

Too Good to be True? – Race, Class, Massacre and the Bryce v Rusden Libel Case

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Abstract

Though little remembered now, the 1886 Bryce v Rusden libel case was a significant legal collision, bringing to a head half a century of antagonism between those who approved of colonization and those who deplored its effects on indigenous peoples. The defendant in the case, George Rusden, lost, and was forced to pay enormous damages. Why, when his evidence was shaky, did Rusden publish his libels? And why did he make little attempt to correct or apologize for them when he discovered they were largely inaccurate? The answers lie in part in Rusden’s Australian background, and the complicated nexus of race, class and massacre that characterizes colonial history.

One of the more fascinating law cases of the late nineteenth century—though one not much remembered now—is Bryce v Rusden (1886), which saw the MP for Wanganui and a former Native Minister of New Zealand, John Bryce, sue a Melbourne historian, George Rusden, for libel. Rusden had claimed in his controversial *History of New Zealand* (1883) that Bryce, among other crimes, had taken part in a massacre of Māori women and children in southern Taranaki in 1868.¹

The trial, which was held in the High Court in London, attracted a great deal of attention, both in Britain and New Zealand. It resulted in record damages of £5,000 against Rusden (in 1886 a truly enormous sum) and appeared to vindicate the view, widely held in New Zealand, that “philo-Māori” like Rusden were unbalanced zealots peddling a prejudiced version of history.²

Rusden had got his facts wrong, and he was duly punished with a verdict that many found unsurprising, if harsh.³ The intriguing thing about the case, however, is not so much how the court dealt with the libels as the question of why Rusden wrote them in the first place, why he made little attempt to correct or apologize for them when he discovered that what he had written was largely inaccurate, and why, as went into court, he nevertheless believed he had a good chance of triumphing over Bryce.

The answers to these questions, it will be demonstrated, lie in a complicated nexus of considerations relating to race, class and massacre in colonial societies. This essay is an attempt to unravel this nexus, in the process shedding light on the attitudes and assumptions that actuated Rusden as he wrote his history of New Zealand. These attitudes and assumptions were by no means peculiar to Rusden, though some—for example, a dislike of democracy and democratically elected politicians—were present in him in an exaggerated form. In many respects this essay is a warning about the dangers of idealism, partisanship and writing histories of countries other than one’s own. It will serve to confirm the old adage that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

As Rusden mentioned on more than one occasion, he was not a New Zealand colonist and would greatly have preferred it if someone like Walter Mantell, William Swainson or Octavius Hadfield had written the history of New Zealand.⁴ This was not mere modesty; on the contrary, Rusden knew that writing about a country not his own posed difficulties of a kind he did not have to worry about as he produced his parallel *History of Australia* (1883).⁵ There, Rusden was writing about events he knew of first-hand, or from sources he could easily verify; when writing about New Zealand affairs, by contrast, he had to rely on secondary sources such as parliamentary papers,

newspaper reports and letters from New Zealand friends, many of which dealt with matters (notably, relations between Māori and the Crown) with which he was not personally familiar. Perhaps inevitably, given his upbringing in New South Wales and later life in Victoria, Rusden tended to view New Zealand history through an Australian lens. This was especially true in the area of race relations, a subject of the deepest concern for Rusden.

Rusden's view of race had been greatly influenced by his upbringing. His father, the Reverend George Rusden, was a talented, cultured man who took his religious duties seriously, and the young Rusden received instruction from him which imbued him with the lifelong belief that all men were equal, capable alike of good and bad and possessing the same basic human rights and responsibilities.⁶ This view of race had important moral and political implications for race relations, for if all men were equal, brothers sprung from the same Adamic stock, then it could not be argued that indigenous peoples were lesser beings to be used or abused by colonists. On the contrary, their rights had to be respected, and their persons and possessions protected, propositions explicitly recognized by the 1838 *Report* of the Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements, which the young Rusden would certainly have heard discussed by his father.⁷

In the context of the Hunter Valley, in the 1830s, this meant that the young Rusden would have grown up with the idea that the local Aboriginal people were not simply shiftless wanderers or rural pests but human beings deserving the same understanding and respect as those of lighter skin. In fact, if there was a threatening, alien Other that impinged on Rusden's boyhood, it was not the Aboriginal people of the district, but the convicts who lived in the nearby Maitland stockade and whom Rusden would often have seen at work in a chain gang.⁸ Certainly Rusden developed a virulent dislike of convicts and ex-convicts and similar "turbulent" elements, a dislike that was extended to those who furthered their interests or profited from their votes.⁹

Rusden's positive, Christian-humanist view of race and race relations was reinforced by his experience of life in rural New South Wales, where as a jackaroo and later station manager working for his patron the magnate Charles Nicholson, he had come into contact with Aboriginal people who lived and worked on sheep and cattle stations. Rusden liked and respected them, learning something of their language. He rated them, indeed, much higher than most of their "white and contemptuous supplanters," praising their fidelity and cheerfulness and even taking an Aboriginal name, Yittadairn.¹⁰ A romantic verse drama which he wrote at this time, *Moyarra: an Australian Legend* (1851), is unusual in that it depicts Aboriginal people as intelligent, emotional beings, capable of the deepest human feelings.¹¹

Such views, while not unique, were not widely held, and history shows that race relations on the expanding pastoral frontier were often marked by misunderstanding and violence rather than sympathy and respect. Escalating inter-racial tensions reached a crisis point in the late 1830s, when a virtual frontier war raged in New South Wales, as the murder of isolated shepherds was avenged by brutal retaliatory raids.¹² In the winter of 1838 a nadir was reached at Myall Creek station when around 30 unarmed Aboriginal people (mainly women and children) were rounded up by stockmen and shot and hacked to death. The resulting trials and eventual hanging of seven of the killers sent shock waves through the colony, many of whose inhabitants did not believe white men should be executed for killing Aboriginals.¹³ British justice might have been vindicated, but whites on the expanding pastoral frontier were not deterred, it appears, from carrying out further massacres; they merely ensured henceforth that such killings were carried out in secret, sometimes by poisoning.¹⁴

There is no evidence that Rusden himself was involved in or witnessed inter-racial violence at this time, but he would undoubtedly have heard about it. Indeed, as he later commented in a note in his *History of Australia*, he had personally known one of the stockmen involved in the Myall Creek killings, as well as the judge who condemned him to death.¹⁵ Such inter-racial violence, brutal, sudden and indiscriminate, must have made a deep impression upon the idealistic young Rusden; it affected his view of race relations in Australia, which he tended to see as a chronicle of Aboriginal dispossession, marginalization and—more often than colonists dared to admit—massacre.

Massacre: the spectre of it haunts the pages of Rusden's *History of Australia*. While Aboriginal rights had been respected, generally speaking, during the reign of the first Governor, Arthur Phillip, Rusden judged that after his departure in 1792 the treatment of Aboriginal people by colonists had deteriorated to "an almost universal abuse of power."¹⁶ Failure by succeeding governors such as Macquarie to act against such abuses, Rusden opined, had encouraged settlers to believe that they could behave as they liked towards Aboriginals, resulting in attacks upon them right across the colony. Worse, the colonial authorities themselves had taken to the work of extermination, with large-scale military actions mounted against Aboriginal people in the Nepean, Hawkesbury and Grose districts of New South Wales. "Many captives were lodged in prison," wrote Rusden. "Many of their countrymen were shot in places not reported as battlefields. On the branches of trees, in lagoons, in the swirling rivers, many a black carcass [sic] was left to the kites and crows."¹⁷

Under Governor Brisbane the situation had scarcely improved; according to Rusden, Aboriginal people in the region west of Mount York had been "shot like beasts" following a proclamation of martial law in 1824 which had resulted in "four months of authorized atrocity."¹⁸ In Tasmania, by this period, matters were even worse; according to Rusden, race relations were marked by "wild cruelties" on the part of colonists. "Words could not paint the horror of the time," he concluded, noting that when Tasmanian Aboriginals met a white man (George Robinson) *not* bent on murder they were "bewildered."¹⁹

The second quarter of the nineteenth century had seen no diminution in the violence. Governor Darling, Rusden judged, had done little to stop the killing of Aboriginals by the military. His injunction to settlers in the Hunter Valley to take their own steps with regard to dealing with local tribespeople, moreover, had led to "high-handed murders" by armed convicts, "over whose doings there was no control."²⁰ He had personally known many of the survivors of these attacks, Rusden noted, opining that by not punishing or checking massacres, every governor except Phillip had in a sense subscribed to them.²¹ On the other side of the continent, in Western Australia, race relations were little better: according to Rusden, "many dark deeds were done" there, until the new governor, Hutt, took control and put a stop to the abuse.²²

An increase in population and pastoral expansion westward at this period only intensified the conflict between the races. In outback New South Wales, with government sanction, Major Nunn mounted a campaign in 1838 against Aboriginals which resulted in large numbers of deaths. Formal military action was supplemented by more casual killings on remote stations: "countless hundreds of blacks" had been destroyed, wrote Rusden, quoting as his source an "able" police magistrate, J.R. Hardy.²³ The massacre at Myall Creek station, it seemed, had been unusual only in that the perpetrators of the killings had been caught and punished.

Most of the abuses narrated by Rusden had occurred a generation or more before he wrote his history of Australia. In one state, however, inter-racial conflict was a contemporary or near-

contemporary reality, and on it Rusden poured particular vitriol. “If there be any pre-eminence in evil, Queensland must bear the stigma of deserving it,” he pronounced, before embarking on an impassioned, 13-page philippic on the subject of massacre.²⁴ The Native Police in Queensland, Rusden claimed, were “a mere machine for murder;” so efficient were they in their work of extermination that very few witnesses remained who might bring justice to bear on the wanton killers.²⁵ Station owners and their servants were scarcely less destructive, Rusden wrote, observing that they “denounced as impertinent any questionings as to the number, or the manner, of the violent deaths of natives on their cattle stations.”²⁶ Once, Rusden noted, the authorities had attempted to stem “the cruel blasts of persecution which raged over the land”, but with the advent of self-government, police and civilians had been given free rein to behave as brutally as they liked.²⁷

The subject of “dispersal” was a matter of special horror for Rusden, who drew for his sources on a series of lurid accounts published in a local newspaper, the *Queenslander*, in May 1880, and on a pamphlet on the subject published in the same year titled “The Way We Civilize.” “Dispersal,” stated Rusden, was simply a euphemism for wholesale massacre, carried out by black Native Police under the command of white officers in circumstances, often, of extreme violence.²⁸

Some colonists, Rusden admitted, had the decency to be horrified by what was going on. One stated that he could “scarcely control his indignation and remain calm” when he heard “nameless deeds of horror discussed openly by many a campfire.” But others approved of the massacre. One, writing to the editor of the *Queenslander* under the nom-de-plume Never Never, claimed that Europeans were a superior people who had a right to “clear away” Aboriginals, who were “a weak useless race.” “And being a useless race,” he (or she) went on, “what does it matter what they suffer, anymore than the distinguished philanthropist who writes in his behalf cares for the wounded, half-dead pigeon he tortures at his pigeon-matches?”²⁹

To such complicity and apathy there could only be one response as far as Rusden was concerned, and he berated Never Never and his fellow Queenslanders in the roundest terms. “The defence put forward by its apologist, Never Never, is not the least repulsive feature. Over what he justified, a larger number of his accomplices would throw a veil in the hope that the atrocities they could not excuse might wither out of men’s knowledge unexposed. A still larger number, resident in the towns, were probably ignorant...the subject is not inviting. The dead or dying bodies of black brethren are passed by on the other side, while petty local claims or amusements engross attention...”³⁰

For such a crime, Rusden predicted, there would be a “reckoning” in the form of a corruption of the body politic through moral degradation. He noted, in this connexion, that the Queensland government had failed to set up an enquiry into the abuse of Aboriginals following the *Queenslander*’s columns on the subject.³¹

The issue here, with these accounts of mass killing, is not whether they are true, or false, or partially true—about the facts of massacre in colonial Australia debate has raged, and still rages.³² The point is that Rusden believed they were true, and this conviction fuelled a savage indignation in his breast and a concomitant determination to do what he could to alert readers to what he thought had happened, and was still happening. “Why do I write these things?” he asked rhetorically. “I would arouse, if possible, a public sense that, though past wrongs cannot be blotted out, there is even now a future in which some good may be done; that while one solitary Australian

remains alive, there is a sacred duty resting on the community to visit the poor creature in his affliction, and atone in some degree for the cruelties which have been heaped upon his race.”³³

Clearly, Rusden had been deeply affected by what he had discovered regarding race relations in colonial Australia. Most especially, he had been affected by what he had learned from the pages of the *Queenslander*. Massacre, it seemed, was not a horror of the past; it had occurred quite recently, and was still occurring, thanks at least in part to the passive complicity (if not active encouragement) of democratically-elected colonial governments anxious to appease land-hungry colonists. This belief was to profoundly influence not just Rusden’s *History of Australia*, but another, parallel text which he was also writing at this time: the *History of New Zealand*. The result, ultimately, was a libel for which he paid very dearly.

So far, this essay has focused on questions of race and race relations. But there is another discourse in Rusden’s *History of Australia* that is equally powerful, equally pertinent: a discourse of class. On this subject Rusden held highly conservative, even reactionary views: according to these, society had a natural, God-given hierarchy, with aristocrats and gentry at the top, professionals and respectable business people in the middle, and the unskilled labouring classes at the bottom. Beyond this lay the nether-world of criminals and ex-criminals: people, in Rusden’s view, who were naturally vicious and incapable of moral reform. This somewhat pessimistic stance can be traced to Rusden’s essentially Pauline view of human nature, which he saw as irrational and cruel unless restrained by law and elevated by the truths of Christianity.³⁴

Criminals, in the colonial Australian context, were the convicts and ex-convicts whom Rusden would have seen on a daily basis in places such as Maitland, and with whom, almost certainly, had had worked while managing Charles Nicholson’s properties. It was at their feet, with few exceptions, that Rusden laid the blame for the inter-racial violence that in his opinion had so marred Australian history. In Tasmania, for example, during the early phase of settlement, it had been “the worst class of whites” (mainly ex-convicts) who had committed atrocities against the indigenous population.³⁵ In the Liverpool Plains area of New South Wales, in the 1820s, it had been “criminals of the worst class” in the shape of convict or ex-convict shepherds and stockmen who had behaved with “lust, hatred and revenge” towards local Aboriginals.³⁶ According to Rusden, by the 1830s there had developed a “ragged fringe of settlement” on the pastoral frontier where “convict servants had worked their evil will,” so corrupting their masters (who should have known better) that the latter preferred not to enquire into “brutalities of which all men knew.”³⁷

Even after the end of transportation, and the dilution (relatively speaking) of the convict element by a rapidly increasing free population, it was on the morally degraded lower orders (as Rusden saw them) that he fastened the blame for most inter-racial violence. He carefully noted, for example, that it was not the explorers Burke and Wills, but their negligent servant, Wright, who had fired upon Aboriginals near Cooper’s Creek.³⁸ The notion that people like Wright, or the convict and ex-convict shepherds and stockmen caught up in the violence of the pastoral frontier, were simply the tools of a much larger act of dispossession and massacre orchestrated by those higher up the social ladder seems not to have occurred to Rusden, for whom history was simply an accumulation of individual acts and deeds.³⁹

As Rusden saw it, little enough charity had been extended to Australia’s indigenous people, but what there had been was the work of enlightened insiders such as Phillip, the first governor, Arthur, his lieutenant in Tasmania, and (at a humbler level) landowners such “Messrs Everett and Halhead in New England [and] Mr Docker at the Ovens River” in Victoria, “who in spite of the difficulties caused by their erring neighbours, manfully succeeded in establishing

confidence and maintaining peace without previous violence.”⁴⁰ Above all there was Rusden’s hero, John Macarthur, the founder of the country’s wool industry. He had won the love of Aborigines, wrote Rusden, “by a kindness which was rare” (the fact that it was the expansion of the wool industry under Macarthur which was the cause of much Aboriginal dispossession was not something Rusden considered).⁴¹

What united all these men was the fact that they were gentlemen, people who had been brought up to observe the same moral code as Rusden himself. While other, less honourable gentlemen might have behaved poorly towards the indigenous population on their properties, the fact remained that, for Rusden, massacre was something carried out by the lower orders.

When it came to the question of the mistreatment of indigenous people Rusden’s denunciations, however, were not confined to convicts, ex-convicts and the gentlemen landowners who let them work their will. There were other groups who were to blame for what had happened, notably gold-miners and similar elements who (in Rusden’s view) possessed little in the way of moral education and who cared less about indigenous rights.⁴² Unlike landowners, whose property responsibilities required them to look after the land they had acquired or inherited, unlike Aborigines, who were bound to their territories through ancestry and tradition, these “turbulent” elements were linked by no ties to the soil; for them, according to Rusden, all that mattered was short-term gain.⁴³ In this negative view of the urban or semi-urban labouring classes, Rusden was adopting an essentially Classical attitude; he described the proletariat, for example, using the Latin term “faeces Romuli” (excrement of Romulus).⁴⁴ Such extreme language underlines Rusden’s deeply conservative, anti-democratic, highly reactionary world view.⁴⁵

Even worse than gold-miners and their ilk, thought Rusden, were the politicians who had made careers for themselves by appealing to popular sentiment. For this group Rusden reserved a special scorn, seeing them as “parasites” symptomatic of “the disease of democracy.”⁴⁶ Their unrelenting push for an ever-wider franchise, judged Rusden, put in danger the established order of things. Much of the *History of Australia*, in fact, is an attack on democratic reformers who wished to expand the powers of the colonies’ legislative assemblies at the expense of their non-elected upper houses.⁴⁷

In particular, thought Rusden, these “parasites” rode rough-shod over the rights of natives, knowing as they did that there were votes to be had in promises of cheap land and a “firm line” with those bold enough to challenge government policy in this area. The notion that colonial governments posed a threat to indigenous peoples was not peculiar to Rusden. As early as 1838 the *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines in British Settlements* had listed examples of the abuses suffered by indigenes at the hands of colonial authorities, several of which Rusden alluded to in his *History of New Zealand*.⁴⁸ A generation later, Sir John Gorst (who would later defend Rusden at the libel trial) had suggested in his book *The Maori King* (1864) that Māori districts should be placed under direct imperial rule to save them from the grasp of land-hungry colonial administrations.⁴⁹ In Rusden’s *History of Australia* the notion that colonial governments posed a threat to indigenous peoples had figured as an important but secondary theme; in his *History of New Zealand*, however, it became a dominating leitmotiv, with the book focusing squarely on the breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi which he deemed successive colonial governments had committed.⁵⁰ Populist politicians who facilitated these breaches were to be a particular target of Rusden’s vituperative prose, as were civil service mandarins in London who excused or ignored them. He described Christopher Richmond, for example, as showing “a daring irreverence for the facts” in his statement to parliament that warfare in Taranaki was in no way the

fault of colonists, while Frederick Whitaker was accused of possessing a cold, “black-letter intelligence” that could not comprehend Māori patriotism. In relation to his complicity in narrowing Māori land rights to lands in actual occupation, Rusden described Lord John Russell as “sinning boldly with full knowledge of his own degradation, and of the crime he advocated.”⁵¹

The frequency of massacre in colonial history; the fact that it was carried out generally by members of the lower social classes; and the connivance of democratically elected politicians in this horror (or at least their careful turning of a blind eye)—these, then, were some of the *idées fixes* which occupied Rusden’s mind as he gazed across the Tasman at the sister colony of New Zealand and prepared to write the history of that country. It would have been strange, indeed, if Rusden’s Australian experience had *not* in some way influenced his views of what had happened in New Zealand. In the event, however, it over-determined his writing, leading to a lack of objectivity, of balance, which was to have serious consequences. Historians had certainly dealt with the theme of massacre in New Zealand history, but these had been massacres carried out by Māori, either of other Māori, or (more rarely) of Europeans, as in the murder by Te Kooti of some 30 settlers near Gisborne in 1868.⁵² Colonists in New Zealand, unlike their brethren in Australia and the U.S., were not thought to have carried out the killing of indigenous non-combatants; they were seen (and saw themselves) as civilized men of a different nature from the Māori who opposed them, who were increasingly being portrayed as “rebels” and “fanatics.”⁵³ This fact made the allegations which Rusden was to level at Bryce all the more shocking.

Rusden had originally intended to write a history of Australasia (most probably in the standard three-volume format) in which New Zealand would have played a minor part, as befitted a nation that was both younger and much smaller than Australia.⁵⁴ As he settled down to work in the mid-1870s, however, Rusden soon realized that it would be more sensible to publish the history of New Zealand as a separate book. At first, he had thought two volumes would be sufficient.⁵⁵ As he delved deeper into his subject, however, and discovered the extent (in his view) to which successive governments had breached the Treaty of Waitangi, two volumes grew to three, with the result that Rusden’s *History of New Zealand* is nearly as long as his *History of Australia*. Rusden was aware of the imbalance but felt that it was his “imperious duty” to expose fully and at length what he saw as the accumulated wrongs done to Maori, wrongs which he believed had been systematically concealed.⁵⁶

While Rusden cannot be counted a professional, objective historian in the modern sense, he nevertheless made considerable efforts to ensure the accuracy of his history. He had tested every statement “by reference to the most authentic sources of information” he wrote in the Preface.⁵⁷ These “authentic sources” were not limited to official documents like parliamentary reports but also included unofficial statements and comments from a variety of New Zealand contacts, most of who had been prominent actors in the drama of colonization. As a scholar notes, “one after another” people such as George Grey, William Swainson, Francis Fenton, Walter Mantell, Frederick Weld, and Governors Robinson and Gordon, received enquiring letters from Rusden as his researches raised questions for which he sought their personal answers. Many of these correspondents, such as Grey, went out of their way to help Rusden in his requests for information⁵⁸

To supplement this remote research conducted from Melbourne, Rusden visited New Zealand twice, once in the summer of 1878-79, when he made brief tours of the north of the country, and again in the winter of 1881, when he stayed at Government House in Wellington as the guest of Gordon. While there, he was given access to official despatch books and other

parliamentary papers; even more importantly, he made the acquaintance of Mantell. Each man shared a concern about the abuses they saw Maori as having suffered at the hands of government, and Mantell was in fact to provide Rusden with much information on this score.⁵⁹ So close was their friendship, indeed, that Rusden was to refer to Mantell as his “New Zealand self.”⁶⁰

Numerous and authentic as his New Zealand sources were, Rusden did however bring a very particular view of race relations, formed in Australia, to bear on his subject. This slant was made more acute by the fact that while he was researching and writing his history of New Zealand, Rusden corresponded and associated largely with “philo-Māori” such as Mantell and Gordon, men whose liberal views on how tangata whenua should be treated diverged strongly from those of the bulk of settlers and from those of many in government who wished to see a “firm line” taken with Māori.⁶¹ Gordon’s views put him at odds with most of his ministers; especially difficult was his relationship with the prickly, obstinate Bryce, who served as Native Minister during this period. It seems very probable that Gordon conveyed his deep dislike of Bryce to Rusden while the latter was staying with him in Wellington in 1881. Certainly Bryce became a kind of *bête noire* for Rusden, who saw him as the very incarnation of the ignorant, uncouth working-class settler who had done so much to damage race relations in places such as Australia.

The negative, narrow view of New Zealand history that Rusden developed might have been tempered if he had known New Zealand as well as he knew Australia, and if he had been capable of the kind of objectivity that (ideally) characterizes the professional historian. But Rusden did not know New Zealand; nor was his obstinate, judgemental persona able to maintain balance or critical distance.⁶² The result was a history of New Zealand that was a furious indictment of the treatment meted out by governments to Māori, but which almost entirely neglected other subjects, such as the development of the economy. Historians traditionally, indeed, have refused to regard Rusden’s work as a history at all, seeing it rather as a polemic produced by a bitterly prejudiced amateur.⁶³ Only recently has professional opinion become more favourable, with some scholars seeing Rusden as New Zealand’s first revisionist historian.⁶⁴

Furious as Rusden’s attack was on the colony’s successive governments, his book would have remained no more than an intriguing historiographical footnote since in its original version it dealt with events only up to 1868, and did not include any libels relating to Bryce. But then, just as Rusden was writing its concluding chapters, and only a short time after he had been in Wellington, came the Parihaka incident, which saw government forces invade of Te Whiti’s Taranaki settlement late in 1881.

It is hard to over-state the significance of the Parihaka incident for Rusden. For him, it was the final, disgraceful act in a long sequence of government abuses of Māori rights that stretched back to the Waitara imbroglio and beyond. It was, wrote Rusden to Mantell, “a brutal farce”; later he described it to his friend as “a condoned atrocity” and “the diapason of disgrace.”⁶⁵ Primed by his conversations with Gordon in Wellington only a few months earlier, Rusden had probably already decided to extend his history to the present day; what had happened at Parihaka merely confirmed for him the absolute necessity of bringing his work up to date, so that the shocking truth (as he saw it) about how New Zealand governments were treating Māori could be brought home to his readers. Accordingly, he finished his new version of the history of New Zealand with an extended, highly dramatic account of the invasion of Te Whiti’s settlement, which he described as “an atrocity,” “an injustice,” and “a great raid.” It was the final demonstration, if any were needed, of the colony’s utter bad faith when it came to the question of Māori rights.⁶⁶ In his negative view of Bryce’s “raid” on Parihaka, Rusden was not entirely alone, it should be said;

a small proportion of the settler population was as disgusted as he was, notably the poet Jessie Mackay, who published a satirical mock-epic poem on the incident modelled on Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."⁶⁷

Rusden targeted a number of individuals for blame about Parihaka, seeing it as a plot concocted by devious politicians in Wellington who had taken advantage of Gordon's temporary absence in Fiji to destroy the power of a leader bold enough to challenge their policy of forcing Māori from the land.⁶⁸ But there was one man who drew Rusden's particular venom: Bryce, who had personally led the invasion of Te Whiti's settlement, and who had been fêted by colonists when he returned, victorious, from his mission. Confessing to Mantell that he "lost patience" when he thought of the Parihaka episode, Rusden wrote that he wanted to "sharpen the arrows of his scorn so as to penetrate his [Bryce's] hide deeper."⁶⁹ The result was, among other things, a torrent of invective directed at Bryce in the updated version of the *History of New Zealand*. According to Rusden, Bryce was coarse, indifferent to Māori welfare, lacking virtue, a plotter, violent, a marauder, evil-minded, an undeserving recipient of honours, unwise, ignoble, a kidnapper, a larcenist, callous, an ill-doer in power, dull, ignorant, half-educated, narrow, obstinate, autocratic, a torturer and a teacher of villainy.⁷⁰

This was, even by Rusden's standards, unusually vituperative, given that he had never met Bryce. There is, indeed, a strange, personal edge to the abuse which can best be explained in terms of Rusden's rigid notions of class and his detestation of democracy and of those (like Bryce) who had made a career out of it.

Virulent as Rusden's invective was, by itself it would not have resulted in a libel case. Like other historians of his period, Rusden wrote history with the aim of shaping society in a certain direction, according to his own very definite agendas; he was "engaged," and as such could be expected to express himself in a lively fashion when it came to the events and personalities he described.⁷¹ Added to this was Rusden's own very idiosyncratic stance when it came to writing history: that of the sardonic, disillusioned outsider, at odds with the democratic temper of his times, more inclined to judge and pass sentence than understand and empathize.⁷² Invective, for someone like Rusden, had a definite purpose; as he opined to Mantell, it was necessary in order to "ram the truth into readers" and he made no apology for it.⁷³

Colourful adjectives, however, are very different from specific accusations of ill-doing. These really did have the power to penetrate a man's hide—perhaps, even, destroy him, as well as discredit those who supported or associated with him. It must have been with some gratification, then, that in early 1882, not long after the Parihaka episode, Rusden received a letter from his friend Sir Arthur Gordon enclosing a note about Bryce's "antecedents" which, Gordon stated, Rusden could rely on since Gordon's informant had been none other than Bishop Octavius Hadfield, Bishop of the Wellington province and a respected senior prelate.

The enclosure, written by Gordon, stated that 14 years earlier, on 1 December 1868, during the war against Titokowaru in Taranaki, a detachment of mounted troopers under the command of Captain Newland had come upon a number of Māori women and children foraging for food at an abandoned woolshed. The troopers, led by Bryce and a sergeant, Maxwell, had ridden at the foragers, and when the latter had fled, had "pursued and cut them down," killing some and wounding others. The enclosure went on to state that Major Kemp (Rangihwinui), a leader of kūpapa (loyalist) forces who had witnessed the engagement, had expressed his disgust at this attack on non-combatants, and that as a result a vengeful Bryce had later dismissed Kemp from government employment. The enclosure stated, finally, that the incident at Handley's woolshed

was well known to Māori and that it had earned Bryce the sobriquet of “kohuru” (translated as “murderer”).⁷⁴

A month later, Gordon had written another letter to Rusden, containing another enclosure, this time written by Hadfield. In it, the Bishop stated that a former trooper of the Wanganui cavalry unit in which Bryce had served had told him that Bryce had been the commander of the mounted party that had “killed the children” at the woolshed. The story, Hadfield said, had come to him from Dr Featherston, Superintendent of the Wellington province, who had become concerned at the brutalization which the war was engendering. “I certainly confused the dates if I ever heard them,” wrote Hadfield to Gordon, “but as to the main facts I am clear, as I have a distinct recollection of Dr Featherston’s indignation.”⁷⁵

Rusden later admitted that initially he had been “rather startled” by the information he had received from Gordon, and that he had explored all the official documents of the period which he could find in order to corroborate the story of the massacre at Handley’s woolshed. He had discovered two commendatory despatches, he said, one from Colonel Whitmore, the senior military commander, and another from the officer on the spot, Captain Newland. In his despatch, Newland had stated that Bryce had been “prominent in the affair” and had set his men “a gallant example” in an attack on a group of what were described as “dangerous Hau-Haus.”

Puzzled by the characterization of the incident as gallant and brave, Rusden said that he had replied to Gordon, writing that he could find nothing to confirm the massacre story. But then he had received Gordon’s second letter enclosing Hadfield’s note. Captain Newland, judged Rusden, had misrepresented what had happened at the woolshed; he (Rusden) had preferred to believe Dr Featherston’s version of events, thinking that in his position as Superintendent of the Wellington province the doctor would have been “well informed.” Featherston’s version seemed to be corroborated by a letter to the *Lyttelton Times* written by one “Ipse Dixit” at the very end of 1881, which suggested that Bryce had been involved in murdering Māori.⁷⁶

Buoyed by what he had learned, and believing that he had found a way to deliver a death blow to Bryce and his supporters in government, Rusden wrote up an account of Bryce’s “antecedents” in the second volume of his history in which he stated that Bryce and Sergeant Maxwell, while out on patrol with other mounted troopers, had dashed upon a group of Māori women and children near Handley’s woolshed and had “cut them down gleefully and with ease.”⁷⁷ Though Rusden later disputed it, the meaning was quite plain: Bryce was a murderer. He was no better, in fact, than Te Kooti, who had slain European settlers on the east coast, or Ropata, who had overseen a slaughter of some of Te Kooti’s followers (including women) after the battle of Ngātapa in Hawke’s Bay, massacres which Rusden used to book-end his description of what had happened at the woolshed.⁷⁸ In a way, indeed, Bryce was worse, for at least Māori had the excuse that it was customary to spare no-one in their battles, whereas Bryce, as a European and an officer, could have been expected to show a degree of chivalry toward non-combatants. If he resembled anyone, it was the ex-convict stockmen and shepherds and other whites “of the worst class” who had wrought such destruction on Aboriginal people in Australia.

As if all this were not enough, Rusden then added another paragraph on Bryce, in the third volume of his history, in which he stated that Bryce’s father had been “shipped” to New Zealand, and suggested that when young Bryce had tortured the cows he had herded by throwing stones at their eyes.⁷⁹ The implication that Bryce senior’s passage to the antipodes had been somehow involuntary was unpleasant; the suggestion that Bryce had been wont to abuse animals in his care was extraordinary, based as it was on no evidence at all. Writing to his friend Mantell,

Rusden defended it as a mere “rhetorical artifice” to illustrate the cruelty he believed was inherent in Bryce’s nature.⁸⁰ Reading it, however, one is struck again by the strange, personal edge to Rusden’s invective.

Third-hand gossip about an incident that had happened years earlier; despatches that mentioned Bryce as being present at the woolshed attack but not necessarily killing or hurting anyone; and a pseudonymous letter penned years later by person or persons unknown: these were flimsy structures on which to build something as serious as an accusation of massacre. The fact that Rusden did use them for such a purpose is the more puzzling, since he had more than once expatiated on the necessity of obtaining “independent evidence” when writing history.⁸¹ Though not a self-conscious historian in the modern manner, Rusden was, as one scholar has noted, a conscious historian who knew the importance of verifying source material.⁸² Why then did he so readily make use of the Bryce massacre story, which could best be described as a questionable allegation rather than an established fact?

As I have suggested, part of the reason lay in Rusden’s upbringing in Australia, where massacres of indigenous people (including women and children) had occurred and were still occurring—if one believed Rusden’s *History of Australia*—in places such as Queensland. Shameful killings, it seemed, had happened in the Australian colonies; why should they have not happened in New Zealand? For Rusden, to put it bluntly, massacre was what colonists did.

If colonists in general were capable of massacre, how much more likely a candidate was Bryce. He was not a gentleman, for a start: Bryce had come out steerage to New Zealand, unlike Rusden, who had shared a private cabin with his siblings on his way to Australia.⁸³ Once in the colony, Bryce had worked in manual occupations on the land—a great contrast with Rusden’s experience in New South Wales as a gentleman jackaroo and station manager of Charles Nicholson’s broad acres. Far from fighting democracy, as his assailant had, Bryce had made a name for himself in its grubby arena; specifically, he was known for the “firm line” he took with Māori, which for Rusden meant little more than abuse of their rights and theft of their land. Bryce had even been a gold miner for a while—surely the final proof, if any more were needed, of his brutal, degraded nature.⁸⁴ People very like Bryce, Rusden thought, had been involved in the large-scale killing of Aboriginals in Australia; if anyone in New Zealand had taken part in a massacre of Māori, it would have been a person such as Bryce, who as far as Rusden was concerned belonged to “the worst class of whites.” When it came to massacre, Bryce fitted the bill.

Not everyone was convinced, and some saw danger ahead. A Melbourne friend, with whom Rusden had discussed the matter before he (Rusden) had left for England to oversee the publication of his histories, “begged him not to make use of any of these materials, which appeared to [him] patently false.”⁸⁵ In New Zealand, Mantell, to whom Rusden had sent copies of his passages about Bryce, expressed his dislike of what Rusden had written; Rusden, however, replied that he had decided not to strike them out.⁸⁶ Later, after he had arrived in England, Rusden wrote to his friend that he had showed the passages to some Cambridge college dons, asking them whether they thought them beneath the dignity of history. “They thought not, but considered [them] warm. So I shall hardly make up my mind to take your suave and prudent advice—which it gives me grief to neglect...”⁸⁷ In the end, it seems, the story about Bryce was too good to pass up, whatever qualms it provoked.

Five hundred copies of the *History of New Zealand* were printed at the beginning of 1883, with 125 being sent to Australia for distribution in New Zealand. The English reviews were, generally, favourable: the *Daily Telegraph* thought it “full of valuable information” while the

Spectator deemed it “well-written” though it did note Rusden’s “harsh judgements” upon various public men. Nor was Rusden’s vivid turn of phrase necessarily condemned: the *Spectator*, for example, approved of the book’s “vein of mingled enthusiasm and indignation that lends eloquence to many pages” while the *Daily News* deemed Rusden’s stylistic “warmth” a credit to his love of justice.⁸⁸

Things were otherwise in New Zealand, where the book, according to Mantell, raised a howl of indignation. “Never,” he wrote, “did outraged virtue scream more loudly.”⁸⁹ The history was a libel, not merely on Bryce, but on the whole colony, it was felt: the latest in a long line of biased, partisan attacks from wildly prejudiced “philo-Māori.” In Wellington, the *Evening Post* denounced it as “one of the most scandalous libels on a community that has yet been penned; in Auckland, the *New Zealand Times* regretted Rusden’s “Billingsgate abuse” and deplored his bitterness and anti-white bias.⁹⁰ Angriest of all was Bryce, who called Rusden “a liar, a slanderer and a coward,” adding that while the Australian writer might smite his breast and thank God he was not as other men were, other men might thank God they were not like Rusden. Almost at once Bryce began thinking about legal proceedings: initially he wanted to institute a criminal case, but later decided to pursue a civil action.⁹¹ He would pursue it, moreover, not in New Zealand, but in England, in London, in the very heart of empire. Rusden had succeeded, it appeared, in penetrating Bryce’s hide, and now he was going to have to defend himself against a furious counter-attack.

None of this would have mattered very much if Rusden had had a secure foundation for his story about the massacre at the woolshed. But almost at once doubts began to arise. “Where is your authority for the story about our great Bryce?” asked Mantell in July, noting that a Māori account, published in a South Island newspaper, of what seemed to be the same episode stated merely that Bryce had been one of the attacking party, not that he had killed or wounded anyone himself.⁹² No women had been present at the woolshed, it now appeared; what victims there had been amounted to two boys killed and some others wounded. If the Māori account was to be believed—and it had the ring of truth—the incident had been a nasty one, involving a surprise attack on unarmed children.⁹³ But it had not been a massacre perpetrated by Bryce, who appeared to have had a tangential role in the affair, arriving late on the scene and using his sword only to threaten troopers who were on the point of riding too far ahead and exposing themselves to enemy fire.⁹⁴ He had not, it seemed, dashed upon anyone, or cut them down “gleefully and with ease.”

Realizing that he had made a mistake, and concerned, perhaps, by the news that Bryce was intending to prosecute, Rusden began to backtrack. In a letter to Mantell’s English cousin, Woodhouse, with whom he was friendly, Rusden claimed, casuistically, that he had not said Bryce had *killed* women and children, merely that he had cut them down.⁹⁵ A few days later, in a letter to Mantell, he repeated the claim, before asking his friend to start contacting Māori witnesses to the attack at the woolshed in case he had to defend himself in court.⁹⁶

Wishing to pour oil on troubled waters, Rusden then sent Mantell a letter intended for publication in New Zealand, in which he noted the “very general respect and esteem” that had been enjoyed by his source, Dr Featherston, and the extraneous corroboration provided by Uru Te Angina that an attack on unarmed children had indeed occurred.⁹⁷ Once again Rusden denied that he had said Bryce had killed anyone; he had spoken, he said, merely of the “treatment” of the children, not of their death. “It would afford me great pleasure,” he went on, “to be able to exculpate Mr Bryce from the imputation of having been one of the party which maltreated the children, but I must be aided in the task. A mere assertion that Dr Featherston circulated a falsehood gives me no assistance.”⁹⁸ Rusden then observed that Bryce had not denied he had been

present at the attack, and said he had recorded the incident only as a way of illustrating Bryce's generally "cruel" conduct towards women and children, more recently exemplified by his actions at Parihaka. Presciently, he predicted that the day would come when Bryce's behaviour would be deemed as "little commendable."⁹⁹ Rusden's letter was not published, however; even if it had been, it is doubtful whether it would have placated Bryce, who was notorious for his obstinate, unforgiving nature.

Worried Rusden might have been at the prospect of being sued for libel, but his concern did not extend to taking any more active measures to mend matters. He had prepared an errata slip, for example, on learning that no women had been victims of the woolshed attack, but he did not in the end send it to his publishers, or to New Zealand where his story about Bryce had had most impact. Nor did Rusden take any steps to have his book withdrawn from sale, either in Britain or the antipodes.¹⁰⁰ Most obviously, he had failed to apologize to Bryce, or sought to contact him so as to clarify the details surrounding the alleged massacre.¹⁰¹

Rusden's lack of action in this respect can be explained, partly, by his belief that Bryce's talk of legal proceedings was a bluff designed to intimidate him and that it was "extremely improbable" that Bryce would follow through on his threat.¹⁰² Even when it became clear, early in 1884, that Bryce had not been bluffing, Rusden still took no direct action to placate his opponent, believing, apparently, that when a full recital of the wrongs committed against Māori was heard Bryce would be exposed as the ruffian he was and would be jeered from the court.¹⁰³ In this belief Rusden made a tactical error, as it turned out, for the trial judge (Baron Huddleston) directed the jury to focus solely on the question of Rusden's libellous statements, not on broader historical matters which (in his view) were irrelevant.¹⁰⁴

A more basic, personal reason, however, lay behind Rusden's failure to apologize. Rusden saw himself as a gentleman, a member of an elite whose role it was to guide society in the right moral direction. Bryce, in his opinion, was merely a cow-boy, a member of the lower orders from whom little could be expected beyond brutality and deceit. In Rusden's highly class-determined view of reality, a gentleman did not apologize to a fellow such as Bryce; to do so would have suggested a moral equality, a moral equivalence between the two men which he (Rusden) did not think existed.¹⁰⁵ Rusden's archaic view of social relations was far from uncommon in the nineteenth century but it is fair to say that his Australian background prejudiced him even further against Bryce, whom he seems to have seen as little better than the brutal ex-convict stockmen of his own country.

The rest, as they say, is history. Rusden lost the libel case, and had to pay large damages to Bryce, as well as costs. He did not stop writing about government abuse of Māori rights, but he did so more carefully so as to avoid any further danger of law suits (subsequent editions of his *History of New Zealand*, for example, were printed with the two libellous passages deleted and replaced with asterisks). Bryce, for his part, was wildly feted when he returned home, for his victory in the High Court in London was seen as a vindication of colonial settlement in New Zealand and a final, decisive triumph over "philo-Māori" who had dared question its morality.¹⁰⁶

It was neither, of course; the fact that Rusden had made a mistake about one incident did not by any means invalidate his whole book, as Mantell had been quick to point out.¹⁰⁷ The fact that there were no other libel actions taken out against Rusden, indeed, tended to suggest that he had spoken the truth about how Māori had been treated, and that people like Fox and Whitaker knew it. In his own time, Rusden was scorned as a jackdaw parading in the peacock feathers of an historian, and was dismissed by later scholars as an amateur polemicist rather than a professional

writer of history.¹⁰⁸ Recently, however, as noted earlier, Rusden has been the subject of re-evaluation by scholars who see him as New Zealand's first revisionist historian and an early and brave proponent of indigenous rights: a man who spoke up, and out, when most preferred to keep quiet. Bryce, on the other hand, is now the subject of almost automatic obloquy: for many scholars, especially those in the academy, he is the very incarnation of settler injustice toward Māori.¹⁰⁹ In the long view of history, it is Rusden, not Bryce, who seems to be having the last laugh.

Still, losing the libel case was a serious blow for Rusden, and a setback for all those who publicly questioned the morality of colonization. The sad, ironic thing was that it need not have happened at all, as Rusden's book would almost certainly have had the same impact without the offending passages. But, for Rusden, over-influenced as he was by his Australian background and his beliefs about race, class and massacre, the story about Bryce was irresistible; it was simply too good to be true.

And so it proved to be.

John O'Leary is currently writing a biography of George Rusden which is due to be published by Australian Scholarly Publishing later this year.

Endnotes

¹ See George Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1883), 504-05.

² See Ross Clendon, "Bryce v Rusden: the Vindication of a Colony," BA thesis, University of Otago, 1973, v-vi.

³ See Arthur Gordon to Frederick Chesson 24 April 1886, ATL c 185/114, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington.

⁴ See Rusden to Mantell 8 July 1883 and 30 October 1883, Letters from G.W. Rusden to W.B.D. Mantell and others, 15 July 1880 to 20 August 1895, ATL MS 1834-1835, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington.

⁵ See Rusden to Mantell 30 October 1883.

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- ⁶ See William Renwick, "Who was GW Rusden — and does it matter?," *Stout Centre Review* 3 no. 4 (1993): 18-19; see also Matthew Russell, "'Had I But A Trumpet Tongue': George Rusden and his Imperious Duty," Master's thesis, University of Auckland, 1993, 10.
- ⁷ See Russell "'Had I But A Trumpet Tongue,'" 11.
- ⁸ See A.G. Austin, *George William Rusden and National Education in Australia 1849-1862* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1958), 4.
- ⁹ For a discussion of Rusden's views on convicts and ex-convicts, see Mark Hutchison, "Such a Contracted Sphere: some aspects of the writing of Australian history prior to 1900," Doctoral thesis, UNSW, 1988, 349.
- ¹⁰ See George Rusden, *Moyarra: an Australian Legend* (Maitland, NSW: R. Jones, 1851), iv.
- ¹¹ For a discussion of *Moyarra* and its significance, see John O'Leary, "'The life, the loves of that dark race': the ethnographic verse of mid-nineteenth-century Australia," *Australian Literary Studies* 23 no. 1 (2007): 7-8.
- ¹² See Thomas Keneally, *Australians: Origins to Eureka* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2009), 332, 399-409.
- ¹³ For a discussion of the Myall Creek Massacre and the trials that ensued, see Brian Harrison, "The Myall Creek Massacre and its Significance," BA thesis, University of New England, NSW, 1966; see too Robert Reece, *Aborigines and Colonists: Aboriginal and Colonial Society in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974), 36-95.
- ¹⁴ See Bruce Elder, *Blood on the Wattle: Massacres and Maltreatment of Australian Aborigines since 1788* (Sydney: New Holland Publishing, 1988), 94. For claims that Aboriginal people were poisoned, see Ben Kiernan, "Genocidal Violence in Nineteenth Century Australia," in *Blood and Soil: a World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 287.
- ¹⁵ See George Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1883), 222 (note 1).
- ¹⁶ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 1, 142.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 529-33.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 575.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 623-24, 633.
- ²⁰ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 15.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 17- 18.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 215-19. For a full discussion of massacres of Aborigines at this period, see Bruce Elder, *Blood on the Wattle*, 49-136; also Ben Kiernan, "Genocidal Violence in Nineteenth-Century Australia," 261-286.
- ²⁴ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 3, 231.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 231
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 235.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 236-37. For a study of the Queensland Native Police and their methods, see Jonathan Richards, *The Secret War: a True History of Queensland's Native Police* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2008).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 238-40.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 243-44.
- ³² On the subject of massacre in colonial Australia, see Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981); and Lyndall Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981). For a rebuttal of their views, see Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002).
- ³³ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 3, 230.
- ³⁴ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 1, 19, 211.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 361.

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- ³⁶ Ibid., 576.
- ³⁷ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 220.
- ³⁸ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 3, 199.
- ³⁹ For a detailed discussion of Rusden's historiography, see Hutchison, "'Such a Contracted Sphere,'" 296, 303, 336.
- ⁴⁰ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 234-45.
- ⁴¹ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 1, 497.
- ⁴² See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 237; vol. 3, 228-29, 243, 250-52.
- ⁴³ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 627.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 129.
- ⁴⁵ For a discussion of Rusden's ultra-conservative politics, see Hutchison, "'Such a Contracted Sphere,'" 15, 41, 55-56, 287, 294, 304, 313.
- ⁴⁶ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 3, 164-65.
- ⁴⁷ See Hutchison, "'Such a Contracted Sphere,'" 41, 70-71, 287, 304, 313, 324.
- ⁴⁸ See Russell "'Had I But A Trumpet Tongue,'" 12.
- ⁴⁹ See Peter Gibbons, "Non Fiction," in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998), 44.
- ⁵⁰ See Russell, "'Had I But A Trumpet Tongue,'" 18, 19, 22, 23, 27.
- ⁵¹ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 1, 164; vol. 2, 159; and vol. 1, 401.
- ⁵² For a discussion of Te Kooti's massacre of settlers (and some Māori) near Gisborne, see Judith Binney, *Redemption Songs: A Life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995) 120-122.
- ⁵³ See Gibbons, "Non-Fiction," 46.
- ⁵⁴ See Trollope to Rusden 27 October 1876, Letters to George Rusden from Anthony Trollope, ATL MS-Papers-1706, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington. In his letter, the English author mentions Rusden's "magnum opus," seeming to imply it was a single work.
- ⁵⁵ See Rusden to Mantell 16 December 1882.
- ⁵⁶ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 1, v, viii.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., vi.
- ⁵⁸ See Russell, "'Had I But A Trumpet Tongue,'" 3.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 3-4.
- ⁶⁰ See Rusden to Mantell, 30 July 1885.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 36-38.
- ⁶² For a discussion of Rusden's deficiencies as an historian, see Hutchison, "'Such a Contracted Sphere,'" 53-54, 296, 314-16, 325-26, 329-30, 334, 342-43, 351-52, 360, 368-70.
- ⁶³ See Renwick, "Who was GW Rusden — and does it matter?" 22.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 23; and see too Olivia Mitchell, "George William Rusden, Controversial Campaigner for Indigenous People: an evaluation of a nineteenth-century activist," Master's thesis, University of Melbourne, 2002, 38.
- ⁶⁵ See Rusden to Mantell 25 December 1881, 22 March 1883 and 1 September 1883.
- ⁶⁶ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 3, 273, 300, 485.
- ⁶⁷ See Jessie Mackay, "The Charge of Parihaka," in *The Spirit of the Rangatira and other Ballads*. (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1889), 30-32.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 399-400.
- ⁶⁹ See Rusden to Mantell 27 November 1881.
- ⁷⁰ See "Bryce v Rusden: in the High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division...4 March 1886" New Zealand PAC 347.91 BRV 1886, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 175-79.
- ⁷¹ For a discussion of Rusden as "engaged" historian, see Hutchison, "'Such a Contracted Sphere,'" 10, 15, 19, 23, 28, 51, 63-4, 73, 82.

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- ⁷² Ibid., 38-9, 296, 315-17, 324-27.
- ⁷³ See Rusden to Mantell 8 July 1883.
- ⁷⁴ See Gordon to Rusden 23 January 1882, quoted in “Letter from John Bryce to the Secretary of State for the Colonies... (1887),” ATL PAM 1887 LET 1498, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington.
- ⁷⁵ See Gordon to Rusden 27 February 1882, *ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ See “Bryce v Rusden,” 286-94.
- ⁷⁷ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 2, 504-5.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 499-513.
- ⁷⁹ See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 3, 285-86.
- ⁸⁰ See Rusden to Mantell 22 March 1883.
- ⁸¹ See for example Rusden to Weld 15 September 1878.
- ⁸² See Hutchison, “Such a Contracted Sphere,” 351-52.
- ⁸³ See Austin, *George William Rusden*, 1.
- ⁸⁴ Rusden blamed gold miners for helping corrupt public life in New Zealand. See Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, vol. 2, 488.
- ⁸⁵ See Donald Sladden, *Twenty Years of My Life* (London: Constable & Co, 1915), 248.
- ⁸⁶ See Rusden to Mantell 16 January 1882.
- ⁸⁷ See Rusden to Mantell 20 August 1882.
- ⁸⁸ See Rusden, *History of Australia*, vol. 3, endpapers.
- ⁸⁹ See Mantell to Rusden 14 July 1883, Letters (mainly to Rusden). G. Rusden – Papers 1802, 1860-1895. ATL Micro-MS-0758, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington.
- ⁹⁰ See Clendon, “Bryce v Rusden: the Vindication of a Colony,” 37-39.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 42.
- ⁹² Mantell to Rusden 14 July 1883.
- ⁹³ The Māori account of the killings at Handley’s woolshed is found in a statement made by a local Taranaki chief, Uru Te Angina, who had witnessed the attack, and who helped bring the bodies of the dead boys back to a nearby pā. It first appeared in a Wanganui newspaper, the *Yeoman*, on 8 June 1883, and was subsequently reprinted in other New Zealand newspapers.
- ⁹⁴ For Bryce’s account of the woolshed incident, see “Bryce v Rusden,” 19-24.
- ⁹⁵ See Rusden to Woodhouse 2 July 1883.
- ⁹⁶ See Rusden to Mantell 8 July 1883.
- ⁹⁷ See Rusden to Mantell, 1 September 1883.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰ See “Bryce v Rusden,” 313-18.
- ¹⁰¹ See “Bryce v Rusden,” 329.
- ¹⁰² See Rusden to Mantell 23 January 1884 and 11 March 1884.
- ¹⁰³ See Rusden to Woodhouse 11 March 1884 and Rusden to Mantell 21 April 1884.
- ¹⁰⁴ See “Bryce v Rusden, Summing Up, 12 March 1886 (eighth day),” ATL MS-Papers-0722/4, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, 93.
- ¹⁰⁵ Rusden’s epithets for Bryce included “reptile” and “creature” — see Rusden to Mantell 16 January 1882, 4 August 1884 and 11 August 1885.
- ¹⁰⁶ See Clendon, “Bryce v Rusden: the Vindication of a Colony,” 68-77.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Mantell to Rusden 14 July 1883.
- ¹⁰⁸ See Clendon, “Bryce v Rusden: the Vindication of a Colony,” 71; and Renwick, “Who was GW Rusden — and does it matter?” 22.
- ¹⁰⁹ See for example Dick Scott, *Ask That Mountain: the Story of Parihaka* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2008), 32, 61-2, 78-83, 87, 105, 114-133, 139.

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