

Send books for review, and book reviews to:

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The *New Contree* Journal publishes reviews of significant books that are relevant to historians. Book reviews are written on invitation from the office of the review editor, but unsolicited reviews may also be considered. *New Contree* has an interdisciplinary outlook and welcomes suggestions of historically significant works written by scholars in other disciplines. The review should be submitted to the review editor within two months of receipt of the book. If this deadline cannot be met, a mutually agreeable alternative date can be negotiated. If it becomes impossible to review the book, it should be returned to the review editor. All reviews will be submitted to the members of the editorial board before acceptance for publication.

Contents and additional (or book) references

The review should summarize what is important in the book, and critique its substance. The reviewer should assess the extent to which the author achieves the stated aim of the book. It is important that the reviewer should engage the material instead of simply reporting the book's contents. For this reason, the reviewer should try to avoid summations of book chapters or the separate contributions in an edited collection. Instead, the reviewer should assess the ways in which chapters and contributions are relevant to the overall context of the book. Reviews should be written in a style that is accessible to a wide and international audience.

Any use of references or additional references from other sources must be informed on in footnote style.

Format

The review should generally be between 800 and 1 200 words, and should include as little bibliographic data as possible. When necessary, use page references for quotations in the text of the review and provide complete bib-

liographic details of the source. The review should begin with a heading that includes all the bibliographic data. The elements of the heading should be arranged in the order presented in the following example:

The early mission in South Africa/Die vroeë sending in Suid-Afrika, 1799-1819. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005, 272 pp., map, chronology, bibl., index. ISBN: 1-9198525-42-8. By Karel Schoeman.

Do not indent the first line of the first paragraph, but indent the first line of all successive paragraphs. Use double spacing for the entire review. Add your name and institutional affiliation at the end of the review. Accuracy of content, grammar, spelling, and citations rests with the reviewer, and we encourage you to check these before submission. Reviews may be transmitted electronically as a Word file attachment to an email to the review editor. If you have additional questions, please contact the Book Review Editors.

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Charles Warren: Royal Engineer in the Age of Empire
(Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2021, 486 pp. ISBN: 1839521872)

K Shillington

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Most readers will be familiar with Kevin Shillington's work on the southern Tswana from his two previous publications, *The Colonisation of the Southern Tswana, 1870-1900* (1984) and his subsequent biography of Luka Jantjie, *Resistance Hero of the South African Frontier* (2011). Both publications were ground-breaking in that they focused a level of attention on the region, and its African population and leadership that had been eclipsed by affairs and conflicts elsewhere in southern Africa and the British Empire. One of the main actors in the unfolding drama in the territories north of the Orange

River after the discovery of diamonds in what was to become Griqualand West, was Captain Charles Warren, sent to the Cape in 1876 to survey the recently discovered Diamond Fields with the intention of securing the region for Britain and ultimately to bolster British economic interests. A few months later, he was despatched to what was now the Crown Colony of Griqualand West to head up a Land Commission to help sort out the claims of the various disputants to its diamondiferous lands. No sooner was the ink dry on his report than he took up the role of soldier, raising a force of volunteers (The Diamond Fields Horse) to quell a rebellion in Griqualand West by disaffected Griqua and Batswana who felt with good reason cheated by the land settlement process.

Having excelled in the execution of his duties, the promoted Lt-Colonel Warren returned to England. This was not to be his final role in the history of Bechuanaland, however. He returned in late 1884 to lead the largest expeditionary force to leave the Cape Colony. Its intention was to remove the free-booter Republics of Stellaland and Goshen that had forced the major Tswana *diKgosi* (chiefs) in southern Bechuanaland to surrender territory to the white (mainly Boer) interlopers. This was achieved with hardly a shot being fired in anger, thereby eliminating possible German competition from modern Namibia and ensuring British control over the “Road to the North” and colonial control of today’s Botswana and Rhodesia. He returned to England with a considerably enhanced reputation.

With this familiarity and understanding of Charles Warren as a background, Shillington has embarked on a more ambitious project that takes us way beyond the semi-arid landscape of the Northern Cape in modern South Africa – that of a full biography of a man who played a significant role in the progression of British Imperial policies in the late Victorian era. Warren has certainly attracted a fair amount of attention from other writers, for which he elicited either renown or damning indictment, but Shillington’s book undoubtedly provides us with the complete picture. Born into a privileged aristocratic family, Warren’s interests and his career choices were manifold and diverse. His primary love and ability was for mathematics and even before he was 18 years of age, he earned a commission into the Corps of Royal Engineers. He was soon able to indulge his passion and recently acquired skills in surveying when he was deployed to Gibraltar to conduct an Ordinance Survey of the famous “Rock”. Six years later, this experience was to lead him to the project for which he is most probably and rightfully remembered. Under the aegis of

a committee known as the Palestine Exploration Fund, Warren was selected to undertake an excavation of Jerusalem. His interest was spurred by the fact that he was both a committed Christian and a keen Mason (for most of his life). As Shillington remarks, It is for his drawings, “together with the sheer range of his work....that his name is so widely respected...within the wider Jerusalem archaeological community, even to the present day” (p 124) and was to earn him the sobriquet of “Jerusalem Warren”.

Warren’s broad range of interests and his propensity for adventure and risk-taking took him to several intriguing places within the Empire, apart from South Africa of course. For example, in 1879, back from soldiering in Bechuanaland, and after a short stint of teaching at the School of Military Engineering in Chatham, Warren was chosen to lead a rescue mission to find Professor Edward Palmer, a professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge. An authority of the Sinai Bedouin, Palmer was sent on a secret mission to determine the political loyalties of the Bedouin at a time of resistance to the British invasion of Egypt. In brief, the foolhardy Palmer’s party was murdered by opportunist Bedouin robbers. Shillington provides a fascinating story of the “Man Hunt” led by Warren that followed his blatant challenge to British authority in the region and the punishment meted out to the perpetrators.

Two other periods of Warren’s career are worthy of mention so as to whet readers’ appetites. The first is Warren’s appointment as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in 1886. It is indeed something of a surprise that he was ever selected for the post, but Warren was not one to turn down a challenge. His selection was based more his organisational skills at a time when the Met was desperately in need of reform (in which he was moderately successful) than his actual policing experience. Unfortunately for Warren his stint as commissioner coincided with two crises in late Victorian London. The first was the rise in the number of homeless and impoverished people in the capital especially and the concomitant rise in political agitation led by led by political groups such as the Social Democratic Movement. The rising radical nature of public demonstrations coupled with police inexperience with riotous mobs led to the event known as “Bloody Sunday” on 20 November 1887 or the “Battle of Trafalgar Square” that led to few deaths and about 200 injuries. The police were ridiculed in the press for their inept and violent reactions and Warren had to bear much of the responsibility for the outcome. The second was the infamous (or famous) murderous spree of the man known as Jack the Ripper whose horrors coincided with Warren’s term. Unfamiliar with such

circumstances Warren was out of this depth and took inappropriate steps and actions to resolve both of them leading to constant denigration in the press. “Ripper” enthusiasts will learn something about these never resolved murders from the perspective of the Met.

Relieved of his duties as Police Commissioner and probably with a degree of relief, Warren was appointed the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Singapore fortress with the aim of strengthening the defences of this important outpost of the Empire. Here his efforts were fully appreciated by the Singapore residents. However, most damning for Warren’s partly tarnished reputation occurred when he returned to South Africa for the last time during the Anglo-Boer war (now more commonly called the South Africa War). He left England in November 1899 to command a division under Sir Redvers Buller, a man whom he had known from his past in South Africa. At the time efforts were underway to relieve the Siege of Ladysmith which was severely taxing British military prowess. This culminated in the disastrous (for the invading infantries) Battle of Spioen Kop. General Warren was basically made the scapegoat for the failure of the attack, a severe dent to British morale and sense of military superiority. Shillington’s careful account and examination shows that the situation was a lot more complex and that blame cannot be attached to any one individual. Moreover, circumstances conspired against the British as in many theatres of war. Buller simultaneously took active measures to exonerate himself from any blame. Shillington’s account shows how Warren took steps later to secure his reputation.

Shillington has achieved his intentions admirably in writing this book. Utilising a vast array of sources including Warren’s own witness and the quite voluminous historiography on Warren himself, he provides readers with a full account and balanced analysis of his subject’s life and achievements. Warren of course served in many corners of the Empire and Shillington offers us an impressively clear and informative background and context to all of the places where Warren served and built his reputation. He also gives a just and open-minded analysis of Warren as an individual, focusing on aspects such as his tremendous self-will and bravery, his broad range of interests (that included hot air ballooning – then in its early stages of development), his commitment to a humane form of imperialism and his religious faith, underscored by his membership of the Masonic Lodge and his loving relationship with his wife Fanny and his children; this all balanced against his failures. Charles Warren was fundamentally an engineer, but the title may be a little misleading – he

was a man of any parts, though he never lost his interest in engineering which stood him in good stead during critical times in his life. The author has made use of a wide range of photos, illustrations and newspaper clippings from the Warren family archives well as many other images and maps that enhance to book enormously. Most impressively, Shillington has written a most readable biography on a very interesting personality during the heyday of the British Empire. This is a book accessible to a wide readership which will surely find much to enjoy and savour within its pages.

War party: How the ANC's political killings are breaking South Africa
(Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2020, 255pp, ISBN: 9780624088233)

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In his monumental book *War party*, journalist Greg Arde takes readers to the controversies in KwaZulu-Natal as he reveals the deadly nexus between politics, organised crime and the notorious taxi industry. In so doing, Arde tries to tie together all the strands of the stories on political killings – especially those that are as yet unknown to the general public. He tells us that it is only a few journalists and researchers who have this information. The book is clustered into three parts. The first discusses the killing fields of KwaZulu-Natal, while part two delves into the violent actions of the taxi industry. Part three of the book looks into the African National Congress (ANC) and its control of the city of Durban.

It is key to mention that all the three parts are complementary to one another, because they resonate around the relationship between the ANC, the ruling party, which by collective action – be it through commission or omission – is instigating and perpetuating violence as a means of exerting its power and thereby gaining material benefits. The reviewer thus takes the position that for anyone who is interested in truly understanding the current issues in the ANC and why things began to fall apart during Jacob Zuma's tenure, this book is a vital source. Arde's publication is not only relevant but it is vital

reading because it explains how the ANC has changed from being a liberation movement into being what he calls a “war party”.

KwaZulu-Natal has been plagued by political violence since the 1980s and early 1990s and Arde takes the reader back to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) *versus* ANC conflicts when the parties fought one another for political dominance in the province. Arde then goes on to highlight how inter-party conflict between two antagonists later changed into intra-party warfare, with members of the ANC fighting each other for positions in government institutions and party structures. Furthermore, political violence in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) can be traced to the assassination of Sifiso Nkabinde, a wealthy political strongman and warlord who once served as member of the ANC KZN provincial legislature. Arde explains that Nkabinde’s death in 1999 served as a starting point and breeding ground for revenge killings which took hold from the early 2000s.

The dominance of the ANC in KZN from 2004 onwards exacerbated political violence in the province. Arde’s book notes that killings associated with intra-party killings in KZN began as a result of contestation for political positions such as ward councillor and mayoral posts especially after 2007 when Jacob Zuma became the president of the ANC. Although Arde doesn’t dwell much on the socio-economic status of these hopeful ANC councillor candidates, the reviewer is of the opinion that many have little in the way of a formal educational background and do not possess administrative or managerial skills. Furthermore, they have large and extended families of dependants who rely on them for support. Thus, holding public office is seen as a way of amassing wealth by looting state resources at the expense of ordinary citizens.

At the epicentre of these killings is ANC-factionalism. Allegedly, the party has divided itself into sub-groups and Arde points out how the events of the ANC’s 2007 National Elective Conference held in Polokwane paved the way for factional politics in the ANC. For instance, the eThekweni Municipality was the primary political support base for the Zuma faction. Arde and others have highlighted that there was indeed a widespread sense in South Africa that the country was being run from Durban during Zuma’s presidency. This reviewer is reminded of the words spoken in 2014 by President Thabo Mbeki, Zuma’s predecessor. Mbeki indicated that when a minister is appointed in a certain region, officials from the same region will almost certainly be appointed in that department. This practice was termed the “homeboy” phenomenon by Mbeki.

Arde's *War party* reveals that factionalism and intra-party killings are heavily influenced by corruption committed by government officials, and that those who do not approve of such corrupt practices are intimidated and even assassinated. He provides a case study of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) general-secretary, the late Sindiso Magaqa who was assassinated for voicing his grievances about corruption in the uMzimkhulu Local Municipality. Drawing from Arde's analysis throughout the book, it is clear to the reviewer that politicians in KwaZulu-Natal tend to eliminate everything or anyone who is an obstacle to the exploitation and squandering of state resources. Political killings occur frequently in KwaZulu-Natal as a result of contestation for tenders and government contracts from different factions within the party, and this also includes ineffective policing. Because one faction wants to "eat", members of an opposition faction are targeted ruthlessly. This practice received its nickname from Senzo Mchunu who is reputed to have said: "...my turn to eat has come".

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial government established a commission of inquiry chaired by advocate Marumo Moerane, to investigate the factors perpetuating political violence in the province. Sadly, many of the findings by the commission made no difference at all to the widespread corruption. Arde quotes Bheki Cele who dismissed the commission as mere "storytelling, ... a waste of money".

This reviewer argues that in his publication Arde neglects to discuss the proliferation of firearms and ammunition in KZN and the reality that this leads to countless assassinations. There were certainly weapons that came into KZN during the conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s. Apart from those supplied to the ANC by solidarity movements and overseas anti-apartheid organisations weapons were also provided by various sources such as the apartheid government's police (known as the *Vlakplaas* weapons), from the South African Defence Force and also weapons associated with the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB). We are told that the AWB distributed weapons to IFP members with the sole intention of destroying the ANC and its supporters. However, after 1994, many of these weapons were never recovered by the ANC government. Today they haunt KZN and lead to uncontrollable killings.

Arde provides an analysis of another site of violence in KwaZulu-Natal – the taxi industry. This is the most vital industry in the country and it serves as cover for all sorts of criminals, including taxi bosses, politicians, influential and prominent families in KwaZulu-Natal. This is the industry that moves an

estimated 75% of the population every day. Without it, the economy would grind to a halt and decline drastically. It is clear that the taxi industry generates a great deal of money, most of it is not touched by the South African Revenue Services (SARS). This being so, competition for the control of the strategic taxi routes has led to spiralling violence and assassinations.

The taxi industry is controlled by greed. Members of the different taxi associations fight each other for long distance routes and government tenders. Arde goes as far as tapping into the GO! It is a Durban initiative, the public transport system involving buses and taxis. Arde reveals how contracts for this initiative were awarded without any consultation with other taxi associations. This serves as evidence that government contracts and tenders are frequently awarded unfairly through patronage networks. In his fearless analysis of the taxi industry politics, Arde mentions names of most feared taxi families and individuals such as the Gcaba family, Elias “Sputla” Mpungose, Qithi Khumalo, Romeo Mbambo, and the Mpisane family. As a means of dominating the industry, taxi bosses tend to make use of contract killers, “*izinkabi*”, famously known as hitmen, who are employed to carryout assassinations. These hitmen allegedly work as private security/bodyguards to some of the local politicians in KZN.

Arde’s stories in chapter after chapter are linked to particular events and named people; they highlight that the controversial KZN province is a hotbed of political violence, one that has become institutionalised in South Africa. The politics of patronage and impunity continue to compromise South Africa’s constitutional state and break it down. Countless crimes committed have never been accounted for. The ANC has indeed turned into a “war party” and South Africa is increasingly becoming a mafia-state where might is right, and big guns are calling the shots.

The plague of violence has become a defining aspect of the ANC-led government and sadly, this reviewer feels compelled to conclude that never in their wildest dreams, did the founding fathers of the ANC ever imagine, when they met in Mangaung (Bloemfontein) in 1912, that they were in actual fact creating a monster, a criminal enterprise of syndicates. The post-apartheid ANC-led government seems to exist for no other reason or purpose than to loot squander state resources.

One may quote the United States Republican Party strategist, Stuart Stevens, who wrote: “A party without a governing theory, a higher purpose or a clear moral direction is nothing more than a cartel, a syndicate that exists only to advance itself. There’s no organised, coherent purpose other than the acquisition and maintenance of power.” This reviewer draws the conclusion that when Stuart made this statement, it was as if he was looking at the present day African National Congress.