

The Unauthorised History of Australia

TRUE GIRT

We are, in all societies and school systems, fed to some extent, upon mythologized national histories. Captain Cook and Lachlan Macquarie loom large in Australian History and the people who lived here for 50,000 years often only get a footnote. Ned Kelly is fated as a hero too, yet his Euroa letter warned if the policeman Fitzpatrick was not exposed as a liar this "shall be the cause of greater slaughter to the rising generation than St. Patrick was to the snakes and frogs in Ireland." This can only be described as terrorism. Ned Kelly was Irish and they were not the favourite immigrants of the English and Scottish immigrants who ran the place. NSW premier Henry Parkes, one of the fathers of Federation, dismissed



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the Irish immigrants to the colony as 'jabbering baboons'. In 1872 he said " I protest against Irishmen coming here and bringing their national grievances to disturb this land of ours...Until Irishmen learn to be Australian colonists... they must not be surprised if people regard their presence as something not very desirable."

Hatred of the Irish has deep roots in Australia. Back in 1824 Governor Brisbane reported "every diabolical crime, which has been committed in the colony since my arrival, has been perpetrated by Roman Catholics." Until very recent times, "Irish" was synonymous with "Roman Catholic." That is until European migrants from Catholic countries came in large numbers.

When the transportation of convicts was ended to the east coast in 1840, in part due to the unacceptable levels of sodomy amongst the convicts, herded together in large numbers, free settlers became the focus. This led to what Hunt describes as "an alms race" between Catholics and Protestants. The religious sects competed in sponsoring migrants of their own faith while the English and Scottish

Protestant squatters " imported Indian and Chinese labourers who could be exploited for a pittance, a business model later perfected by 7-Eleven."

The 1848 revolutions in Europe, all of which failed, led to an influx of refugee European immigrants, followed by the tsunami of white settlers and Chinese of the Gold Rush. "The settlers swarmed onto Aboriginal land "like flies to roadkill." Indeed Charles Darwin wrote, on his short visit in 1836, "wherever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the Aboriginal."

Hunt's description of the white settlement of Tasmania deals with information still not widely known. The decimation of the kangaroo population around Hobart Town deprived the Aborigines of their

favourite food source and conflict over game grew more frequent. The Rev. Knopwood, who happened to perform the wedding of my great great great grandparents, was an enthusiastic contributor to this decimation of wildlife. He was also suspected of assisting bushrangers. Acting as magistrate, he refused to believe Alexander Pearce's claim that he had eaten the other convicts who had escaped with him. Imprisoned again Pearce escaped, took another young convict and ate him too. He was hanged for this.

The genocide of the Tasmanians is just one impressive part of this book. In 1828 The Hobart Town Courier accused "the natives" of having "formed a systematic organized plan of carrying out a war of extermination

against the white inhabitants of the colony." The Black War resulted in terrible atrocities against the original inhabitants, including one settler collecting 'the ears of all the blacks he shot' in a pickle tub. They thus tagged the enemy with the same brush as their own community, full of demands for extermination of the Aborigines.

For those uninformed about the early history of our nation, this is a purchase well worth the money. It is of even greater value for those who have absorbed the national myths. TRUE GIRT - The Unauthorised History of Australia by David Hunt. Black Inc Books. Carlton. Victoria 2016.

The author is a prominent Australian Muslim scholar and activist.