

Henry Williams' leadership, stressing preaching rather than Marsden's plan of 'civilising'; Henry Williams' peacemaking; the greater emphasis on mastering the language; and the diffusion of printed works in Maori. Earlier, her book offers plenty of evidence for those who would argue that in the first decade of their activity, missionary inadequacies are a sufficient explanation of limited impact.

Mrs Binney could have ignored the events of 1828 and after, for this is after Kendall's missionary career. But the book is full of unexpected riches. The chapter dealing with Kendall's researches into Maori religion, while it is of most interest in disposing of the idea that Kendall encountered the cult of Io, and in demonstrating Kendall's limitations as a student of other religions, is also a brilliant piece of literary detective work, and, more thanks to Mrs Binney than Kendall, throws much light on Maori religion. There is a valuable appendix on Baron de Thierry and some intriguing asides in the preface on how Professor Elder edited letters and how Dr Hocken may have acquired C.M.S. manuscripts.

Some points of detail could be criticised. The footnotes, although packed with useful information, frequently contain material that could more appropriately be in the text (for example on pp. 16-17, 80-1). There is a tendency to use 'of course' and 'in fact' when, one suspects, she is uncertain of her ground; she has some strong prejudices, especially against Samuel Marsden. It is odd how historians will moralise about missionaries; dog-owners, it is said, become like their pets.

On interpretations one can disagree and on small points cavil; but it remains an outstanding biography in the best pugilistic, perfectionist tradition of Auckland historians.

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The Charter of the Land — Custom and Colonization in Fiji. By Peter France. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1969. U.K. price: 78s.

THE CHARTER OF THE LAND is representative of a new breed of colonial history, firmly based on the local viewpoint and documentation and overall concerned with culture contact. In this respect, and in his focus on land as a key factor, France's subject matter closely parallels anthropological interests but his approach is still that of the historian. He is most concerned with events and situations rather than structures and abstractions, politics before kinship, individual action not group dynamics.

In fact he attacks the anthropologists and anthropologically-minded administrators for transplanting into Fiji a system of land tenure presumed to be, but never in fact, traditional. France's argument is that Fijian land tenure and indeed the whole of the communal system was flexible, quite unlike the European conceptions and very different in different parts of Fiji. The early administrators, particularly the first Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, deriving ideas from outside (e.g., from the evolutionary anthropologist L. H. Morgan), or at best from a single local example (Bau), felt that the traditional form of land tenure was based on inalienable communal rights. Gordon legislated along these lines and so created the myth he felt existed. The experiment in Fiji to preserve the pristine traditional culture, the forerunner of more famous schemes in Africa was then incorrect rather than 'indirect'.

France's situational approach allows him to dramatically reinterpret the nature of Fijian society and history. He begins by showing, from archaeological and oral, as well as documentary evidence, that Fiji in the pre-contact and early contact period was a melting pot of different Melanesian and Polynesian peoples. Consequently customs varied between districts and even villages. The rights of chiefs ranged from absolutism to virtually no control. Communal tenure, the foundation stone of Gordon's policy, was practically non-existent, the tenure being in essence a form of usufruct. Fijian society was, furthermore, highly unstable, torn by war and constant ferment.

On such a society the first white men (beachcombers, traders) had little effect, certainly not disrupting nor destroying, but adapting to the mores of their hosts. The mission impact was not great either, since in order to convert the missions had to back the chiefs.

But the missionaries in their efforts to remain exclusive from Fijian society did introduce the revolutionary idea of freehold. With the arrival of the planters alienation moved into full swing. An important function of the consuls, the local Fijian governments and the colonial administration when established, was to regulate these sales. This regulation was necessary largely from the European point of view, for the Fijians at least initially were happy enough to sell land and in any case only considered that they were transferring the usufruct rights. Full protection came in the Gordon period after Gordon convinced himself rather than the chiefs about the inalienability of Fijian land. The whole communal system thus enshrined in the law books has survived to the present, despite criticism from later governors like im Thurn, and a host of economic advisers who saw communalism as the enemy of economic development.

In many ways France has achieved a *tour de force* and most criticisms are relatively insignificant. But there are some worth mentioning. One of the disadvantages of the historical method in a subject like this is that most of the sources from the local point of view are usually slight and not in any way comparable to the rich detail of the ethnographer's notebook. The historian is more fortunate in Fiji than in many areas, in that he has the records of the Native Land Commission in which from 1880-1965 the Fijian view of land tenure was minutely recorded. Even so the Native Land Commission papers have many drawbacks. Fijian evidence is inhibited by the relative status of witnesses, by the desire to increase prestige, by the artificial atmosphere of proceedings and particularly by official interpretations. Dr France may well be right about the fluidity of the Fijian social structure but the picture from documentary evidence is not clear enough.

Dr France does not use ethnographic sources extensively. And he claims he has good reason for to him anthropological theory is the *bête noire*, the reason for the created rigidity in the Fijian social structure. He castigates nineteenth century ethnographers like Fison and goes as far as to claim (p. 119) that these views are still accepted by anthropologists. The work of modern anthropologists like Geddes, Nayacakalou, Belshaw and others is very much more sophisticated and in fact in some ways amplifies France's fluidity thesis. A point which France glosses over is that all social structures have a degree of rigidity, often in the ideological sphere, but actual behaviour is not so constrained. This is particularly true when the rigidity is an administrative edifice which does not square with local

custom. That Gordon's legacy impeded development to some extent there is no doubt, but there were still ways of circumventing the structure.

The Charter of the Land is also intended to be a critique of applied anthropology, pointing up the dangers of using misconceptions about societies for administrative ends. But France is hitting here at a straw man. The anthropological knowledge of the nineteenth century on which Gordon relied would now be regarded as totally insufficient for a land programme. Such knowledge was quite speculative, gathered from traveller's gossip and only occasional forays into the countryside. What Gordon and his anthropological advisers lacked was what is now the hallmark of the anthropologist's professional method — intimacy with the local society. Gordon may have insisted that his staff drink *kava*, he may have tramped around the bush in bare feet, and even assumed the mantle of a chief, but he never really learnt the language nor communicated with the Fijians outside formal or official sessions. Again, Gordon only accepted anthropological knowledge because it dovetailed into the then current colonial policies and pleased patrons like Mr Gladstone.

In short, France's book is a very valuable addition to the Pacific literature not least because it is a refreshing counterweight to the determinism that is beginning to characterise anthropological writing.

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Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919. By William Roger Louis. Clarendon Press, 1967. 165 pp. U.K. price: 30s.

THIS MODEST but scholarly study of British policy towards the German colonies graphically illustrates that mandates were historically phenomena of 'the international frontier' formed by the zones where great power interests came together in conflict.¹

Before 1914 German colonial rule was held in some esteem, but after the southern dominions had captured neighbouring German colonies, 'as a great and urgent Imperial service', evidence of German 'colonial guilt' was deliberately accumulated to legitimise, as it were, the goal of permanent British occupation.

During the period of partition, the British had willingly yielded African and Pacific claims to Germany in return for help in Egypt, much to the resentment of leading statesmen of Cape Colony and the Australasian colonies. By 1916, however, it was generally accepted that the southern dominions would want to keep German South-West Africa, New Guinea and Samoa. As for the tropical African territory conquered with French and Italian assistance, Britain largely adhered to her traditional policy of giving way to France in the west and strengthening her strategic position in the east.

The Japanese seizure of German Pacific Islands north of the equator and rights in the Shantung peninsula posed new problems. While Australia, and to a lesser extent New Zealand, had misgivings about the 'Japanese peril', Britain needed Japanese naval support to win the war. The price of this support was the secret Anglo-Japanese understanding of February

¹ H. Duncan Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, London, 1948, p. 3.