

onies where the immigrants were consciously participating in a social experiment. The Wakefield colonies produced the Godleys' letters, the Richmond-Atkinson papers, Lady Barker's memoirs, the propagandist writings of the Wakefields and C.F. Hursthouse. Sewell's *Journal* is a fuller, shrewder record than any of these. Its obvious parallel, *The Richmond-Atkinson Papers*, is heavily edited and suffers from the obvious disadvantage of a collection of letters and papers as compared with a methodically kept journal—the composition of letters depends too much upon chance. Sewell's *Journal* reveals a quaintly artificial quality about Canterbury, where social engineering took place on an unusually smooth surface. He scarcely mentions Maoris. There were few near Christchurch and those Sewell saw he tends to compare with the Irish, living in misery and squalor beyond the Pale. They were not merely peripheral to European settlement, they were an irrelevance. In Canterbury the land question focussed upon price, not ownership.

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*Class Structure in Australian History.* By R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving. Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980. xii, 378pp., photographs. Aust. price: \$20.35 cloth; \$14.35 paper.

THIS BOOK has caused a stir within the profession in Australia. The reasons for this are various and would repay inquiry but they certainly include the challenge Professor Connell and Dr Irving make to that tradition of interpretation whose *locus classicus* is W.K. Hancock's *Australia*. Hancock largely left class out of Australian history; Connell and Irving seek to put it back in. Their method is that 'full-scale theoretical analysis of social organization and change' which Connell foreshadowed in the late 1960s and claimed to be essential if there were going to be any improvement on Hancock.

After an opening chapter on the nature of class analysis the two authors proceed to practise it. The story of class relations is neatly periodized. The first fifty years of European settlement see colonial capitalism established under the benign eye of the state; from 1840 to 1890 we have the hegemony of the mercantile bourgeoisie; then the major working-class challenge of 1890-1930; the final chapter traces the impact of industrialization, ending with the fall of Whitlam. From Arthur Phillip to Malcolm Fraser the permutations are many, but for Connell and Irving it is basically a tale of two classes, the rulers and the ruled.

This may make the book sound little more than a political tract so I wish to emphasize that Connell and Irving are to be taken seriously. A short review cannot do justice to the sweep or weight of their arguments. They attempt 'total history' much in the manner that Marc Bloch did in *Feudal Society* but where Bloch's feudalism was a relatively simple phenomenon, Connell and Irving deal with a country whose European settlement was contemporaneous with the industrial revolution and the inception of rapid social change. The result is a remarkable synthesis of a vast range of historical information. The patterns seem contrived at times but the authors almost convince that it is possible to see a

modern society moving in time and to see it whole.

Another technically interesting feature of the book is the way Connell and Irving handle the concept of class structure. Connell holds a chair in sociology so it is agreeable for an historian to find both authors insisting that class structure is not a permanent framework in which events happen but something which is itself time-contingent. For them class structures emerge out of particular historical circumstances, are continually re-created and are continually being modified. So seriously do they take this idea of structure as process that they are unwilling to offer any final definition of class: ' "Class" is not a layer in a layer-cake; it is an emergent structure in a historical process' (p.21). Here Marxism is subtle because it is so historically conscious.

The concentration on the specific circumstances of class relations in Australia is so complete that other British colonies do not rate a mention in the subject index. But comparisons are begging to be made. Connell and Irving argue that the education acts of the 1870s and 1880s were means of making the working class amenable by disciplining their youth and instilling bourgeois values. Did it happen this way in New Zealand? They interpret the emergence of the Australian Labor Party as 'a product of class mobilization under hegemony'. Equally true (or untrue) of the New Zealand Labour Party? A New Zealand comparison might also be in order in considering their thesis that 'a profound social and economic deadlock' had been reached in Australia by the 1920s, a deadlock which led to the reconstruction of the economy around manufacturing.

Over a third of this book is comprised of illustrative documents. They do provide a relief from analysis but unfortunately they can be variously interpreted. It would have been better if the space had been devoted to elaborating and justifying the argument in terms of particular case studies. This way Connell and Irving could have facilitated the rigorous assessment they say they want. As it is they operate at such a high level of generality that it will be possible for them to brush aside or re-interpret little pieces of evidence that seem at odds with their grand design. Judging the validity of their arguments will also be difficult until we know more about the Australian occupational structure, especially about those groups who appear only on the margins of this book—farmers, office workers, shopkeepers, teachers, artisans, small businessmen, small contractors. Some of these groups may turn out to fit the class-as-process model but others may not.

But let me not hedge my bets. Already the urban historians have filled in sufficient of the gaps to give reason for believing that Connell and Irving's stress on class is exaggerated. Hancock may have said too little about social inequalities out of a concern to highlight the differences between Australia and the mother country. But he did not get it all wrong. The Australian capital cities were commercial ones in which the relations of production did not dominate social relations. They were also cities with high levels of home ownership by Western standards, which helped to soften if not remove class feeling. And along with home ownership went attachment to private property. This is embarrassing for Connell and Irving because they recognize private property as the citadel of capitalism. Their way out is to imply, following Gramsci, that when working-class people accepted the ideology of private property they unwittingly allowed bourgeois values to be imposed on them. This is unconvincing. It overlooks the historically deep roots of individual property rights in the culture of *all* the English, to which Alan Macfarlane has recently pointed. It ignores the determination of so many colonists to migrate in order to improve themselves. It also

assumes that Connell and Irving know better than these working people what they really wanted. This may be the arrogance of the intellectual or it may arise out of a deep desire to have Australians different from the way they are—if the people are pure at heart the revolution will come sooner. Either way it is a pity that Connell and Irving did not think more critically about Gramsci; he may well turn out to be a blind guide to the antipodes.

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*Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era 1820-1920.* By Roger C. Thompson. Melbourne University Press, 1980. xii, 289 pp., maps. Aust. price: \$25.

THIS BOOK goes some distance towards filling a void in Australian historiography. From the 1790s, when Tahiti became an important source of salted pork for the newly-established colony of New South Wales, there were always important interest-groups which looked outwards to the Pacific Islands rather than inwards to the then unexplored and untamed continent. These included merchants who traded in sandalwood, *bêche-de-mer* and coconut oil; the Victorian-based Presbyterian mission which represented the main Protestant presence in the New Hebrides; and a generation of 'opinion leaders'—editorialists and politicians as well as merchants and churchmen—who saw a 'manifest destiny' for Australia amongst its island neighbours.

After a background chapter, Dr Thompson traces Australian attitudes towards the Pacific Islands by focussing upon key events and issues: for example, the annexation of New Caledonia by France, Britain's annexation of Fiji, attempts to persuade Britain to act in New Guinea, the response to German expansion, France's proposed deportation of *récidivistes* to its Pacific possessions, condominium rule in the New Hebrides, the sharing of spoils from the First World War.

The author argues that the concern for Pacific Islands' affairs demonstrated by colonial governments in the nineteenth century and the Australian Commonwealth early in the twentieth, amount to foreign policies. This raises a number of issues, some semantic (can a colony have a foreign policy?), some of greater significance. Specifically, Dr Thomson maintains that both colonial and, later, commonwealth governments, had foreign policies at a time when they had no foreign representation and no dealings in the international arena except by association with Britain. It was admittedly, a time when a few leading politicians (for example, James Service of Victoria, William Morris Hughes of New South Wales, Sir Thomas McIlwraith of Queensland) had reasonably consistent attitudes towards Islands' affairs but their concern more often revealed in petulant comment than in constructive action. The author points out that Australian expansion was more properly 'sub-imperialism'—activity directed at the expansion of British rather than Australian sovereignty. Perhaps what he calls foreign policy might be called a sub-foreign policy, an attempt to influence the making of