

bomber Michael Barrett in 1868), Basiana's two young sons were forced to witness their father's execution. Moreover, the Kwaio country was devastated by a brutal punitive expedition. In this the colonial administration aided by indigenous rivals of the Kwaio and by a whisky-sodden 'army' of planters and traders supported by the Australian warship *Adelaide*, sought not so much to avenge Bell as to defend the sacred principle of British ascendancy.

To tell their story Keesing and Corris have drawn extensively on the recollections of people who observed or participated in the attack or its aftermath. These include Basiana's son, Laefi, and the now celebrated novelist Xavier Herbert, who was working as a pharmacist in Tulagi at the time of the executions. The result is a well-rounded piece of history in which the documentary sources (which present an official's eye view of the massacre) are balanced by the views of those who were closest to the affair and so were in the best position to know what happened and why. The oral sources unlocked by Keesing's knowledge of the Kwaio language make it possible to see the event from 'below', while the documents enable it to be set within the context of the administration's general ignorance of, fear of, and lack of concern for its colonial subjects.

As an account of a dramatic event, as a contribution to our understanding of the larger question of the nature (fallen?) and merits (few?) of colonial rule and as the result of a successful mingling of historical techniques, this book deserves a wide readership. Anyone who has occasionally wondered why those who lived under colonial rule have commonly been 'ungrateful' for what they have received should be enlightened by Laefi's account of his father's death:

When they were going to hang our father, they took us to him. The Government stood us in front of him. The Government said they were going to make us see the hanging, as a lesson to us. 'This is to make you see what happens. You two might want to kill (to avenge him)'. The Government was treating us cruelly making us see our father being killed. We were the only people there. Some white men and the natives who did the hanging were the only other ones. Anifelo and I were made to stand there with the hanging party when they were hanged. My father first, then Ruita, then Fairi'ia, then . . . [he began to sob . . .] I was only about seven years old.

It is little wonder that the Kwaio supported the Maasina Rule nationalist movement of the 1940s.

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Divorce in New Zealand; a social history. By Roderick Phillips. Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1981. Price: \$10.95.

THE NEW HISTORY has been slow to come to New Zealand. It is then exciting when a historian who has made a central contribution to the new European social history turns his attention to this country. Dr Phillips has a comparative background and skills in the methods of the new social history which few New Zealand historians possess. *Divorce in New Zealand* is thoroughly professional in both content and style. The form of the book is impeccably economical. It is

structured into three parts; a straightforward report of parliamentary debates on divorce, an examination of national divorce statistics from 1867-1980, and a local case study of divorce petitions within the district of the Auckland supreme court from 1869-1900.

The report of the parliamentary debates documents a liberal shift in M.P.'s attitudes from the nineteenth-century view that divorce was punishment from matrimonial offence to the present view that it constitutes only legal recognition of marriage breakdown.

Analysis of the national statistics should illustrate how representative M.P.'s attitudes were, but the figures establish little more than a gradually rising rate of divorce which escalated sharply following new legislation in 1968. There are other statistical changes but despite the sophistication of Dr Phillips's analysis they remain somewhat unrevealing. As the author acknowledges, without the possibility of a comparison with the rate of marriage breakdown, the social meaning of the divorce rate remains obscure.

The local study is then of particular importance in establishing the social significance of the record. The Auckland divorce petitions contain some fascinating and sometimes moving fragments of personal testimony, but do not allow the construction of comprehensive case histories, nor do they lend themselves easily to the categories of statistical analysis. The historian is rightly diffident in drawing conclusions about the social significance of divorce from this record.

This is in sharp contrast to the rich suggestiveness of Dr Phillips's work on eighteenth-century France. *Divorce in New Zealand* is a spin off from work for a 'general history of divorce in the west'. Too often the reasons for the study of New Zealand are logistic rather than logical. The reader is never told why this material is of interest in understanding New Zealand society nor how it would contribute to a larger comparative understanding of divorce in the west.

In particular this study sheds little light on marriage and family structures. Dr Phillips makes a tentative connection between European attitudes to divorce and the ending of the domestic economy. New Zealand, where domestic production remained important for so long, could have been an ideal testing ground for this hypothesis. Dr Phillips, however, seems unsure how to describe the economic structure of the New Zealand family and therefore leaves undeveloped a hypothesis that might have thrown a fascinating light on the European material.

The end of domestic production does not end the economic function of the family. Marriage remains an economic relationship, as the process of ending a marriage surely shows. Dr Phillips's analysis of divorce remains indecisive because he never deals clearly with the family as an economic institution. Current debate suggests that the crucial issue about divorce legislation in the popular mind is not the grounds for divorce but property settlement. Divorce legislation cannot sensibly be discussed in isolation from the provisions of Matrimonial or Married Women's Property Acts.

Had Dr Phillips considered the economic meaning of family breakdown he might have illuminated the uneven class distribution of divorce which he documents but leaves unexplained.

In a footnote Dr Phillips gives recognition to women's domestic labour. Had he related his work more clearly to the domestic labour debate he would have seen that divorce cannot be understood without reference to women's economic position. Any discussion of 'attitudes' to divorce must recognize the economic

dependence of most women on marriage. Very few women can maintain a middle class status on their own. The social and economic status of the overwhelming majority of women are dependent on the continuation of their marriage. This dependence and the unequal division of matrimonial property has meant that divorce has had quite different implications for men and women irrespective of the double sexual standard.

Dr Phillips is unable to develop the case for a relationship between female employment rates and divorce frequency. Employment does not, however, equate with economic independence. Most women perceive that their status depends upon their relationship to a man. Current legislation is liberal but women have responded to 'easier' divorce with considerable anxiety. The legislation is premised upon the possibility too of equal economic opportunity, but the lived reality of the overwhelming number of women denies this. 'Attitudes' to divorce cannot be understood without respect for that reality, that is without reference to sexual politics.

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Iz Dalmacije u Novi Zeland. By Ivan Čizmić. Globus, Zagreb, and Matica iseljenika Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1981. 186pp., N.Z. price: \$34.02.

PROFESSOR ČIZMIĆ is a historian working with the Matica iseljenika Hrvatske, the Zagreb-based Centre for relations with emigrants from Croatia. His major research interest is the history of Yugoslav emigration to countries beyond the European continent. In an earlier monograph of his, entitled *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret u SAD i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918* ('The Yugoslav emigrant movement in the USA and the creation of the Yugoslav state of 1918'), Zagreb, 1973, he examined the history of the Yugoslav immigrant community in the USA, and in particular its relations and attitudes towards events in the homeland. *Iz Dalmacije u Novi Zeland* focusses on the same topics but covers the period from the beginning of immigration to New Zealand in the late nineteenth century up to the present day.

Iz Dalmacije u Novi Zeland is dedicated to the centenary of Yugoslav immigration to New Zealand which was celebrated in 1979. The book is, as its subtitle says, a 'history (povijest) of Yugoslav settlement in New Zealand as seen by a contemporary Yugoslav historian. Thus, technical terms such as 'reakcionaran' or 'napredan' ('progressive') should be interpreted in the post-1945 Yugoslav context.

Ivan Čizmić's book is arranged chronologically in seven chapters starting with a brief geographical and socio-political survey of New Zealand (pp.9-14). While any short survey of this type must necessarily be somewhat general and selective, some of the author's numerical figures and comments may convey to the Yugoslav reader a distorted impression of today's Maori population. Thus, the number of Maoris is given as between '100,000 and 200,000 at the time of Cook's visit' (p.10). But then the reader is left with the figure of 40,000 for the year 1896