

<b>Institution:</b> Glasgow Caledonian University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Nazi militarism and the rise of the far right		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013-2016		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  Ben Shepherd	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Reader in History	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2002-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016-present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>  <p>Popular engagements with colonialism and decolonisation have moved in recent years beyond academia. They have contributed to the rise of far-right movements across the globe, and provided a narrative to justify repression and discrimination against marginalised groups. Shepherd's extensive research into colonisation, appeasement, German militarism, and its relationship to Nazism, is an impactful challenge to this phenomenon. The reach of the combined research is significant, resulting in curriculum change, and substantive popular acceptance of the failures and crimes of the Third Reich on social, military, and political levels.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>  <p>Dr. Shepherd has produced a number of impactful publications based upon his expertise in Nazi foreign policy and militarism [R1,R2,R3,R4].</p> <p>Colonialism and decolonisation are part of the historical experience of many European countries, but until recently there was little appreciation of their Europe-wide links and characteristics. In the EU-funded project Colonialism and Decolonisation (CoDeC), teachers, historians and educationalists from seven European countries analysed colonial pasts, processes of decolonisation and memory politics from a comparative transnational perspective. Shepherd's input was based on his substantial research into the impact of Nazism in Europe.</p> <p>The project's main output was an edited volume, 'Colonialism and Decolonisation in National Historical Cultures and Memory Politics in Europe' [R5]. The materials contained within are designed to integrate colonialism and decolonisation into the teaching of History in European schools, and equip teachers and students with the ability to contextualise and challenge far-right 'foundation myths'. Shepherd co-authored three chapters, and is lead author of the chapter 'Reasons for Appeasement: The British Empire'. The connections between British colonialism, decolonisation, and the appeasement of Nazi Germany's are articulated as an attempt to preserve its empire. He presented historical sources highlighting different elements of this relationship, which were incorporated into school-level class exercises devised with his teaching colleagues in CoDeC's British contingent.</p>		

Dr. Shepherd has also written a general history of the German army during the Nazi period [R6]. The high profile in recent years of far-right political movements and nationalistic antagonisms, across Europe and elsewhere, demonstrate the ongoing relevance of this period and of conveying its lessons to a wide audience in an authoritative and accessible manner: the book has sold in huge numbers, beyond the academic sphere [C7].

For decades after 1945, it was generally believed that the army, professional and morally decent, had been distinct from obviously criminal Nazi organisations such as the SS. Drawing on primary sources and upon a comprehensive base of scholarly literature, *Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich* [R6] conveys a much darker, more complex picture. It is so far the only book to examine the army throughout the Second World War, across all combat theatres and occupied regions, and from multiple perspectives: the analysis casts light on contemporary far-right movements across the globe.

This was a true people's army, drawn from across German society and reflecting that society under the Nazis. Without the army and its conquests, the Nazis could not have perpetrated their crimes against Jews, prisoners of war, and occupied civilians. 'Hitler's Soldiers' examines how and why the army participated in or were complicit in such crimes, and why some soldiers, units, and higher commands were guiltier than others. It also examines the reasons for the army's early battlefield successes and subsequent defeats, the latter due not only to Allied superiority and Hitler's mismanagement as commander-in-chief, but also to the moral, political, economic, strategic, and operational failings of the army leadership.

### 3. References to the research

- [R1] Philip Cooke and Ben H. Shepherd, eds., *European Resistance in the Second World War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2013). Published in the United States as *Hitler's Europe Ablaze: Occupation, Resistance and Rebellion during World War II* (New York: Skyhorse, 2014), and as an audiobook of the same title (Newark, NJ: Audible Inc., 2015). Also published in Polish as *Ruch oporu w Europie 1939-1945* (Warsaw: Bellona, 2015).
- [R2] Ben H. Shepherd, *War in the Wild East: The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). Sold on HUP's trade list, and featured as a choice by the American History Book Club.
- [R3] Ben H. Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans: German Armies and Partisan Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). Also published in Serbo-Croat as *TEROR NA BALKANU: Nemačka vojska i partizanski način ratovanja* (Belgrade: Magellan Press, 2014).
- [R4] Ben H. Shepherd, 'Guerrillas and Counter-insurgency', in John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Second World War. Volume One: Strategies, Operations, Armed Forces* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015).
- [R5] S. Karly Kehoe, Ben H. Shepherd (principal author), Nelson Mundell and Louise Montgomery, 'Reasons for Appeasement. The British Empire', in Uta Fenske, Daniel Groth, Klaus-Michael Guse and Bärbel P. Kuhn, eds., *Colonialism and Decolonization in National Historical Cultures and Memory Politics in Europe: Modules for History Lessons* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015). Also in German and French.
- [R6] Ben H. Shepherd, *Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich* (London and New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016 (hardback); 2017 (paperback)). Published as an audiobook (Old Saybrook, CT: Tantor Media), and in Polish as *Żołnierze Hitlera* by Wydawnictwo NapoleonV, Oświęcim, both 2018. Nominated for Military History Monthly's Book of the Year 2017.

### 4. Details of the impact

The first impact lies in the use of Colonialism and Decolonisation in National Historical Cultures and Memory Politics in Europe in the training of teachers in Belgium, Scotland and Germany.

The topics are included in several educational packages from other organisations, such as StudioGlobo, an NGO for development cooperation specialising in developmental education [C1]. They have also been used in the University of Leuven's Arts Faculty's summer and fall school for history teachers in the Africa Museum, Tervuren, 'Historical Thinking About the Colonial Past' [C2].

At the University of Siegen in Germany, the sections on Overseas Colonialism (I) and Decolonization and Independence Movements (III), the latter of which includes Dr. Shepherd's chapter 'Reasons for Appeasement,' are used in the University's Advanced Training Course for qualified teachers: these annual training courses involve several hundred teachers, exponentially increasing the impact of the CoDeC research through the subsequent delivery of teaching of this interpretation of history in secondary schools [C3]. November 2016 feedback for the project confirmed the use of the modules in schools across the German federal state of North Rhineland-Westphalia [C3]. In Austria, the Contemporary History course at the University of Vienna regularly uses several modules from the book. The sections on Overseas Colonialism (I) and Decolonization and Independence Movements (III) are used in the 'Introduction to Contemporary History: Contemporary History as the history of the 20th and 21st century which is usually attended by several hundred students [C3].

The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven hosts the CoDeC project site, and offers access to the materials, including Shepherd's modules, as part of its Faculty Outreach Programme [C4]. The project is situated in the context of using historical analysis to understand contemporary political developments, and incorporating the research into teaching modules for secondary schools. The website notes:

'CoDeC discusses to what extent national remembrance cultures related to colonialism and decolonisation can be implemented in a collective European framework, in the context of the idea of the colonial past as a connecting and dividing fact in European history. It studies the way in which the theme is addressed in history education in the different partner states, and the impact and importance of colonial past on historical cultures and memory politics today. It studies the renewed interest in the colonial past and processes of decolonisation in different European countries in a comparative perspective.'

The programme is part of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, which has not merely a European but a world-wide reach. The CoDeC materials are available as teaching resources for individuals as well as schools and educational institutions, on open access and without charge. Thus the impact of the research is multi-national, and embedded in second as well as third-level teaching. The high take-up of Shepherd's modules is further supported by changes to the History secondary curriculum in Belgium. Colonisation/decolonisation has been explicitly included in the new history standards for schools, and the research speaks directly to the Belgian's aims of contextualising contemporary decolonising initiatives [C5].

The underpinning research in the CoDeC project derives from that undertaken for the Hitler's Soldier's monograph. The book is unusual in terms of its tremendous reach amongst a non-academic readership, the impact of which is evidenced in book sales figures showing a large-scale popular impact. The Times Higher Education indicated in 2017 that average sales for Arts and Humanities academic books are 60 copies across a book's lifetime [C6]: Hitler's Soldier's: The German Army in the Third Reich has sold 15,569 copies in hardback, paperback, eBook, and audiobook combined [C7]. The number of sales in a variety of formats demonstrates impact beyond the academy (although the book has also been widely and positively reviewed in scholarly fora), and the extensive reviews on Amazon confirms the high level of engagement with the research amongst a non-specialist audience [C8]. The monograph's focus on levels of

support for the Holocaust amongst the German military constitutes a challenge to the broad narrative that those backing Hitler's genocidal campaign were largely confined to the Waffen SS and Gestapo, leaving the Wehrmacht a generally honourable professional army. Hitler's Soldiers provides a comparison with the current support for far-right regimes in contemporary Europe, making their rise more explicable.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [C1] Studio Globo, an NGO for development cooperation in education, uses the resources to demonstrate the links between historical and contemporary issues: 'Those actions show the outrage about racism and colonial thinking today. Those thinking patterns are traces of the colonial past' <https://www.studioglobbo.be/aanbod/sporen-van-kolonisatie-lespakket> (in Flemish)
- [C2] Teacher Training summer and autumn courses (2019) in the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium  
[https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/fac\\_kalender/herfstschool-historisch-denken-2019](https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/fac_kalender/herfstschool-historisch-denken-2019) (in Flemish)
- [C3] Confirmation of modules being used at 'Zentrum für schulpraktische Lehrerausbildung' (Center for Practical School Teacher Training, Aachen). This course is for postgraduate teacher trainees offered by the University of Siegen, Germany
- [C4] Faculty Outreach Programme  
<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/outreach/geschiedenis/codec> (in Flemish)
- [C5] Changes to the History secondary curriculum in Belgium  
[https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200609\\_04986594](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200609_04986594) (in Flemish)
- [C6] 'Worst sellers: warning of existential crisis for academic books', Times Higher Education, June 16, 2017. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/worst-sellers-warning-existential-crisis-academic-books>
- [C7] Sales figures, Yale University Press
- [C8] Reviews of Hitler's Soldiers from members of the public  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/reviews/0300179030/ref=cm\\_cr\\_getr\\_d\\_paging\\_btm\\_pr\\_ev\\_4?pageNumber=4](https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/reviews/0300179030/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_paging_btm_pr_ev_4?pageNumber=4)