

## Editorial: The First Twenty Years

---

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO about the only journals which published articles on New Zealand history were the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, *Political Science* (Wellington) and the Melbourne journal, *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*. The latter journal had first appeared in 1940. Professor F. L. W. Wood, an Australian who was the Professor of History at Victoria University College, Wellington, had been a member of the planning committee. There was apparently an 'understanding in principle' to publish one New Zealand article per issue. If that had been agreed it had not been carried out. In the ten years, 1949-59, *Historical Studies* had published six articles on New Zealand history in twenty issues, plus several articles by academics in New Zealand on Pacific and (in one case) British history.<sup>1</sup>

It should be added that there is nothing surprising about what seems an Australian neglect of New Zealand history. In the 1950s I taught Australian history in New Zealand. I can testify that it was not easy to arouse great enthusiasm about the question of whether 1890 was a turning point, or the role of economic interests in Australian federation and other issues debated in *Historical Studies*.

When the possibility of launching a New Zealand journal of history arose, the Editorial Board of *Historical Studies* was pleased at the prospect of being 'relieved of New Zealand material' because much of it was below standard.<sup>2</sup> Certainly two or three of the New Zealand articles were low-powered. However, the New Zealand contributors on New Zealand and Pacific history included J. C. Beaglehole, R. T. Shannon, D. K. Fieldhouse and the present writer (on Maori nationalism and the European economy). There was also the important 'revision article' by J. W. Davidson, a New Zealander at A.N.U., and an article on New Zealand and Australian federation by E. J. Tapp, a New Zealander at the University of New England. That there was, indeed, a need for a New Zealand journal is suggested by the fact that seven articles on New Zealand history were published in the first three issues of the *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH).

<sup>1</sup> Stuart Macintyre, 'Historical Studies: A Retrospective', *Historical Studies*, XXI, 82, April 1984, pp.1, 9.

Dr Macintyre says that eight articles originated in New Zealand. My count is eleven, but five of the articles were on British and Pacific history.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p.9.

We got the NZJH under way with little outside help. No New Zealand Historical Association then existed, although I reported to a meeting of historians at Massey University in 1967 which resolved to form an Historical Society. This resolution was not put into action for some years, although informal meetings continued fairly regularly.

It seemed that about £1000 was needed to finance the first issues. I tried various possible sources without success. The Minister of Internal Affairs had a 'cultural fund' at his disposal, so I visited his Department in Wellington. I was sent to what one might have called 'the Gaming Room'. There, in a room decorated with plans of horse-racing tracks, sat a lady engaged in a telephone conversation with the secretary of a club that wished to hold a raffle. 'No, you may not have prizes worth less than five shillings . . . Yes, there is a limit to the value of the highest prize . . .'

'So you want £1000 to start a history journal. Does New Zealand need a history journal . . .?' Evidently not. Eventually Kenneth Maidment, the Vice-Chancellor of Auckland University, induced the University Council to put up the money. Few people, I suspect, were optimistic about our future. The *Journal of Pacific History* was being launched at the same time, and some people wondered whether there would be enough articles written to sustain both journals. But the universities were experiencing a great increase in student and staff numbers which meant that there were far more research workers and authors of historical articles.

Nicholas Tarling, Keith Sorrenson and I worked out a publishing policy. We did not wish our journal to be solely devoted to New Zealand history. On the other hand, I was anxious to avoid what I regarded as a weakness of *Historical Studies*. It published articles on history in general, especially when written by Australians, and hence became a journal of last resort for medievalists and others whose work was rejected (so one suspected) by the leading specialist journals. We decided that we would publish articles on New Zealand and the Pacific, including Australia and Southeast Asia, as well as on imperialism, especially British. We also hoped to publish articles on philosophy of history or historical method, and were to do so. Articles on Great Britain or Europe were to be avoided unless they had some relevance to imperialism or New Zealand. I also hoped, at least occasionally, to attract articles of general interest, thoughtful but not pedantic, like the first article in the first issue by F. H. Hinsley, 'The Causes of War: The Two World Wars Compared'.

The first issue had, I thought, a certain panache. It included Peter O'Connor's article, 'Venus and the Lonely Kiwi: The War Effort of Miss Ettie A. Rout Part I', about New Zealand soldiers getting V.D. during the first World War. There was also an article by a Canadian, John Kandle, on the Round Table Movement in New Zealand, one by Russell Stone on the Maori lands issue in 1879 and G. P. Taylor on business and politics in Queensland, 1859-1895. Peter O'Connor's article caused a minor sensation. The Chancellor, Sir Douglas Robb, a surgeon, took me aside

in the street and asked 'What's wrong with O'Connor? Is he mad?' Somehow, Frank Sargeson heard rumours of his attitude and cancelled his sub to the journal. He had been told that the Council had forbidden the publication of Part II. He was unmoved when I asked him how Council could do that. Regrettably, Part II, about French instead of Egyptian women, has not yet appeared.

The facts about the track followed by the journal over two decades may be briefly summarized. In the first twenty years the journal published 132 articles on New Zealand history and some seventy on other subjects, mainly philosophy of history, British imperial and Pacific history. There were eight articles on Australian and eight on Asian history. The balance was accidental in the sense that few articles on those subjects have been submitted. It has sometimes been said that the journal has become a journal of New Zealand history but there has been little change in the balance of New Zealand and other history. In the first ten years there were 62 New Zealand articles; there were 70 in the second decade, but they included a special issue of seven articles on New Zealand social history.

Of the 200 contributors, 176 were New Zealanders or, at least New Zealand residents, so it has been a New Zealand journal in that sense. Twenty percent of the contributors were women, the same proportion in the second decade as in the first. Few of them wrote about women's history.

The matters debated in the pages of the NZJH have included the existence and nature of classes in New Zealand; the reasons why New Zealand did not join the Australian federation in 1901; and various aspects of labour history. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was extensive debate on the reasons for the rapid spread of Christianity among the Maoris. If trade and literacy were the Trojan horses which brought Christianity into the Maori kainga in the 1830s, the Maoris would later turn Christianity into their own theology of liberation. Numerous articles on politics have been succeeded, as would be expected, by an increasing number on social history. Some of the articles have been republished, the social history issue as a book; others in a book on women's history. From time to time the NZJH has published bibliographical articles to assist secondary school teachers, on topics in the syllabus for upper classes. One task the NZJH took over from *Historical Studies* was to publish (annually) a list of current historical research in New Zealand.

Between 800 and 900 copies of the NZJH are posted out twice a year. Financially the journal was in difficulties during the high inflation of the mid-seventies. Almost all of the New Zealand Universities gave generous subsidies which served to keep it afloat. Since then it has done reasonably well. Unlike many professional journals, the NZJH has had no paid or subsidized editorial staff. It is a kiwi roll-your-own journal. The editors are much indebted to the work of several administrative assistants and secretaries.

This is the last issue of the NZJH which I shall edit. Judith Binney

and Keith Sorrenson will be the new joint editors. I wish them and the NZJH well.

KEITH SINCLAIR

## VIENT DE PARAÎTRE

BERNARD VIENNE

Maitre de Recherches à l'ORSTOM

## GENS DE MOTLAV

Idéologie et pratique sociale  
en Mélanésie

Publication de la Société des Océanistes No 42

Musée de l'Homme, Paris 1984

This book gives us the results of a long field work carried out in the north of Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) on Banks Islands, main center of classic anthropology (Codrington, 1891; Rivers, 1914) and of its theoretical debates. Weaving the monograph approach of the societies of the Motlav, Ureparapara, Vanua Lava and Mota islands, with theoretical thought, Bernard Vienne — in the manner of Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer* — extricates the ecological background of the region in its relationship to Melanesian conceptualisations (organization of space and time). Then, in three masterly chapters, he analyzes from first hand documentation, the social organization of Banks Islands (dualism, marriage, residence and kinship), its native theoretical readings and the general problems it poses for anthropology. Finally this work gives us the finest description to date of the political system: the hierarchy of grades (*suqe*), an original and complex variation on the model of *big men* societies.

Here, Bernard Vienne ties together the perspective of the best Anglo-Saxon monographs and the important contribution of modern French theories to the problems of kinship and marriage.

En vente à la SOCIÉTÉ DES OCÉANISTES, Musée de l'Homme, 75116 Paris.

Prix: 260 F.F. (+ frais de port)