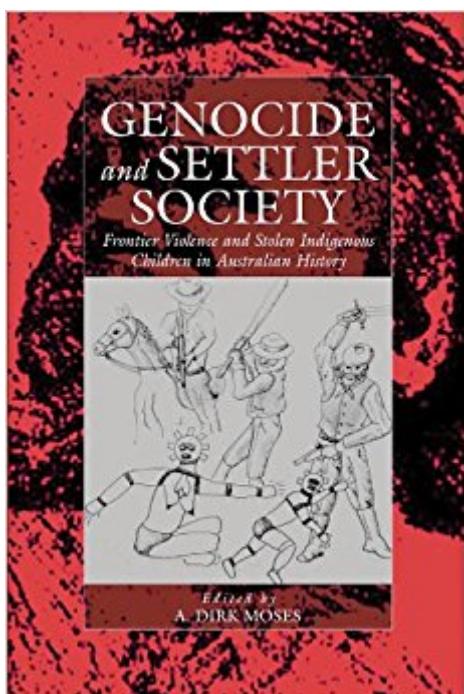


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Genocide And Settler Society: Frontier Violence And Stolen Indigenous Children In Australian History (War And Genocide)



Synopsis

Colonial Genocide has been seen increasingly as a stepping-stone to the European genocides of the twentieth century, yet it remains an under-researched phenomenon. This volume reconstructs instances of Australian genocide and for the first time places them in a global context. Beginning with the arrival of the British in 1788 and extending to the 1960s, the authors identify the moments of radicalization and the escalation of British violence and ethnic engineering aimed at the Indigenous populations, while carefully distinguishing between local massacres, cultural genocide, and genocide itself. These essays reflect a growing concern with the nature of settler society in Australia and in particular with the fate of the tens of thousands of children who were forcibly taken away from their Aboriginal families by state agencies. Long considered a relatively peaceful settlement, Australian society contained many of the pathologies that led to the exterminatory and eugenic policies of twentieth century Europe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This anthology represents an invaluable contribution to the study of radical violence in colonial Australia and stands in its own right as an historical document reflecting the current state of the discipline on the question of genocide. It offers an impressive breadth of discussion and does not attempt to impose an artificial unity in an essentially divided field. At a more practical level, it is

immensely useful as a teaching text. Moses has done the scholarly community a service by foregrounding the important question of genocide in Australian history in such a thoughtful, open-ended way. It will have provided an invaluable service should it engender further informed debate about the nature of genocide, the nature of colonial empires and the nature of the Australian past." Journal of Australian Studies "In this book Dirk Moses recognizes the enormity of the task before him. By establishing a conceptual framework for Australian historians to consider genocide as an integral part of modernity and white settler colonialism, he has begun the process. This is a singular achievement." Holocaust and Genocide Studies "...editor and contributor A. Dirk Moses has compiled an excellent set of first-rate essays all of which shed some insight on the book's themes...The chapters...are well written, well edited, and very thought provoking...This book has a great deal to commend it. Each essay is well written and manages to present a point of view without being dogmatic...A wide variety of scholars will find this book worthwhile reading." Itinerario "...often new, probing and rich examinations of the takeover of a continent by white Anglos and the long-term impact...the book is replete with detailed and meticulously sourced information on the scope, scale and persistence of the cruelty and violence involved — actual and structural- over a 200-year period...there is a great deal in this excellent volume that demands grounds for deep reflection on how Australia came to be what it is." Patterns of Prejudice "The value of this stimulating collection of historical essays is that it points to both the usefulness of a transnational framework for analysing race thinking and the necessity for close attention to the historical specificity of particular moments and places." Australian Book Review "[This volume] constitutes a successful exercise in deparochialization...[it] firmly inscribes the genocide directed towards Australia's indigenous peoples in the historiographical record." Australian Humanities Review "[This volume] is an outstanding collection, a challenging conversation between differing viewpoints where discussion is ongoing and cooperative." Australian Historical Studies "The book makes a valuable contribution to scholarship on a subject that touches deep into the dark shadows of Australian identity. It builds on and explores the underlying issues that emerged in the heat of the genocide debate in Australia. Australian historiography, and in particular writing on Australian Aboriginal history, can be insular and with its own blind spots. Genocide and Settler Society not only offers a number of local case examples, grounding the debate in the Australian context, but also places the Australian debate in a broader international context with contributions from eminent European and Australian scholars, bringing new perspectives on this vexed question. I found this the most intellectually stimulating and refreshing aspect of the

A. Dirk Moses A. Dirk Moses is chair of global and colonial history at the European University Institute, Florence / University of Sydney. He has also edited another volume in this series entitled Empire, Colony, Genocide.

This book is a definite mixed bag. There are good essays, bad essays, and some that simply lull you into boredom in spite of the rich opportunities of the subject matter. Despite the title of the book, some of these authors (particularly Russell McGregor and Paul Bartrop) take a denialist approach to genocide in Australia. Their arguments in doing so are rather flimsy, and both are based on a fundamentalist reading of the UN Genocide Convention of 1948. As Bartrop puts it, "An act either is genocide according to the law of nations, or it is not genocide at all." Bartrop essentially rejects the 1843 genocide at Warrigal Creek because it doesn't fit into his preconceived idea of what a genocide looks like. As a Holocaust scholar rather than a scholar of Australian history, it is clear that his ideal is the top-down authoritarian genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. His argument seems to come down to Warrigal Creek just not being Holocaust-like enough for him to accept as genocide. However, he masks his exceptionalism by comparing Warrigal Creek to Sand Creek, which was a similar event but one that had enough of the top-down methodology of the Holocaust for the author to feel comfortable accepting as genocide. The technique McGregor uses, by contrast, hinges on the refusal of the United Nations to accept cultural genocide as a category of genocide in its 1948 Convention, despite the insistence of Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term genocide. Having thrown that category out, McGregor effectively denies the possibility of assimilation as a form of genocide. Having thrown out the idea that destroying a culture is genocidal, he turns to demography, showing that the total Aboriginal population numerically increased during the 20th century, and therefore the government could not have been complicit in genocide during that time. In doing this he also derides work (as for instance that by Anna Haebich in this collection) suggesting that the Australian government wanted to "breed out" the aboriginal race, and that higher aboriginal numbers may simply indicate the increase in mixed-race individuals as a result of this process. Beyond these problem essays, this collection is an oddity in that a couple of the essays included have nothing to do with frontier violence in Australia at all, focusing instead on the German Holocaust. Maybe it is sad that one of these articles (written by Jürgen Zimmerer) might be the best essay in this entire collection. In short, what we have here is a real hodgepodge, an effort to produce a collection of essays on a controversial topic without leaving anyone alienated. Because

the book is about genocide, articles about Nazi Germany were included to avoid alienating Holocaust exceptionalists. For this reason there was also an article by Paul Bartrop, who although Australian is clearly a historian of the Holocaust and not of Australia. Australian nationalist genocide-deniers were also appeased by a place in the book with the McGregor essay. There was also an effort to ensure a balance between "intentionalist" (genocide must have a clear perpetrator, such as a state) and "structuralist" (genocide may be caused systematically, or by settlers not acting under government orders) points of view, although I felt there were more examples of the former than the latter. However, all of this inclusion does not mean it is an even-handed collection. Although it was an effort to keep people from feeling alienated, what that really means is that it avoids alienating professional academics. To the lay public, it feels less like history and more like a catfight between the intelligentsia. For all the effort in avoiding alienation, it's worth noting that none of the authors are Aboriginal. That's one perspective the book desperately could have used.

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