat* recorded several precedents faced by the *Force Publique*, which are worth exploring in detail. One of these concerned Chaltin's pacification operations in the Uele region against the Azande chiefs Bili and Ndoruma in the spring of 1896. On 5 April, his 500-strong column, supported by Avungura spearmen, engaged an enemy force estimated to be several thousand strong:

> Ndoruma's troops were divided in a large number of companies. Each company comprised five or six ranks of spearmen and archers, preceded by a rank of marksmen. The men armed with guns fired two or three rounds, before throwing themselves to the ground. Three ranks of spearmen launched themselves at us; if they were repulsed or killed, the marksmen were again called into action before more spearmen hurled themselves forward once more; in the event of defeat, the marksmen were the first to flee the field in order to take up positions in the rear to cover the retreat of the remaining spearmen. (Les marches et le combat, 1904, quoted in Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952, pp. 317-318)

While demonstrating a great degree of sophistication through the integration of firearms with other weapons, the outcome proved catastrophic: 500-600 dead against six killed and 21 wounded for the *Force Publique* (Les marches et le combat, 1904, in Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952, pp. 317-318). The concentrated fire and the rigid discipline of a European square formation wreaked havoc on the serried ranks of the Azande who, in the opinion

of Guy De Boeck (1987) suffered not from primitive weapons or tactics but, like many other African forces, simply a failure to discern the intentions and tactics of their opponents before it was too late (p. 29).

Les marches et le combat equally referenced other indigenous groups who made heavy use of firearm power. The Enguettra revolt in the northeast of the colony around the turn of the century resulted in numerous engagements in which the *Force Publique* faced their own previously captured rifles. On 25 February 1900, Commandant Verstraeten's column made contact.

> A veritable storm of projectiles rained down on us, and, immediately thereafter, the enemy who was in the process of enveloping us, fiercely rushed all sides of our square. We ordered rapid fire which the four platoons, who maintained perfect order, calmly executed. More than once, the assailants faltered, but resumed their attacks again and again, and only retired after being repulsed each time with great losses. (*Les marches et le combat*, 1904, quoted in *Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique*, 1952, pp. 484-485).

One final engagement a few days later was enough to elicit a surrender. The defensive power of the *Force Publique*'s squares, once again, proved decisive.

Time and again it demonstrated that, with adequate training, supplies, and discipline, a numerically inferior *Force Publique* expedition would almost always emerge victorious. Be it in the use of square formations, concentrated firearm use, or the adoption of adequate precautions when marching and in camp, the basis of a CFS military art in frontier warfare was beginning to emerge. If anything, it built on the articles beginning to appear in *La Belgique Militaire* and the well-received publication *L'art militaire au Congo* by Colonel Albert Donny (1897).[6] The approach to frontier warfare was a mixture of operational aggression to seize the initiative and, where possible, tactical defence to maximise the *Force Publique*'s key strength of concentrated and disciplined firearm power. Another entry in *Les marches et le combat* stressed this point when referencing the campaigns against the irrepressible Budja people. Situated between the Mongala and Congo Rivers, they had proven to be a perennial thorn in the CFS' side since the early 1890s. A series of punitive expeditions produced unsatisfactory results, not least due to a series of well-executed ambushes, one of which even succeeded in breaking a *Force Publique* square (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952, p. 480). More pacification efforts towards the turn of the century produced better results, such as Verdussen's second expedition in late 1900.

> Around 9 o'clock, three shots were fired by the scouts, who hurried back, followed at the double by a large number of spearmen. The vanguard hastily took up its position in the first platoon. The natives, who had advanced *en masse* to within ten metres of the platoon, were repulsed having inflicted a few casualties. The white officers had great difficulty to restrain their men who wished to throw themselves in pursuit. We held them back, anticipating another native attack, which came a few minutes later; this one was again repulsed by the sustained and accurate fire of the first platoon. The battle had lasted seven minutes. (*Les marches et le combat*, 1904, in *Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique*, 1952, p. 482)

Convincing though this action was, tactical victories did not always produce operational or strategic results. The following year, the Mardulier expedition was launched against the same foe and succeeded in capturing 500 firearms and a great quantity of ammunition, yet the region was not completely pacified until 1905.

Heavier firepower, in the form of artillery and machine guns, could also produce rapid results and built upon European ideas of claiming the moral and psychological advantage in battle. Although few in number, 75mm Krupp, 47mm Nordenfeldt mountain guns, and Maxim machine guns appeared in the Congo in ever greater numbers from the 1880s onwards. Reports suggest that a good many of these pieces were used to strengthen the defences of key military stations rather than in offensive action. Nevertheless, there was an increasing need for heavier firepower, such as these, to be taken on an expedition (Report to the King on the political and military

measures taken to bring about the repression of the slave trade in the territories of the State, circa1888; Janssens, 1979). This was to counter the earthworks and palisaded fortifications the *Force Publique* frequently encountered, known either as 'Bomas' or 'Zeribas' depending on the opponent. During the Congo-Arab War, artillery proved effective in dislodging Rumaliza's forces from their defensive Bomas by setting them ablaze (Auguste Théophile Léon Rom, n.d). However, there were equally times when defensive works proved too difficult to breach resulting in protracted sieges or murderous storming operations (Letter from Captain Jacques to the Director of the Societé Antiesclavagiste, 9 May 1894; Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique. 1952). Elsewhere, Lieutenant Wtterwulghe's defeat in a battle against the Mahdists in 1894 was as much a result of his Nordenfeldt jamming as it was the flight of his Ukwa auxiliaries (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique. 1952).

At times, it proved more expedient to eschew firearm power in favour of the *arme blanche*. Edgard Cerckel, the last surviving Belgian witness to the Congo-Arab War, recounted in a 1952 newspaper how Dhanis often favoured charging the Arabs with fixed bayonets rather than engaging with them with firearms. Not only did this help conserve precious ammunition but, if circumstances allowed, a rush with cold steel could result in a more decisive victory given the enemy's propensity to melt away before a proper battle could take place (*Le Soir*, October 1952). For Émile Lémery this was the very crux of frontier warfare as he experienced it. In a letter to his mother in December 1893, he wrote the self-glorifying words: "Here, it is not a question of tactical operations […] It is the *élan* which the white man imparts to his men, by launching himself forward, that inspires them to a furious attack" (Marechal, 1992, p. 240). He reiterated the sentiment in 1955 recollecting how "Nothing can stop the force of the *élan*; either everyone dies or ends up victorious. It is this savage and spontaneous attack, which, throughout this campaign, has been our strength" (*Le Soir*, 5 August 1955).

While almost certainly written with a degree of romantic bluster, it was precisely this hot-headedness that *Les marches et le combat* sought to temper. Too many expeditions had come to an ignominious end on account of officers' inexperience or blind faith in the superiority of European arms. Among those to pay the ultimate price was Lieutenant Bucquoy, whose expedition against the Budja in 1891 was essentially wiped out by an ambush at Yamikele (Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique, 1952, p. 478). Four years later, negligence forced Captain Francqui to abandon his expedition on Bahr-el-Ghazal when the vanguard, under the command of Lieutenant Frennet, was found to have been marching without loaded weapons and overrun by a surprise attack (*Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique*, 1952, pp. 308-309). Come 1897, it was Lieutenant Burke who fell victim to laxity. Having searched without success, a party of Lualuabourg mutineers were finally sighted near Goie-Kabamba between the Kabongo and Lualaba lakes. Rather than properly reconnoitre the area or await reinforcements, the American launched his 100-strong force straight into a trap that cost him and 25 of his men their lives (De Boeck, 1987).

Knowing the country as well as they did, indigenous opponents routinely held an advantage beyond the established field of battle. More mobile than a *Force Publique* column – which routinely swelled to four or five times the number of active troops on account of the women, children, boys, and porters that accompanied it – ambushes were the most dangerous feature of frontier warfare in the Congo (De Boeck, 1987). This was particularly the case in difficult terrain when columns were strung out. The enemy would prey on stragglers or seek to defeat smaller sections of the expedition in detail such as the vanguard and rear-guard, which could be well distanced from the main body of troops. Equally, under the cover of darkness, unsupervised or ill-prepared camps offered enticing targets.

To counter this, the *Force Publique* established precautionary procedures for troops on the march. Michaux, for instance, organised his columns against the Batetela rebels by splitting his troops into six companies. One of these was comprised of loyal long-service regulars which acted as the commander's personal bodyguard and mobile reserve. The other five companies rotated daily between roles: the vanguard; in the main body; as porter protection; and in the rear-guard. A system was introduced that grouped men in fours, with numbers one and three responsible for

observational duties to the right and two and four to the left as they passed through dangerous territory or thick forest. When they were available, auxiliaries were used as scouts and flanking protection. What is interesting to note is the observation made by Lieutenant Gloire in 1897 that the Ndirfi rebels from Dhanis' column utilised a similar system (*Deuxième Section de l'État-Major de la Force Publique*, 1952).

In the event of attack, the rear-guard was to take-up the most defensible position it could find. The porters were to make for this group as quickly as possible, using their stores to build a make-shift barricade before laying down to clear the field of fire (De Boeck, 1987). Upon selecting a site for camp, four flags were placed at each corner, designating the extent of its boundaries within which each company knew their position. The vanguard faced the front: behind them was the company who were to take their place the next day. Company no. 3 faced right, no. 4 left, and no. 5 behind. The veterans company formed a circle in the centre around the commander's tent and the stores. Elements of company no. 2 were tasked with guarding the camp beyond its perimeters. The other companies were tasked with clearing 100 metres' worth of open space around the camp, collecting the branches and forming a mini redoubt which was fortified with earth from the digging of a trench. The camp had only one entrance and was guarded by a picket. Sentries were also stationed around the perimeter and were overseen by white officers or NCOs throughout the night. Any sentry found asleep on duty was stripped of his rank the next day and reduced to the status of a porter for the remainder of the campaign. While sound enough in theory, in practice mistakes and oversights could rarely be entirely avoided. Even one of Michaux's camps was penetrated by a surprise attack, resulting in a chaotic battle to eject the assailants (De Boeck, 1987).

Conclusion: Independent colonial military tradition

As with frontier and colonial warfare elsewhere in the world, there was no one solution or fool-proof method to achieve success. Instead, a broad set of principles revolving around preparation, adaptability, and common sense tended to inform best practice. Over time, this could be passed down between successive generations of colonial officers or codified in publications and training manuals. This is how militaries have processed learning and continue to do so today. They distil best practice from recent experience and adopt it from elsewhere when appropriate. In the case of the *Force Publique*, such publications were comparatively sparse compared to their British and French imperial neighbours. Nevertheless, a corpus of material did emerge, and with it, important lessons could be drawn from a wide variety of campaigns. Through trial and error, the *Force Publique* emerged as a successful proponent of frontier warfare. That it did so is no real surprise given the inherent materiel and other advantages enjoyed by European or Europeanised forces. That it did so organically and without a colonial military tradition of note behind it is, perhaps, a far more curious development.

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About the Author

Born and bred in Belgium to British parents, Mario came over to the UK to pursue his undergraduate degree in War Studies at the University of Kent, with his dissertation focusing on Irish regiments in the British Army during the First World War. Following this, he attended St Catherine's College, Oxford, for his Master of Studies (MSt) in Modern British and European History, taking the first steps towards a focus across the Channel with a dissertation entitled 'Anglo-Belgian Military Co-operation 1906-1914'. Mario returned to Kent to pursue his PhD on 'The Belgian Army, Society and Military Cultures, 1830-1918', and now holds a post as a Lecturer in the School of History teaching undergraduate and postgraduate military history modules. Mario has broad research interests that include British, Irish and European military history in the 19th and 20th centuries. More specifically, his interests lie in the links between armies and societies at all levels, but particularly with relation to national and regional identities.

Email: m.a.draper@kent.ac.uk
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7240-343X

Endnotes

[1] The *Force Publique* was the Congo Free State's (later Belgian) colonial army. Established in 1885, it recruited locally but was commanded by a handful of European officers and non-commissioned officers.

[2] For the most detailed account of the Congo-Arab War, see Marechal, P. (1992) De 'Arabische' Campagne in het Maniema-Gebied (1892-1894) Situering Binnen het Kolonisatieproces in de Onafhankelijke Kongostaat. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale. See also, Draper, M. (2019) The Force Publique's campaigns in the Congo-Arab War, 1892-1894. Small Wars & Insurgencies, 30(4-5), 1020-1039. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2019.1638553

[3] On the most recent influence of Callwell see Whittingham, D. (2020). Charles E. Callwell and the British Way in Warfare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and on the influence of Galliéni and Lyautey see Porch, D. (1986). Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The Development of French Colonial Warfare. In Paret, P. (Ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 376-407. See also Callwell, C.E. (1896). Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice. London: HMSO, Reprinted by Oregon: Watchmaker Publishing, (2010); & Lyautey, H. (1900). 'Du rôle colonial de l'armée', Revue des deux mondes (15 January, 1900).

[4] On martial race theory, see Streets, H. (2010). Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[5] For alternative spellings of the name see, Gordon, D.M. (2014). 'Interpreting Documentary Sources on the Early History of the Congo Free State: The Case of Ngongo Luteta's Rise and Fall', History in Africa. 41, pp. 17-18. https://doi.org/10.1017/HIA.2014.6

[6] See, for example, La Belgique Militaire, 1052, 31 May 1891 & 1136, 15 January 1893.

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

The search for truth: Filming the battle of Meewah

Daniel Maddock
Margaret Baguley
Martin Kerby
Alison Bedford
University of Southern Queensland

ABSTRACT

The Battle of Meewah (One Tree Hill) was fought just outside the city of Toowoomba in September 1843. The battle constituted the first major setback to European settlement in Queensland, though it slowed rather than halted the dispossession of First Nations' people. It offers an invaluable insight into the 'Aboriginal way of war' and challenges the widespread perception that First Nation's peoples were the passive victims of colonial expansion. The battle is the subject of a currently in-production documentary film with the working title *The Battle of Meewah*. For this documentary the filmmakers have developed a new approach to documentary film authorship that aligns more deeply with Indigenous story telling culture rather than the Western sole-authorship model.

KEYWORDS

Auteurism, Cinema, Documentary, Frontier Wars, Yarning Circle.

CITATION

Maddock, D., Baguley, M., Kerby, M., & Bedford, A. (2023). The search for truth: filming the battle of Meewah. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 106-119. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.210

Introduction

In September 1843 a number of Australian First Nations' peoples from the Darling Downs region, in the Australian state of Queensland, defeated colonial settlers and pastoralists in the Battle of Meewah (One Tree Hill) just outside the city of Toowoomba (Kerkhove & Uhr, 2019). First Nations warriors were led by Multuggerah, a member of the Jagerra nation who united warriors from across different tribes in order to successfully conduct a pitched battle, a rare event in both form and outcome (Burke et al., 2021). Multuggerah's use of terrain and military intelligence, his understanding of logistics evident in the decision to conduct ambushes on the key transportation route between Moreton Bay and the Darling Downs, his use of deception, and a carefully planned withdrawal, all bear the hallmarks of a skilfully conducted, though ultimately unsuccessful guerrilla war. For though the battle constituted the first major setback to European settlement in Queensland, the dispossession of First Nations' peoples was slowed rather than halted. Nevertheless, the battle does offer an invaluable insight into the 'Aboriginal way of war' as it was practised during the Frontier Wars and thereby challenges the widespread perception that First Nation's peoples were the passive victims of colonial expansion.

The Friends of Multuggerah, a community-based group established to celebrate the endurance and resilience of local Aboriginal people and culture and operating under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba organise an annual commemoration service for the battle which is held in Toowoomba. This battle and how it is remembered is the subject of a currently in-production documentary film titled *The Battle of Meewah*. By telling this story through the medium of documentary film the authors explore a new approach to documentary film authorship. This approach aligns more deeply with Indigenous story telling culture rather than the Western sole-authorship model, which is usually described by cinema theorists as auteurism (Nelmes, 2012).

Historical context

In 1968 William Stanner (2020) coined the phrase the 'great Australian silence' to describe the pervasive "cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale" that has ignored the less celebratory aspects of the nation's history, notably European "invasion and systemic massacres" (p. 120). The silence that Stanner so eloquently challenged has until recently obscured the extent to which a war was waged on the Australian frontier between 1788 and 1928, one which led to the death of 22,000 men, women, and children, 20,000 of them Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders killed either in official or non-official actions. Yet even the casualty figures are a cause for some dispute. Raymond Evans and Robert Ørsted-Jensen (2014) argue that the real number of First Nation's deaths was in fact in excess of 65,000 in the state of Queensland alone, which also has the unwanted distinction of being the site of the greatest number of white victims than any Australian colony. The proof that a war was fought on the Australian frontier is, however, both extensive and compelling, ranging from material held in archives in major cultural institutions in Australia and Great Britain to oral histories in Indigenous communities. White settlers and political and military figures described, often with a "disturbing candour … violence [which] was very widespread, well-orchestrated and committed continent-wide from occupation until far into the 20th century" (Daley, 2014, para. 7).

Over the past decade, there has been significant progress made in mapping of the sites of atrocities perpetrated during the Frontier Wars (Burke et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2013-2022; Sweeting & Krichauff, 2022). Henry Reynolds lauded these efforts but nevertheless argued that a new mode of historical research into Australia's Frontier Wars was required, one which moved beyond the 'massacre' narrative:

> Up until now, Aborigines have typically been seen as victims and consequently either pitied or disregarded … The common emphasis on the brutality of the frontiersmen and their racial animus might be understandable, but it leaves out the determining character of Indigenous initiative… Mass killing of the kind in question normally occurred during periods of enhanced conflict. Aboriginal bands in such circumstances cannot be considered as unarmed civilians … It is clearly time to move beyond the idea that the Aborigines were victims whose fate was simply to suffer and to die. (Reynolds, 2020, paras. 13 - 16)

Reynolds explored this argument in his seminal *The Other Side of the Frontier,* first published in 1981. It has been only relatively recently that other historians have built on this scholarship, with Reynolds noting in particular the work of Clayton-Dixon et al. (2020) and Kerkhove and Uhr (2019). Subsequently, with Nicholas Clements, Reynolds produced Tongerlongeter – First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero (2022) – a work which likewise demonstrates the success of First Nations' resistance. Other works continue to appear, most recently Ray Kerkhove's How They Fought (2023), a groundbreaking exploration of Indigenous tactics and weaponry.

The relative paucity of historical scholarship is further compounded by the difficulty in accurately reconstructing 'site histories' of key affrays and skirmishes. In many cases, the 'landscape' of war – the exact nature and location of sites, and the manner in which a conflict 'played out' – is contested (Litster & Wallis, 2011). The problem is further compounded by the debates over whether Indigenous-settler confrontations were ever actually (Contos, 2000; Evans & Thorpe, 2001; Harris, 2010; Ryan, 2013; Statham, 2003) and the lack of understanding of how traditional Aboriginal warfare functioned. Some of these deficiencies are currently being corrected (Allen & Jones, 2016; Darmangeat, 2019; Kerkhove & White, 2022; White & Kerkhove, 2020). Moreover, a growing number of historians now acknowledge frontier war 'battles' (Clements, 2014; Coulthard-Clark, 1998; Gapps, 2018; Kerkhove & Uhr, 2019).' This has been supported by the Australian War Memorial's recent—and one suspects reluctant—recognition of the Frontier Wars and the associated massacres. The Memorial's governing council has after much delay committed itself to embarking on a "much broader, a much deeper depiction and presentation of the violence committed against Indigenous people, initially by British, then by pastoralists, then by police, and then by Aboriginal militia" (Knaus, 2022, para. 3). There is also renewed awareness of the importance of reconstructing sites locally (Cole, 2004). However very few sites have been thoroughly assessed with regards to their logistics, number of casualties and other factors. This inhibits a proper understanding of how individual battles or skirmishes unfolded and prevents them being properly commemorated. Reynolds (2020) is nevertheless encouraged by the fact that these scholars have, in his estimation, established "beyond reasonable doubt that the resistance by Aboriginal people was well planned, persistent and carried through with courage and determination" (para. 20). Technologies such as virtual reality are also beginning to provide important opportunities to represent the "arts, cultural stories, heritage, traditional knowledge and histories of First Nation people using new, immersive and interactive technologies" which include "interactions between first settlers and traditional peoples" (Trundle, 2020, paras. 1-2).

Battle of Meewah

The Battle of Meewah (One Tree Hill) was the culmination of a series of events which took place over several years between pastoralists and the local First Nations peoples on whose land they were increasingly beginning to encroach. In particular, the poisoning of over fifty First Nations peoples at Kilcoy Station using flour laced with strychnine made further violence inevitable. The First Nations leader, Multugerrah, united the different tribes and began ambushing the drays carrying food supplies and produce. The disruption of the main road that connected the settlers at the top of Toowoomba's escarpment with other large settlements at the bottom threatened the survival of white settlement in the area. To protect their drays from Multugerrah's attacks the settlers organised for them to be accompanied by armed guards. On 12 September 1843, 18 armed

men guarding three drays dragged by as many as 50 bullocks fled when they were stopped by a hundred of Multuggerah's warriors on a steep and boggy stretch of the road that cut through thick bush. They returned with a party of between 35 and 50 men who engaged the warriors in a pitched battle the next day. Having been taken by surprise by the arrival of the settlers, Multugerrah's warriors retreated up the mountain. They threw spears and rolled boulders on their pursuers, and though they inflicted wounds and injuries, they did not kill any of the settlers, though they took an unspecified number of casualties in return.

As journalist David Marr has indicated, the exact details of the battle were never clear but the cultural narrative and embarrassment to the European settlers was keenly felt.

> How many died on either side that day has never been clear. Perhaps none. Before it was forgotten, the Battle of One Tree Hill was celebrated in newspaper reports, books, and heroic bush ballads not as a bloodbath but a humiliating defeat of the pastoralists at the hands of the blacks. (Marr, 2019)

The response was as predictable as it was bloody. Eventually, about 75 to 100 settlers, including among their number most of Moreton Bay's soldiers and police, forced the First Nations peoples from the area and subsequently killed many of them in the Lockyer Valley area. Five years of attacks and raids followed, but First Nations resistance served only to delay the dispossession of Multuggerah's people.

The documentary format

Although contemporary audiences may well characterise documentaries as the binary opposite of fictional narratives, from the very birth of film, the extent to which moving images are capable of conveying objective truth has dominated scholarly discussion (Nichols, 2010; Plantinga, 2005). It was an issue that also came to dominate the planning and filming of the documentary *The Battle of Meewah*, a process further complicated by the demands of the collaborative process (Baguley et al., 2021) and the need to respectfully present Indigenous ways of knowing through Western conceptions of historical research.

The first sustained scholarly discussion of documentary film was written in 1898 by Bolesław Matuszewski, a pioneering Polish cinematographer involved with the Lumière brothers and others associated with the birth of cinema. *Une nouvelle source de l'histoire* (Eng. A New Source of History) and *La photographie animée* (Eng. Animated Photography) are recognised as the first film manifestos to consider the historical and documentary value of film (MacKenzie, 2014). Matuszewski argued that "animated film" had the capacity to document and archive visual material more powerfully than other communication mediums by providing "a direct view of the past" (Matuszewski quoted in Chapman, 2013). The growing field of cinema aesthetics and an awareness of how the form could be used to manipulate meaning through images and sound ensured that Matuszewski's claims to the "incontestable and absolute truth" of film (Matuszewski et al., 1995) were not universally accepted, even at the time of writing, and are now thoroughly discredited. Nevertheless, over subsequent decades "the question has been raised again and again whether and to what extent it would be possible to use film as a way of documenting contemporary history" (Terveen quoted in Chapman, 2013).

Early recognition that documentary film offered an incomplete, and perhaps mutilated truth, has never been fully resolved, either in academic or popular circles. Bill Nichols, widely regarded as the most significant documentary film scholar in the world (Aitken, 2006; Bruzzi, 2002), acknowledged this tension when he noted that the documentary is "a filmmaking practice, a cinematic tradition, and mode of audience reception [that remains] a practice without clear boundaries" (Grant & Sloniowski, 2013). Indeed, as Shapiro has observed, documentary "straddles the categories of fact and fiction, art and document, entertainment and knowledge" (Shapiro, 1997). It is evident therefore that the filmic representation is itself not the real object and is an interpretation of the reality made by the author/s (Maddock, 2021). For whatever their

claims to authenticity, documentary makers are in essence expressing a point of view. As Morin claimed, the very nature of the cinema form can only lead to a director's representation: "there are two ways to conceive of the cinema of the Real: the first is to pretend that you can present reality to be seen; the second is to pose the problem of reality" (Morin quoted in Lee-Wright, 2010, p. 93).

If the author's touch is an inescapable part of creation, as the makers of *The Battle of Meewah* have found, the question of how it can be harnessed to make a documentary appear truthful becomes the defining question of any project. The framework of ethical principles for documentary filmmaking created by the influential Center for Media and Social Impact at the American University is framed by this imperative. The documentary maker, in their view, should create work that is a reflection of what they understand to be true and real, but which would withstand critical scrutiny if they told their viewers where and how they accessed their images (Aufderheide et al., 2009). Such a requirement demands that the documentary maker and the viewer should agree that the same thing occurred despite the fact the former was present at the real event and the latter only experiences a mediated version of it. How far the documentary maker is prepared to go in this mediation is a complex issue. Jill Godmilow, an American documentary filmmaker, takes one extreme, suggesting that eschewing emotive filmmaking for a strategy of "under-representation and Brechtian reconstruction" leads to a raw truth, "cold facts and hard reality" (Godmilow, 1999). In contrast, Werner Herzog (2021) suggested the 'fly-on-the-wall' approach should be discarded in favour of shaping the "ecstatic truth to tell a beautiful and brilliant story". These contrasting views highlight the complexity of any engagement with the 'truth' of a story via a film documentary. This is also complicated by filmmakers often working with people they have chosen and therefore "typically see themselves as stewards of the subjects' stories" (Aufderheide et al., 2009, p. 7). Alternatively, some filmmakers believe that deceit is appropriate when documenting politically or economically corrupt acts, which often includes the subject "taking advantage of other people or when they are so completely convinced of their rightness, they would be happy with their portrayal" (Aufderheide et al., 2009, p. 8). These types of decisions are made by the filmmaker usually during the editing process as there is a widely held belief that they should "do no harm" and "protect the vulnerable" (Aufderheide et al., 2009, p. 6). Some theorists suggest authorial ideologies such as auteurism, which credits the director with everything from the film's storyline to the techniques used through the filming, thereby unnaturally elevate the director's place within a production (Gerstner & Staiger, 2003). The film critic André Bazin claimed Western art, which included cinema, evolved toward a personalisation, something clearly out-of-step with other world cultures (Caughie, 1981), including those of Indigenous people, whose commitment is to the group not individual recognition.

Authorship and protocols

Although the documentary filmmaker is telling another person's story, it remains that person's story to share. It is therefore presumptuous for a director to consider themselves the only author of consequence to the filmmaking process, narrative, and viewer (Grant, 2008). Gerstner and Staiger (2013) therefore define authorship for cinema as a "mutual connection" explaining that writers, directors, and producers create the work whilst cinematographers, editors, and animators (amongst others) create the world that viewers perceive as the work (p.12). This partnership approach to authorial control allows for a more truthful, democratic, and clear point-of-view to be presented to the audience. For First Nations Australians this is a very important step toward Truth Telling. As truth has long been hidden or obscured or presented entirely from a colonial perspective, Truth Telling has become one of the key processes for reconciliation in many countries where historical colonisation has severely and adversely impacted indigenous peoples (Wright, 2021). In terms of authorship, Indigenous cultural heritage is communally owned because many generations of Indigenous people "may contribute to the development of an item of knowledge or tradition" (Janke, 2009, p. 6).

As Janke (2009) highlights, although the medium of film can promote perspectives and advance understanding, Indigenous people have also been exploited by filmmakers. This has included having Indigenous cultural heritage "appropriated without proper consultation or sufficient acknowledgment" and stereotypical perspectives that "demean Indigenous cultural beliefs" (p. 4). As the issues paper titled *Towards a Protocol for Filmmakers working with Indigenous content and Indigenous Communities* states:

> Non-Indigenous filmmakers who want to portray Indigenous stories must take responsibility for finding out about the cultures they are representing. Filmmakers often don't respect the authenticity of stories and cultural materials. Yet Aboriginal audiences can pick out the false cultural references, for instance, where the names and languages are not from the particular area and the stories and the dances are wrong. It's like putting a plastic bag in an English period film. (Janke & Australian Film Commission: Indigenous Unit, 2003, p. 9)

This includes respect for sacred sites and materials as under First Nations customary laws some images and knowledge are not to be made accessible to the public, or may be gender-specific, and therefore only to be engaged with by initiated men and (Janke & Australian Film Commission. Indigenous, 2003, p. 11).

The Australian *Pathways & Protocols* (Janke, 2009) filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts is underpinned by two key principles:

- Respect for Indigenous culture and heritage, including recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, maintenance of cultural integrity and respect for cultural beliefs; and
- Respect for Indigenous individuals and communities.

This respect for Indigenous individuals, communities, culture, and heritage is also embraced in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research, 2020). Research which includes Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs) such as filmmaking is underpinned by four principles that strengthen ethical and responsible research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These include:

- Indigenous self-determination (recognition and respect; engagement and collaboration; informed consent; cultural capability and learning);
- Indigenous leadership (Indigenous led research; Indigenous perspectives and participation; Indigenous knowledge and data);
- Impact and value (benefit and reciprocity; impact and risk);
- Sustainability and accountability (Indigenous land and waters; ongoing Indigenous governance; reporting and compliance). (p. 10).

The principles of this code which apply to people working with Australian First Nations people, including documentary filmmakers, are underpinned by the value of integrity, which at its heart "depends on the values and integrity of researchers and institutions" (AIATSIS, 2020, p. 11). The documentary film maker is located at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) which has 40 years of involvement in First Nations' peoples higher education. It was therefore important to consider the Institution's approach. Professor Tony Dreise, a descendent of the Guumilaroi and Euahlayi First Nations of north-west New South Wales and south-west Queensland, was the inaugural Deputy Vice Chancellor for First Nations Education and Research. He was instrumental in developing the blueprint (2022-2025) which underpins UniSQ's approach to working with First Nations people, noting that "First Nations people are critically important to the very identity, spirit and culture of our University and region" (UniSQ, 2022, para. 4). The blueprint also aligns with the AIATSIS Code of Ethics noting that "research at UniSQ will be underpinned by cultural protocls,

provide tangible benefit to First Nations, and be led or co-led by First Nations people" (UniSQ, 2022a, p. 4).

This therefore necessitated an approach to filming the Meewah documentary that was based on the establishment of prior relationships, clear notification to First Nations participants of the aims and purpose of the documentary, the provision of free, prior and informed individual consent wherever possible, engagement of the participants throughout the process, and respect for custodianship, knowledge, and modes of communication that were respectful and effective and evident in the final documentary (AIATSIS, 2020, p. 21).

The Yarning Circle as a methodology for truth telling through the documentary form

Collective authorship is closely aligned to traditional narratives passed down in First Nations cultural groups. These cultural narratives, known as 'Songlines' are passed from elder to elder but have no singular author and sometimes span many different nation groups across what is, post colonisation, the singular country of Australia (Glynn-McDonald, n.d). Songlines are oral histories about places and journeys which are linked to creation narratives. These stories are presented in song and often linked to ceremonies that are enacted in specific places (Poulter, 2017). This ideology of collective and culturally diverse authorship is also evident in the practice of a Yarning Circle. A Yarning Circle is a place to talk, share, discuss, and educate. Yarning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was, and still is, a conversational process that involves the telling of stories as a way of passing on cultural knowledge (*Yarning Circle*, n.d). The circle, by its very design, places an equal importance on all participants' contributions to the conversation. It is therefore a collaborative construction of narrative and ideology which is the antithesis of the "western intellectual property system [which] does not acknowledge communal ownership of cultural expressions and knowledge passed down through generations" (Briscoe, 2020, para. 31). Therefore, a critical part of this process was the importance of attribution. It was particularly important to ensure First Nations people who were featured in the documentary were identified by their names and clans, otherwise the lack of attribution "perpetrates the anonymity of Indigenous faces and continues to silence Indigenous voices" (Janke & Australian Film Commission. Indigenous, 2003, p. 12). In addition, it is important to acknowledge cultural beliefs around the representation of deceased people, such as Multuggerah, as "the reproduction of names and images of deceased people contravenes mourning practices and is offensive" (Janke & Australian Film Commission. Indigenous, 2003, p. 11).

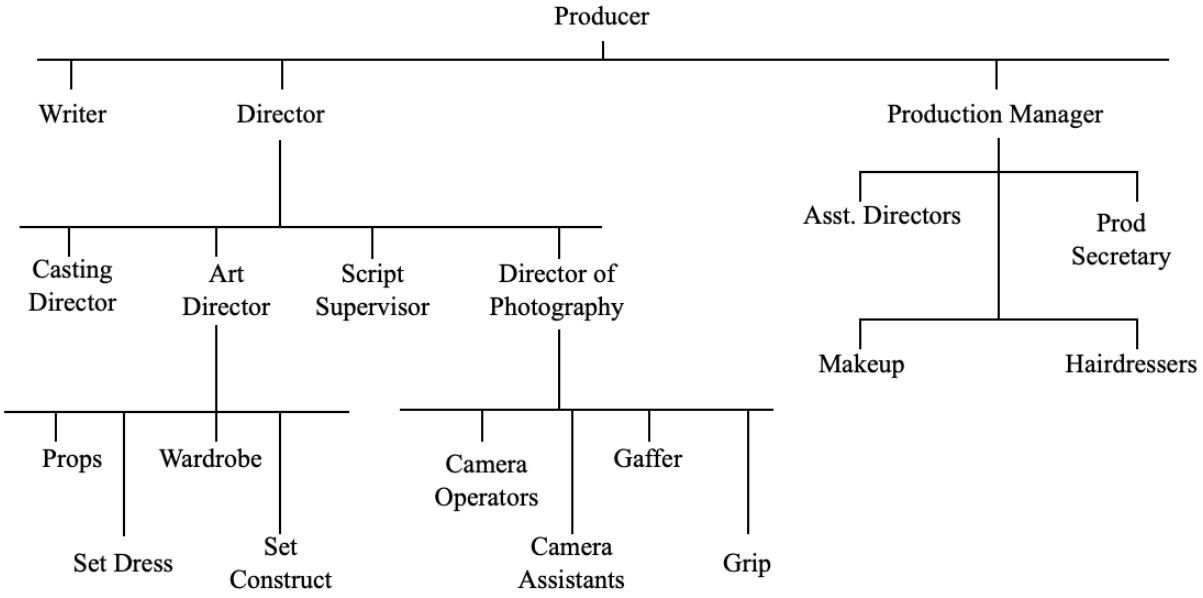
To visually indicate the authorial control and narrative point-of-view of the First Nations Aboriginal participants, Errol Morris' direct-address cinematographic method was utilised in the creation of the documentary. This approach enabled a conversational empathy from the participants as they presented their story directly to the lens and subsequently to the viewer (Maddock, 2022). The process of interviewing began with a discussion which guided an oral history rather than a line of questions which constructed meaning through authorial control (Jones, 2020). However, the documentary also comprises historical evidence presented by historians and academics of European descent. As this story is not presented from their point-of-view, or even an omniscient third-person point-of-view, those contributors are composed using a traditional observational cinematographic method to visually differentiate this distinction (Maddock, 2018a, 2018b). The historians also refer to those presented in the historical narrative in third person whilst the Aboriginal contributors use second and first person by including themselves in the continuing narrative of their people's history. This form of documentary methodology sits outside of Nichol's six types of documentary film modes: poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive, performative, though it does borrow components from the reflexive, observational and participatory modes (Nichols, 1991). In recognition of the AIATSIS Code of Ethics and the filmmaking guides for working with Australian First Nations peoples the methodology also include extensive consultation with First Nations people whose clans had connections with Multuggerah and the story of the Battle of Meewah; the inclusion of First Nations

Elders who were acknowledged as being able to speak about these connections and story of Multuggerah; discussion of how First Nations people would be attributed in the documentary; and the inclusion of an aspiring First Nations filmmaker as part of the team.

This methodology therefore proposes a new form of documentary film, one aimed at participant co-authorial status, whilst also questioning the definition of cinema as a medium of auteurism and singular expression. This new methodology has been designed to lead to a more culturally appropriate narrative representation, a narrative which belongs to a culture, an entire group of people, rather than an individual. As indicated by Michael Rabiger and Mick Hurbis-Cherrier in Figure 1, although a producer holds financial, managerial, and completion authority on a film production, the director is charged with the authorial direction of the film as noted earlier in this paper.

Figure 1

Lines of responsibility in a small-feature filmcrew

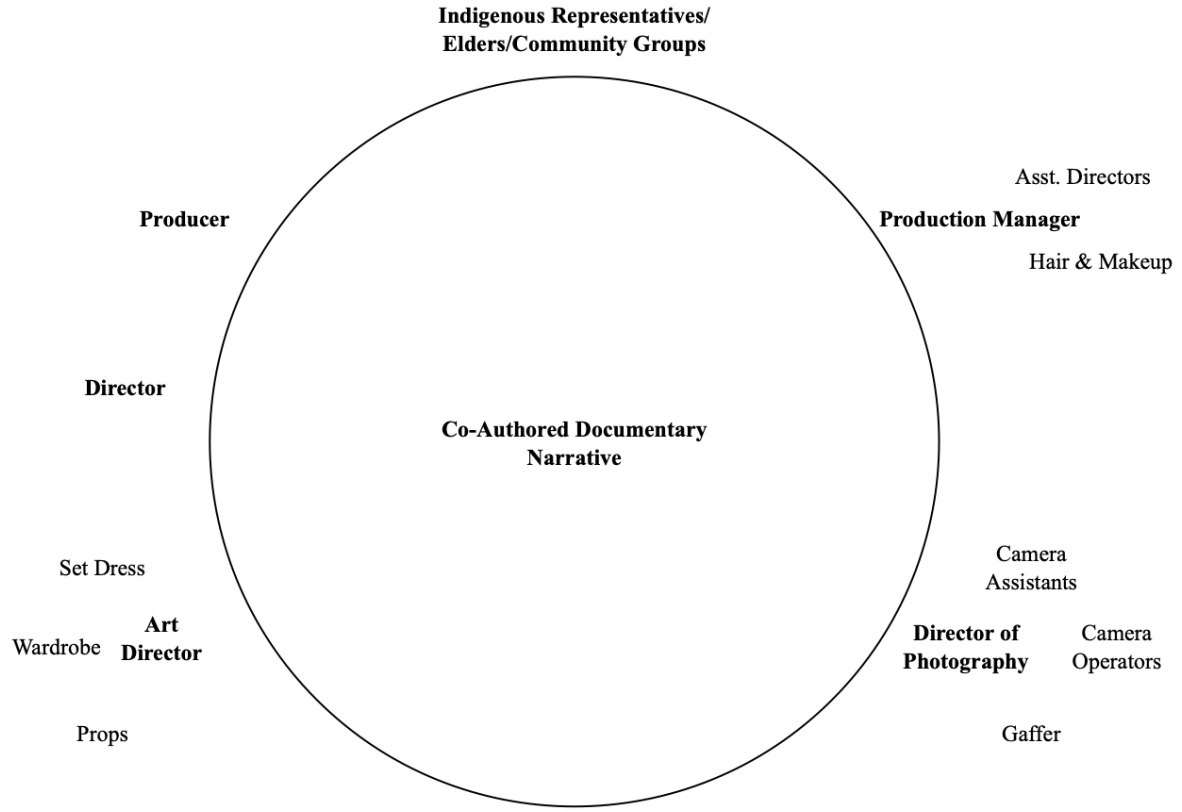


Note: Adapted from Rabiger et al. (2020, p. 336).

An alternative working structure to Figure 1 is represented in Figure 2 and shows an equal distribution of authorial status which is shared between the heads of department within the crew, including the director, and the documentary film subject owners such as the Indigeneous representatives, elders, and nation groups.

Figure 2

Co-Authored Documentary Model



Notes: Adapted from Rabiger et al. (2020, p. 336). A small documentary crew is represented by a central narrative as owned by the Indigenous representatives who work together with a film crew (department heads in bold type) using a Yarning Circle Methodology to achieve participant co-authorial status.

Conclusion

The creation of the Battle of Meewah documentary is significant and timely. There is growing recognition of the importance of acknowledging the Frontier Wars as an integral part of mainstream Australian history. The significance of First Nations peoples' resistance to European invasion has been submerged under stereotypes, including filmic representations of Aboriginal people as passive recipients of invasion. The establishment of the AIATSIS Code of Ethics and protocols for working with Indigenous peoples has resulted in important changes to how Aboriginal people are represented. National Indigenous Television (NITV), which is owned and operated by First Nations Australians, was established in Australia in 2007. This has created important opportunities for First Nations peoples to choose how they are represented, with NITV providing substantial work for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous industry practitioners (McNiven, 2019). The approach taken through this documentary provides important insights into the important protocols that must be observed by non-Indigenous filmmakers who seek to document First Nations peoples and their collaborative stories and culture in ways that honour, respect and educate.

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Author biographies

Daniel Maddock (PhD) has a background in internationally award-winning media production and a particular interest in visual and digital literacies and the use of media in pedagogical practice. Daniel is the Australian representative on the editorial panel for the world's first academic journal about cinematography - Cinematography in Progress. His PhD thesis on the practice of cinematography was nominated for the Chancellor's Medal for Excellence in PhD Research at Griffith University. Daniel's research focuses on the form of film and creative media and how it is constructed for meaning in addition to and in support of the media's content. Daniel sees visual literacy and linguistic literacy as elements of a whole literacy and therefore advocates for a deeper understanding of non-literary forms of communication and expression. Daniel has also published internationally broadcast and award-winning television drama, internationally award-winning short-films, and nationally broadcast documentaries.

Email: daniel.maddock@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2746-9098

Martin Kerby is an Associate Professor in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. His research interests include biography and artistic and cultural responses to conflict. Dr Kerby holds two doctorates in the field of biography. He has received numerous research awards including several ANZAC Centenary grants, both state and national (2014, 2015, 2017). Dr Kerby was a 2018 Q ANZAC 100 Fellow at the State Library of Queensland with his project was titled 'A War Imagined: Queenslanders and the Great War'. He was recently awarded a place on the highly regarded Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators (2020). Dr Kerby has published extensively including The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). He is also the Chief Investigator on a USQ Capacity Building Research Grant titled 'Counter Memorials/Monuments and the Australian Commemorative Landscape'. He is also currently the Chief Editor of Australian Art Education.

Email: martin.kerby@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4073-2559

Margaret Baguley is a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in visual arts. She has received numerous awards recognising the high quality of her teaching and research. She is currently the Associate Head Research for the School of Education. Her research interests encompass the arts, arts education, leadership, group dynamics and creative collaboration. She has an extensive number of publications including The Palgrave Handbook of Global Arts Education (Barton & Baguley, 2017, Palgrave MacMillan) and The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War since 1914 (Kerby, Baguley & McDonald, 2009, Palgrave Macmillan). Dr Baguley is also a practising artist with 10 solo exhibitions and 47 group exhibitions with forty of these being invitational. Her most recent group exhibition received Australia Council for the Arts funding and she has been a recipient of grants from the Ian Potter Foundation, Craft Queensland, Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. During 2020 Dr Baguley was one of a team awarded a USQ Learning and Teaching Open Educational Practice (OEP) Grant for the project titled 'Exploring social justice, democracy, human rights and citizenship: Engaging tertiary students through an open history textbook initiative'. Dr Baguley was co-awarded a Princeton University Library Research Grant (2020) with Dr Kerby to undertake research on the relationship between the artist and author of the Mary Poppins series of books. Dr Baguley is currently elected Vice-President of Art Education Australia (AEA), the national peak body for visual arts education.

Email: baguley@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0098-6378

Alison Bedford (PhD) is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia with a specialisation in History curriculum and pedagogy and education research. Her own research interests include the social function of fiction, science fiction and history pedagogy. She is the Book Reviews Editor for the Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies. Dr Bedford's publications are wide ranging. She has published a monograph, In Frankenstein's Wake: Mary Shelley, Morality and Science Fiction (McFarland, 2021), as well as a number of textbooks for both tertiary and secondary students, most notably Teaching Secondary History (Sharp, Dallimore, Bedford, Kerby, Goulding, Heath, Von Guttner, & Zamati, Cambridge, 2021) and Modern History Units 1-4 (Bedford, Martens, & Slavin, Cambridge, 2019) as a part of the Cambridge Checkpoints series. She has also recently co-edited Unlocking Social Theory with Popular Culture with Dr Naomi Barnes (Queensland University of Technology). Dr Bedford's work on History pedagogy has been published in a number of journals, including Historical Encounters and Agora.
Email alison.bedford@usq.edu.au
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6708-9896

HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS
A journal of historical consciousness, historical cultures, and history education

ISSN 2203-7543 | Double Blind Peer-Reviewed | Open Access | www.hej-hermes.net

'Pou maumahara', 'the memory place': Remembrance and material cultures of colonial conflict at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

Rowan Light
University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau

ABSTRACT

This article explores how material objects reveal patterns of remembrance in the public histories of the nineteenth-century New Zealand Wars fought between British regiments and colonial forces and Māori hapū and iwi (tribal groups). It is based on collections research conducted at the Auckland War Memorial Museum which conceptualises a new gallery displaying stories and objects relating to the wars. Bringing together museology and historiography, the article argues that an engagement with the material culture of the New Zealand Wars and public lexicons of memory in a museum context offer opportunities to move beyond national narratives. Just as these colonial conflicts reconfigured the materiality of violence and collective belonging, so too do museum-based objects activate the presentation of these histories in light of new public needs since 2017.

KEYWORDS

Auckland War Memorial Museum, Colonial Violence, Māori, New Zealand Wars

CITATION

Light, R. (2023). 'Pou maumahara', 'the memory place': Remembrance and material cultures of colonial conflict at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. *Historical Encounters, 10*(2), 120-137. https://doi.org/10.52289/hej10.211

Introduction

In a passageway between galleries on the second floor of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, one finds a discrete display of a small box (*Fig 1*). Its lid is painted in a Māori poutama design, the simple but striking geometric style used as part of the visual narratives of a wharenui (traditional meeting house) on marae (the gathering area and complex of buildings around wharenui). On closer inspection, the box itself is of a modest make and purchased, we discover from the display label, from *The Warehouse*, a local New Zealand retailer. A nearby short film explains its purpose: this was one of four boxes that held the 13,000 signatures collected by Ōtorohanga students over 2014 and 2015 asking the New Zealand Government to establish a formal day of commemoration for the New Zealand Wars. The petition itself sprung from a school history trip to the battlegrounds of the Waikato War (1863-1864), especially the kainga (unfortified village) of Rangiaowhia sacked in February 1864. "We were shocked and horrified at the stories told by the kaumatua [elder]", student organiser Leah Bell states in an interview clip, "who were distraught sharing their ancestors' stories about innocent women, and children, and elders being burned alive. We decided that it was our responsibility now to take action and be proactive about our history." Their hard work paid off: the petition gave impetus to government work with iwi negotiating October 28 as 'rā maumahara' the day of remembering – akin to Anzac Day on April 25 (Gibson, Williams, Cairns, 2019, p. 21).[1] Indeed, the students drew on a commemorative vocabulary of twentieth-century conflict: "in our country we do not commemorate those who lost their lives here in New Zealand both Māori and colonial. Their blood was shed on New Zealand soil, their lives were given in service to New Zealand."

Figure 1

Te Waka-Petihana: Petition Box, for national day commemorating New Zealand Wars

Note. Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 2018.12.1 Gift of Timoti Harris and Lesleigh Henderson. AWMM.

The nineteenth-century wars between Māori and the British Crown, popularly called the New Zealand Wars, were the defining crisis of colonial New Zealand. These were conflicts between and across Māori communities, against or aligned with the colonial government, and fought by professional regiments, volunteer groups, and settler militia from around the 1840s up to the

1880s. These conflicts produced new divisions: the language of 'settler' and 'settlement' that obscure the realities of military invasion and occupation of colonial New Zealand, and indigenous Māori as 'rebel', 'native', 'Kingite'– Māori who aligned with the Kīngitanga (Māori King movement) – in contrast to 'kūpapa', a term originally meaning neutral 'fence-sitter', which was transformed, pejoratively, into alignment of 'Queenite' hapū or iwi with the Crown (Crosby, 2015, pp. 8–9). As well as suggesting dynamic spaces of neutrality and belligerence, these categories pointed to the spiralling contours of colonial violence, which demanded responses from even those who sought to avoid conflict.

The experience of 'ngā pakanga', a term in te reo Māori that captures a wide set of experiences from collisions and war, to invasion, occupation, genocidal acts or intentions, and more intimately, local and personal acts of violence – was also marked by a reconfiguration of the space between history and memory. Writing a century ago towards the end of the memory boom of the *long nineteenth century*, James Cowan published the first substantive general history of the New Zealand Wars (a term he popularised) in 1922 (Cowan, 1922). Structuring his histories around interviews with those who experienced the conflicts, he inaugurated a new historiography, one textured by languages of memory. Cowan's own project was not without its problems: the Māori anthropologist and statesman Apirana Ngata critiqued Cowan's tendency to obscure the historical experience of Māori with romantic versification; he dismissed Cowan as part of a set of writers who "direct their attention to the popular public and may be left there" (Ngata, 1986). A hundred years later, Vincent O'Malley's recent edited collection of nineteenth-century primary sources, *Voices of the New Zealand Wars / Ngā reo o Ngā Pakanga o Aotearoa* (O'Malley, 2021) speaks to this entanglement of memory and history. The popular esteem held for *Voices of the New Zealand Wars*, while reflecting O'Malley's contribution to public history in his corpus of work since 2016, also points to an appetite for more textured stories of colonial conflict among the New Zealand public. It reflects the power of witness history (Margalit, 2003); one in which the dead themselves seem to speak as they did to the Ōtorohanga students at Rangiaowhia. Ngata's particular point, nonetheless, stands as a warning to any author of historical accounts of the wars: one must attend to the experiences of these conflicts in collective memory as systems of knowledge and meaning-making or risk reducing it to national mythology.

This article explores how historians and researchers might approach these fraught issues and trajectories, through two starting points. First, only histories configured by collective memories can meet public demands for recognition of colonial conflict while at the same time resisting the mythologisation of war. Second, objects in museums play an invaluable role because they activate spaces of memory, violence, and collective belonging. In light of contemporary public debates and discussions, the petition box, for example, carries a weighty burden in the museum (MacKintosh, 2019). Its power partly lies in its activation of commemorative practices, bringing into tension and attention different remembrances of the wars: Māori collective memory defined by "intimacies of violence" (Kidman, 2021) and the constitutive forgetting of Pākehā or non-Māori memorialisation (Bell, 2020). The petition box operates, in this way, as an anchor; it starts the visitors with a contemporary question – how and why should we remember the New Zealand Wars – while signalling the work of the Auckland War Memorial Museum as 'pou maumahara', a space in which multiple memories of violence can be recognised and relationships of meaning made explicit in the encounter with the past (Auckland Museum, 2016) and the ways that the wars are not resolved for many communities. It poses fresh questions: what is the role of the Auckland Museum as a war memorial, an institution built to mark the fallen of the Great War which brings together histories of conflict and violence into arrangements of mourning and commemoration, in the remembrance of these conflicts here in this place?

These are live research questions in my work as project curator in the Human History team at the Auckland War Memorial Museum assisting with the research and conceptualisation of a new gallery displaying stories and objects relating to the New Zealand Wars. This entails a collaborative re-thinking about what it means to present these histories of conflict and violence in light of the establishment of Rā Maumahara Day of Commemoration every October 28 which offers the potential to substantially revise our commemorative cultures of war. An important

example was offered by the 175th anniversary of Te Ruapekapeka, the final battle between British and Māori forces in the 1845-1846 Northern War, in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland). The striking imagery of layered hands (*Fig 2*) conveyed the intergenerational stories, communities, and whakapapa (connections of descent) from both sides of the battle, while the emphasis on "reverence", "remembrance", and "reconciliation" indicated key registers of the global memory boom and its "terrain of injustice" (Connerton, 2008, p. 17).

Figure 2

The icon for the 175th anniversary commemoration of Te Ruapekapeka, 8th January 2021 hosted by Ngāti Manu, Te Kapotai, Ngāti Hau and Ngāti Hine.

Note. The theme for the commemoration was 'Kawea a puriri mai' – in reverence, remembrance and reconciliation.

A consideration of several arrangements of objects from the museum's war collection, offered here, reveals crucial historiographical problems, intersections, and junctures. Most of these objects discussed are currently on display as part of the museum's *Scars on the Heart* gallery, which opened in 1996 (Light, 2022). There are some twenty distinct objects, each forming part of a cluster of around half a dozen possible displays. The aim of the selection is to present a diversity of perspectives and voices. Major aspects of ngā pakanga are represented. These arrangements of objects are organised through a series of historical problems in relation to colonial conflict: 'te pūtake o te riri' (the causes of the anger), the roots of conflict in these histories; how we might read these conflicts 'ko te pu o te Pākehā' – through 'the gun of the Pākehā' – that is, the relationship between violence, technology, and knowledge; and 'te rau o te patu' (the edge of the blade) the aftermath and legacies of colonial conflict and how this challenges current historiographical framings of the wars. In parsing problems of New Zealand Wars histories through arrangements of objects and space, I argue that, whereas museum practice and historical research have been separate in New Zealand Wars scholarship, these arrangements are historiographical as well as museological. The intention is not just to represent the wars but interpret colonial violence and its meaning for communities. Drawing attention to problems of causes, experiences, and legacies – each requiring careful work – will ultimately complicate our

sense of these histories in new ways, while drawing into public spaces, especially pou maumahara, memories of violence that have been obscured over time.

'Te pūtake o te riri' / 'the causes of the anger': Colonial conflict and its roots

A seminal shift in New Zealand Wars historiography over the twentieth century was from Cowan's focus on the *how* of the conflicts – where and what groups engaged in fighting during the nineteenth century – to *why* the conflicts were fought in the first place (Keenan, 2021). The desire to understand *causes* has left a powerful impression on subsequent histories. 'Te pūtake of te riri' –*the cause of the anger* – is the official name adopted by hapū and iwi for the October 28 commemoration suggests that this emphasis is also a priority for Māori communities. 'Pūtake', however, conveys a sense of the *roots* of violence in a way that suggests connections, continuities, and on-going relationships rather than abstract historical forces. Broadly, historians fix their emphasis on one of three interconnected factors: land, sovereignty, and nineteenth-century empire – especially the global forces of migration enabled through imperial systems. Danny Keenan challenges any siloed approach to causality in the wars when he suggests that 'historians need to do more than posit sovereignty, as an overarching cause with no grounding, existing somewhere out there in the process of dismissing Māori counter narratives framed by the sustaining land, forests, rivers and other resources rooted in cultural millennia; which as it so happened were taken from Māori with such violence and yes causing immeasurable suffering' (Keenan, 2019). This is evocative of the relationality of remembrance; how "what is being remembered, or perhaps more accurately re-constituted, is … that radical interconnectedness that has been so shockingly betrayed in and through the violence of trauma" (Edkins, 2006, p. 98). In Keenan's presentation, a central conceptual framework is of *mana whenua*, territorial claims based in and around land which are the foundation of tribal belonging. This *economy of mana* remains the organising principle of Māori memories of the these nineteenth-century wars.

Myriad objects in the museum's New Zealand Wars collection evokes this challenge to ground the causes of colonial conflict in land and its relationships. An illustrative example might be, by way of contrast, a cluster of objects that relate to Governor George Grey, one of the most influential of the colonial governors in nineteenth-century New Zealand. Grey's seal, signature, and despatch box were used by Grey as part of the wider practice of colonial governance at different points in his career (*Fig 3*). Most significant, under Grey's policy, was the conclusion of the Northern War in his first term in office (1845–1853) and, in his second term, planning and instigating the invasion of the Waikato in 1863. In this way, these objects are symbols of Crown power. Through letters, first, from Government House in the heart of colonial Auckland and, later, from his island retreat of Kawau, Grey exercised colonial authority, strategised over its extent and expansion, and conducted military campaigns.

Figure 3

The seal of Governor Sir George Grey at Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

These objects also evoke Grey's complex legacy. The assertion of colonial power under Grey was a crucial catalyst for the invasion of the Waikato. He was subsequently mythologised as 'the good governor' among some (although not all) of Auckland's population for whom he was a saviour and advocate – leading to the establishment of a statue of his likeness outside the Auckland Town Hall. Grey's imperial career – a 'pioneer of empire' (Henderson, 1907) – across South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand formed part of Keith Sinclair's argument that New Zealand's race relations were superior to these other contexts (Sinclair, 1952; 1971). On the other hand, recent vandalism of the Grey statue (Martin, 2020), now situated in Auckland's central Albert Park, speaks to another mythology: that of Grey as the embodiment of Pākehā racism and hubris (Kidman et al, 2022), with blood on his hands – through his writing and policy-making, rather than direct violence.

These symbols of an abstracted colonial authority can be juxtaposed with Māori strategies. Two wax impressions of a European-made seal form part of the New Zealand Wars collection at Auckland Museum. The seal was used by Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King, and taken from a document by colonial official F. D. Fenton during his residency in the King's capital at Ngaruawahia, prior to the outbreak of the Waikato War (*Fig 4)*. The establishment of the Kīngitanga was a key Māori response to the growth of colonial government and the exclusion of Māori from parliamentary democracy in 1854 (under the New Zealand Constitution Act 1852). The movement was an experiment in collective belonging, institutionalising Māori land interests in a way that spanned lines of iwitanga (tribalism). The occasion of the appointment of Te Wherowhero as the first King in 1858 was the occasion of important patterns of memory: "I love New Zealand", declared one Waikato rangatira in attendance, "Let us have order, so that we may increase like the white man. Why should we disappear from the land? Let us have a king, for with a king there will be peace among us. New Zealand is ours—I love it" (Cowan, 1922, p. 232). The intentions of the 'Kingites' was expressed in the Waikato haka (war dance), 'Ka ngapu te whenua', which in its contemporary meaning compared the coming of colonial governance as an earthquake to which Māori responses must be to cleave ever more closely to the land – 'kia mau, kia mau' – or be lost.

Figure 4

Two wax impressions of a seal made by Europeans for the use of Potatau, the Maori King.

Note: Taken from a seal by F. D. Fenton while residing at Ngaruawahia, prior to the Waikato War. AWMMAWMM.

Importantly, not all Māori communities aligned themselves with Kingitanga. Sinclair suggests up to half of Māori in the wars were neutral or loyal to the government (Sinclair, 1961, p. 269). A prominent example was Maihi Kawiti, a leading Northern rangatira, who refused to join the Kingitanga and, instead, declared his own rohe potae (protected territory) aligned with the Crown – a strategic partnership ultimately expressed in the investiture of Maihi and subsequent Ngāti Hine leaders with their own seal, Rongomau. This context of cause points to how boundaries between Crown and Māori authority changed overtime as Māori navigated their relationship with an evolving colonial politics (Belgrave, 2005, p. 37) which requires more careful attention by historians of the wars.

Flags are similarly useful shorthand for motivations, intentions, and relationships that complicate notions of colonial conflict and its causes, while also evoking claims on space and its occupation as place (Mulholland, 2018). The regimental colours of the 58th Regiment, for example, reflect the material memory of the fourteen British regiments as well as various auxiliary units that served in Aotearoa during this period. Colours represented the prestige of that regiment within the global network of the British Army (Lidchi & Allan, 2020, pp. 5–7.) Within this tradition of colours was that recording of battle honours – 'mapping' all the places that this regiment had served since its formation in 1755 and, in this way, connecting New Zealand and these conflicts to an imperial circulation of military force. The British Army was an effective network in which men, with perhaps no other job prospects in British society, could join the army and be deployed to different parts of the world (MacDonald & Lenihan, 2019). This imperial experience was transplanted to New Zealand as much as the material colours. It points to the personal relationships of the British Army, with its own cultural meanings and scripts of military violence, that were an important part of the texture of colonial conflict and need to be foregrounded if empire is to be a meaningful cultural context in explaining the roots of colonial conflict. There is a need to restore this cultural context to our understandings of imperial military collections.

We could set up the 58th colours in a dialogue with a very different statement of place and relationships through another flag, one that declares the existence of the place of 'Aotearoa', This 'map' was produced by Te Arawa woman Heni Te Kiri Karamu at the outbreak of the Waikato War. As someone living in Auckland but loyal to the Kingitanga, in part due to her family connections, Heni formed part of the first wave of displaced people forced to abandon livelihood over the course of the invasion. This flag (*Fig. 5*), woven from red silk, was gifted to Wī Kōkā of Ngāti Koheriki; it offers a powerful statement of identity and what this war meant for many Māori and for Heni. The iconography of Christianity, with customary reverence of the star, is combined with the text 'Aotearoa', a declaration that has gained considerable interest to contemporary New Zealanders in light of debates about the naming of 'Aotearoa New Zealand' (Dexter, 2022).

Figure 5

Postcard reproductions of the 58th Regiment Colours (left) and the 'Aotearoa' flag crafted by Heni Te Kiri Karamu. Both original flags are now kept at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

Both flags now sit in the Auckland Museum in various stages of decay. The 'Aotearoa' flag appears like a series of silk strips; the 58th Regiment Colours as a patchwork of fragments. As a metaphor, the fragments are evocative of Pākehā neglect of these histories. Importantly, however, it is also an opportunity to return to patterns of collective memory in colonial society. The 'Aotearoa' flag was captured as a trophy and lauded as the trappings of a conquered foe; the colours were gifted to the city of Auckland after the Regiment was redeployed to Europe in the 1850s. Under British custom, military flags were intended to disintegrate organically, placed, traditionally, in churches. The fact that this custom was translated to the war memorial museum is part of its role as a sacred institution and interlocutor between complex meanings of the wars which required different configurations of memorialisation. It also speaks to the fragmentation of cultural remembrance around the wars since the nineteenth century.

Returning to Keenan's challenge, New Zealand Wars historiography will remain hindered by siloed emphasises on land, sovereignty, and people as historical abstractions unless it attends to the lived meanings of this experience patterned by collective memory. On the one hand, conventional arguments of causality do not recognise the cosmological connection between 'peoplehood' and whenua in te ao Māori; on the other hand, a strict 'national' framework misses the personal and intimate loyalties that shaped the wars. As these object 'impressions' suggest, attention to relationships of memory is key.

'Ko te pu o te Pākehā': Experiences of violence

It was through 'the gun of the pakeha' that colonial conflict was experienced by Māori and non-Māori. This was the insight of Ralph Johnson's seminal 1972 study (Johnson, 1972) which challenged historians to consider the cultural meanings of colonial violence; one that produced new configurations of cultural life through the collision of technology. Conflict "between different cultures affects both parties reciprocally; there is a two-way flow of cultural information and ideas" (Johnson, 1972, p. 50); while Māori knowledge and technology surprised and bewildered Pākehā who continuously underestimated the capacity of Māori to confront and adapt to new circumstances (Belich, 1986). Weapons are both ubiquitous and hidden in these histories, even barely registering in military histories with recent exceptions (Thompson, 2017). On the other hand, the contrast between 'muskets and tomahawks' – the name of a table-top miniatures war game (Faulconbridge, 2022) – has been a favoured romantic device since the earliest fictional writings about the wars (See, for example, Henty, 1891), obscuring the violent reality of the wars through sanitising fictions. New military histories have paid greater attention to the construction of knowledge in the course of the wars (Taylor, 2004; Simons, 2019), although this has focused on the practical waging of conflict rather than its cultural meaning. The need to make meaning of violence, on the other hand, is the heart of the memory boom (Winter, 2008).

Unsurprisingly, the New Zealand Wars collection at Auckland War Memorial Museum is filled with the armaments, trophies, and loot of the British Army. The officer's sword of Cyprian Bridges, commander of the 58th Regiment, whose diary of the Northern War is an important source for that conflict; an Enfield Pattern 1853 (1st Pattern) percussion rifle issued to members of the 40th Regiment in 1856, with its bayonet attachments; a cartridge maker, or teki, made from polished bone and with an extended tongue carved at its narrow neck as a pukana or challenge; a tewhatewha (customary two-handed Māori fighting weapon) dug up at Pukehinahina / Gate Pa in 1875; a double barrel percussion shotgun looted after the battle of Rangiriri. Each of these reveal a range of perspectives and histories, even by a single object. A carbine rifle carved by Eremiha Neke Te Kapua of Te Arawa speaks to multiple layers – the trajectory of the weapon itself as a European product and its literal inscription with Māori memory by Te Kapua (*Fig 6**).***

Figure 6

Detailing of a carbine, carved by Eremiha Neke Te Kapua circa late 1800s, currently on display at the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.

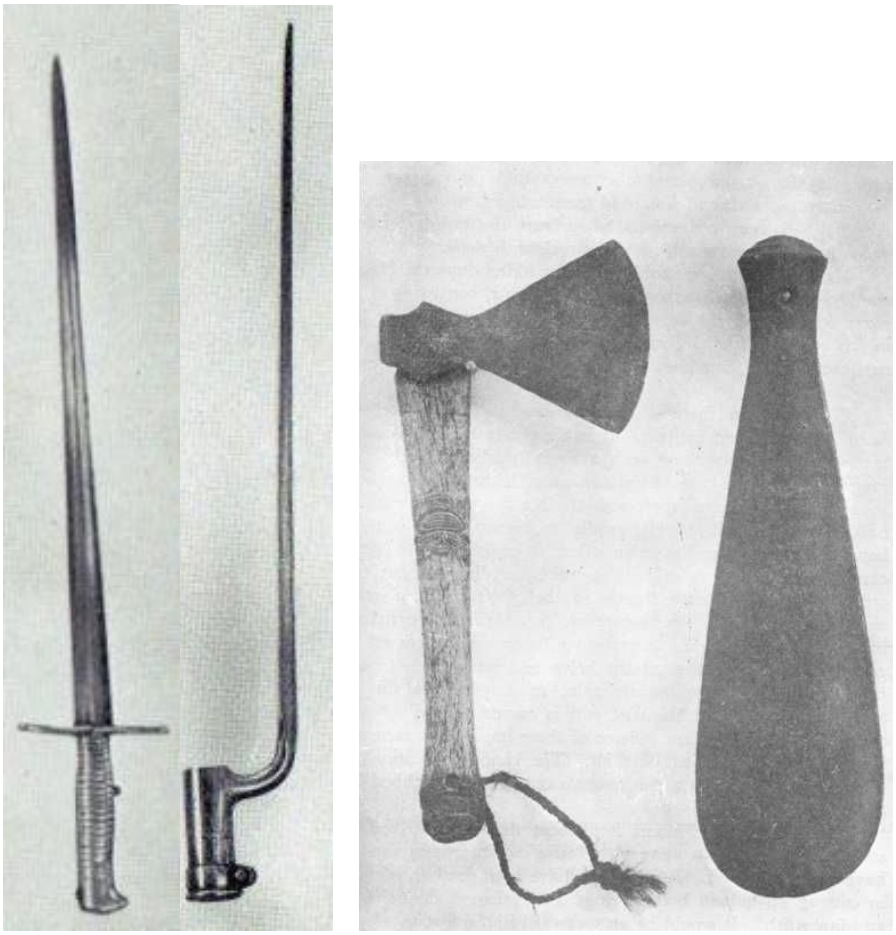
What is more surprising is how little these crucial material expressions of colonial violence have been considered by historians. Despite – or because of – their ubiquity, little attention has been paid to the cultural meanings of these technologies. Thomson shows how the Enfield rifle (such as the one mentioned above) materialised a sense of settlers' imperial innovation and self-superiority. Colonisation in the nineteenth century was, at its heart, a physical act of displacement, of maiming, and of killing. An illustrative example was the experience of Sergeant W. H. Free of the 65th Regiment, later recorded in a series of interviews with James Cowan as part of his 1922 history, at Mahoetahi in the Waitara valley at the outbreak of the first Taranaki War in 1860:

> There was some good bayonet-work at Mahoetahi. One of our men, W. Marshall, had an encounter in the swamp with a powerful Maori, who tried to wrest his rifle from him. Marshall at last got his arms free, and sent his bayonet clean through his opponent's body up to the locking-ring. A Maori got a soldier of the 65th face downwards in the muddy swamp-water, and would have drowned him but for a bullet from a fellow-soldier which stretched the Ngati-Haua dead. A soldier of the same regiment bayoneted a Maori through the chest, but the amazing warrior gripped the barrel of the rifle with his left hand and tomahawked his opponent on the arm before he fell. (Cowan, 1922, p. 198.)

The most confronting aspect of this episode – the heart of this history – is the physical violence in which two groups of people encounter each other and attempt to kill each other. The "bayonet work", "the work of the day", both reveals and obscures much of this transgressive act of taking the life of another human person (the euphemism of 'work' is not only unsurprising but necessary to filtering "the red business" of war) (Winter, 2017, p. 1). It reveals a significant lexicon of memory which folds conquest of people and place into uses of technology which has long been a useful side-step from the reality of conflict. In both Cowan's historical framing and the sergeant's testimony, a stark and deliberate contrast is drawn here between the British bayonet and the Māori tomahawk. *Tomahawk* was a kind of catch-all phrase that would more appropriately is described as pātītī, a kind of short axe, or a mere, a blunt weapon made of stone or bone. A juxtaposition of these technologies from the Auckland War Memorial Museum adds to our understanding of the 'work' of Mahoetahi: British officers, regulars, and settler militia used variations of the bayonet. Conversely, the Māori patiti or mere were adaptations of customary weapons. In this moment, we glimpse something of this 'work' when Marshall is driving his bayonet into (and through) this person, into this human body, up to the locking ring or hilt of the bayonet *(Fig 7)*. Despite the centrality of these tools, or perhaps because of their ubiquity, their material importance has not been commented on by historians of the wars.

Figure 7

An arrangement of bayonets and Māori patiti and mere from the Auckland War Memorial Museum. AWMM.



This intersection of technology and memories of violence is reflected in other objects. The outbreak of colonial conflict in the nineteenth aligned with the new British imperialism, with its attention to not just military power but an extension of control and authority through the production and ordering of knowledge (Richards, 1993). The New Zealand Wars are a striking example of this tightly coiled relationship between war, space, and knowledge in this new imperialism, through imagery and mapping of battlefields, fortifications, and landscapes. In parallel, attention to sites of battle has been a fruitful strategy around which historians and archaeologists have fixed their narratives of the wars (Prickett & McGovern-Wilson, 2009).

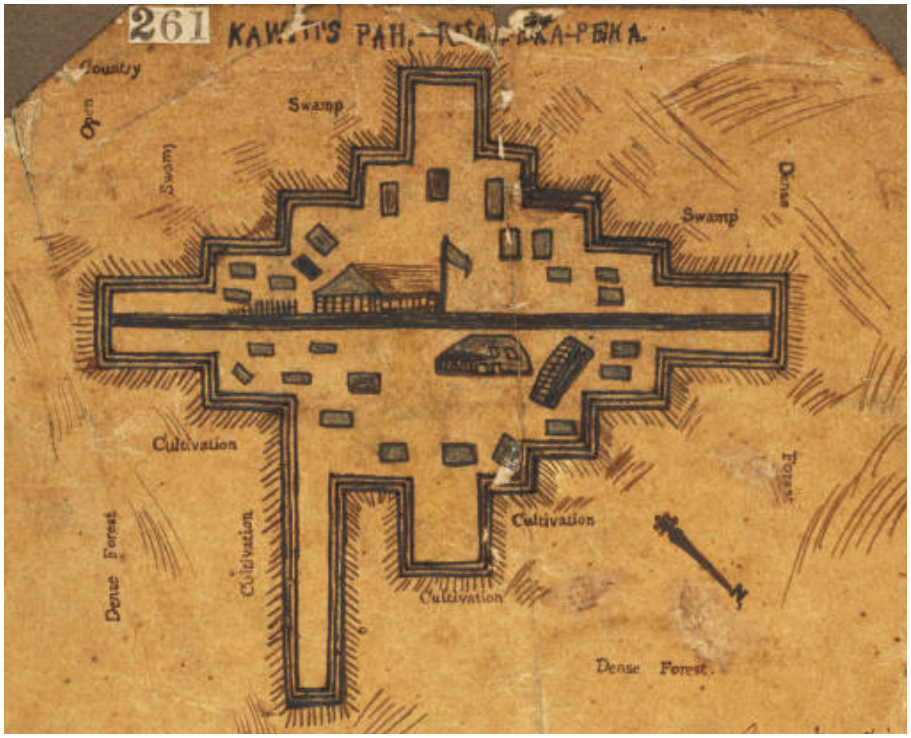
A leading example is the construction of 'Te Ruapekapeka', the first modern fighting pā, and its reproduction through maps, models, and other memorial acts. Ruapekapeka was both a major battle and a site of Māori technological innovation, designed by Ngāti Hine leader Kawiti 'Te Ruki' ('The Duke'). Popularly translated as 'the bat's nest', historian Ruth Ross suggested that Ruapekapeka had multiple meanings: it might also refer to 'rua' – 'two' – 'pekapeka', or 'zig zag', reflecting the diagonal trenches that defined the pā (Ross, 1965). This sense of multiple visions and meanings attached to this site is a useful way to disrupt assumptions of imperial certainty.

As in the production of meaning around weaponry, mapping these sites of violence and its memory was a cultural project. One of the few maps purported to have been produced by Māori during the New Zealand Wars was one that records Te Ruapekapeka (*Fig 8)*. It was commissioned by a colonial agent Henry Wriggs shortly after the battle on the request of George Grey during his first term as governor (NZMS 928, Auckland City Library). The map was later donated to the

Auckland Library along with Grey's other papers. Like all maps, it reveals the cultural world of its producer – their interests, intentions, and assumptions. In this case, the Wrigg map is political as well as an attempt to convey the strategic space of the pā. A bird's-eye-view indicates a geometric layout; split across the middle with a line representing the two sides of the alliance between Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Hine during the war against the Crown. In the centre is depicted Kawiti's flag, another linkage to statements of violent resistance and the occupation of space.

Figure 8

Map of Ruapekapeka by 'native'.



Note: Collected by H Wriggs and presented to Governor Grey at the conclusion of the Northern War. The map itself became part of the colonial archive after it was delivered to George Grey during his first governorship, becoming part of his library which later was placed in the Auckland City Library. ACL.

A different spatial arrangement of memory is evoked by a model of the pā associated with Colonel Robert Henry Wnyard, one of the British commanders who was at the battle as part of the 58th Regiment. Upon returning to Auckland, Wynyard either constructed or commissioned a model depicting Ruapekapeka. Like the Wrigg 'native' map, Wynyard's model filters this violent encounter as it attempts to reconstruct its spaces for the purposes of military advancement. The reconstruction exaggerates certain aspects – either as a fault of personal recollection or as a way to better appreciate the pā's construction. Its purpose was multifaceted; the model was a way to convey knowledge of a defeated enemy for future engagements; it was also a commemorative project for the colonial elite of Auckland who visited the model after its completion and display at Albert Barracks in 1858. Both these intentions were also acts of meaning-making; both obscure and reveal certain details of the experience of violence in the Northern War and its aftermath. There is an opportunity here to explicate the problems of re-enactment and its feint of memory.

We need to pay greater attention to the connection between space, knowledge, and imperial violence in New Zealand's colonial conflict. This is not simply representations of colonial wars, but as how the war was remembered – that is, survived and understood. This relationship of violence with the transformation of material and epistemological spaces is one activated through objects. It is hardly a new insight to suggest imperial archives reproduce imperial narratives; only in

making this production of knowledge and its connection to technologies of violence explicit and critical, however, can we present these histories in ways that witness to memory. We need to return to Johnson's original challenge – it is through the cultural meanings of violence that we begin 'see' the work of memory and might more powerfully arrange our histories.

'Te rau o te patu' / 'the edge of the blade': Legacies of war

Just as the causes and experiences of colonial conflict produces new histories and memories in Aotearoa, the legacy or aftermath of ngā pakanga gave new decisive directions to the social and cultural lives of communities. From the mid-1860s, Māori communities increasingly turned to new expressions of indigenous Christianity, inspired by new prophetic leadership. Followers of Pai Maire or 'Hauhauism', founded by Te Ua Haumene, attempted to reassert their own cosmological destiny. These myriad changes are reflected in objects – such as a walking stick belonging to the warrior-prophet Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Tūruki (Binney, 1995) – and other kinds of authority, as evoked in a Māori calendar created in Taranaki as part of a strategic adaptation to assert mana whenua over disputed land **(***Fig 9***)**. These complex responses do not fit neatly into linear notions of time; assertions of claims over time, space, and history were 'measured' in different ways in the wars' aftermath, while extending the impact of imperial violence in ecological and temporal terms**.** Kidman (2021) has invoked fruitfully the anthropological framework of 'shatter zones' – conveying the instability of traumatic events from which shock waves radiate out over time and place (Etheridge, 2006).

Figure 8

Calendar made of cartouche paper; given to Major Parrish of New Plymouth by a Māori who had picked it up on a Taranaki battlefield during the wars of the 1860s. AWMM.

The most significant expression of the post-conflict crisis was the confiscation of Māori land – first under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863 which seized all land in the name of the Crown from those deemed 'rebels', and later as part of the process of translating Māori collective ownership to individual title through the Native Land Court. Some nine million acres of land were transferred to Crown title under these conditions by the 1890s (Boast, 2008, pp. 49–61; Gilling, 2009, pp. 27–28). This was the *raupatu*: the 'edge of the blade' that cut deep into Māori society long after the final gunshots of the nineteenth century. This produced new divisions on the

landscape and new agents of conflict, represented in the surveyor corps whose job it was to translate Māori land into Crown title to be sold to new settlers (Byrnes, 2001).

Māori responded, in kind, with new boundaries. The *aukati* was the line between the lands remaining under the authority of the Māori King, exiled to Ngāti Maniapoto territory. Colonial New Zealand, up to the 1880s, operated as a dual state system (Belgrave, 2017). Colonial officials and settlers were warned not to cross the *aukati* or else face punishment of death. An object that powerful evokes the long aftermath of the blade-edge is a chain used by surveyor Richard Todd to survey confiscated land for Crown sale (***Fig 10***). Todd was killed in Pirongia for crossing the *aukati* in 1870 by Kingite forces. The steel chain, a simple loop with a handle at one end and interspersed with brass markers, speaks to different kinds of 'weapons' – in this case, a chain to carve up the land. Todd's death also underscores to the 'two worlds' of the Crown and Kingitanga which existed up to the 1880s. There was no clear victory here for the colonial government: the wars did not end but continued in other forms. Arranged as a spiral – a key metaphor of Māori concepts of non-linear time, as shown in Brett Graham's painting – Todd's chain evokes the way that raupatu generates new crises and conflict in this shatterzone of empire.

Figure 10

Surveyor's chain, found on Mt. Pirongia, belonging to a Mr.Todd, killed in 1870, alongside Brett Graham's Recalibrate (2014). AWMM / Brettgraham.co.mz

The assertion and violation of *aukati* returns us in some ways to the spatial commemoration of the Ōtorohanga students and the *rā maumahara* day of remembering discussed in the introduction. The petition hīkoi (march) up to Parliament and visit to the site of civilian deaths at Rangiaowhia was indicative of deeper patterns of petition, commemoration, and activism since the invasion of the Waikato. Gibson, Williams, and Cairns (2019), for example, situate the petition box as part of decolonial resistance that began long before the formal movements of the late twentieth century. Thematically, the petition box might be paired with another object, a pen currently on display in a section of the museum's Māori Court, its ethnographic display of Māori culture on the ground floor. This *pene* (pen), with nib holder on one end and a paper knife on the other, was used by Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapipipi Te Waharoa 'the king-maker' at the signing of peace at the end of the Waikato invasion with General Cleary, commander of the imperial forces. The meeting between the general and 'the peace-maker' had been arranged by 'Maoriphile' George Graham. A famous picture of the meeting shows Tāmihana placing his taiaha (fighting

staff) at the feet of Cleary (*Fig 11*). The horizontality of the painting, with its two collectives on either side of TāmihanaTāmihana, emphasises the resolution between the two sides of the conflict.

Figure 11

Wiremu Tāmihana Tarapīpipi Te Waharoa depicted laying down his taiaha before British Brigadier General G. J. Carey at Tamahere on May 27, 1865. Archives NZ.

Although simple to look at, the pen is significant object, connected to Tāmihana Tāmihanaand the uncertain end of the Waikato War. Crucially, it underscored the bitterness for Waikato Māori in the aftermath of *raupatu*, as the 'peace' was quickly shown to be one-sided. 'Bookending' the petition box, and reiterating the connection between text, resistance, and the legacy of conflict, Tāmihana's Tāmihanapen evinces a different kind of material commemoration. Like the petition box, the pen brought into personal arrangement distinct perspectives, having been cared for by Graham upon his return to Auckland and donated by his descendants to Auckland Museum in 1954. This was "te maungarongo"—the covenant of peace—part of Tāmihana's Tāmihanaethos shaped by his Christianity and customary leadership (cast by some of his opponents as cowardice or desperation out of starvation; within his kin networks as a traitor – AJHR, 1865, p. 2.) Tāmihana referred to his "terms of submission" – continuing that "this is the sign of my making peace, my coming into the presence of my fighting friend, General Carey." The pen reveals some deeper interactions and stories of this *hoa riri* relationship, one's friend-in-anger.

This was 'peace' with a question mark; in the mid-1860s Tāmihana lodged three petitions with Parliament "regarding war and raupatu" in the Waikato (O'Malley, 2016, p. 523). He directly challenged the extent of the confiscation of Waikato, citing that "this is the condition approved by me putting an end to this war"; a war that had been caused by government provocation. (AJHR, 1865, I, G-05) This commitment to holding to the land, through the Māori kingship, "will never be given up even unto the end. It will by no means be put an end to, whether good or whether evil (comes of it)" (Ibid). Tāmihana's words, echoing from their historical context and read through a commemorative lens have wider implications for New Zealand's relationship to colonial conflict.

> E koro whakaatua mai he tika whakina mai kaua e huna mai he hori whakkina mai kia noho mohio ai matou ka pa huna atu e ngaro te tangata ae ko tenei. E koro kei huna mai koe.
>
> Friend let it be made known; if it is correct, confess it, do not conceal it; if it is false, tell us that we may be aware of it, it is not as though it could be kept secret by hiding it; and now, O friend, do not conceal it. (AJHR 1865, E11)

This inscription, linking pen, petition, and the work of commemorating colonial conflict, is a cry against injustice. It offers a double meaning as it represents the historical experience of colonial

conflict and its interpretation. Foregrounding the work of historical remembrance is key in approaching histories of the New Zealand Wars.

Conclusion

In considering, schematically, the causes, experiences, and legacies of conflicts in these histories through object stories, we begin to grasp the immense challenges in representation and meaning with which history is conventionally charged. There are some obvious gaps here: Imperial and racial hierarchies constructed through military cultures need to be highlighted, too often being obscured in Auckland's colonial history. This requires identifying how imperial military culture was translated locally. Indeed, most of the North Island in which the major conflicts of the wars were fought was part of Auckland Province during this period – something that calls into question the naming of the New Zealand Wars which might be better described as 'Auckland's Wars'. Above all, there is a need to bring an arrangement of exhibitions, objects, and practices into explicit dialogue with themes of cultural memory and commemoration in the New Zealand Wars. Museums can play a leading role. Connecting stories and objects with the communities shaped by colonial violence would be a fruitful practice in order to better reveal local languages of memory, asking what these experiences mean to these communities. Multiple 'works' – enacted, operative, and rhetorical – during and after ngā pakanga give new direction and purpose to the historiography of the New Zealand Wars and the historical remembrance of colonial conflict through objects.

Biography

Dr Rowan Light is a historian and Lecturer at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau. He is also Project Curator (NZ Wars) at Auckland War Memorial Museum. His first book, *Anzac Nations: The Legacy of Gallipoli in Australia and New Zealand, 1965-2015*, was published in 2022.

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About the Author

Rowan Light is a historian of memory and commemoration, interested in public uses of the past and how communities make sense of war and violence. He is project curator (NZ Wars) at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, assisting the Human History team in the redevelopment of the New Zealand Wars gallery. His book *Anzac Nations* (2022) published by Open University Press, is a history of cultural memory that explores how the story of the Anzacs at Gallipoli has changed overtime in Australia and New Zealand. He is particularly interested in how groups and institutions shape the remembrance and commemoration of war and conflict, through museums and other forms of media. Rowan's essay 'Unknown Anzacs: the politics and performance of bodily repatriation and state formation' was awarded the Ken Inglis Postgraduate History Prize and published in Australian Historical Studies in 2018. 'Unknown Anzacs' explored the connections between nineteenth and twentieth-century histories of violence through a comparative and transnational lens. Rowan has also published in Australian Historical Studies and reviewed for the New Zealand Journal of History. His 'public impact' writing in New Zealand Herald, Dominion Post and The Press has contributed to the evolving debate about public monuments and New Zealand's colonial history.

Email: rowan.light@auckland.ac.nz
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1535-0399

Endnotes

[1] Iwi are extended social units in Māori society, typically denoting a broad descent group connected to a common ancestor and territory and often translated as "tribe."

END OF ISSUE