

ers' migration, and revolutionary ideology, the book fails fully and explicitly to take advantage of many of the insights that can be gained from the literature of comparative labour history and the theories it has tested and generated. But despite such caveats, Olssen's *Red Feds* is a major achievement, and has become without question one of the key texts of New Zealand history.

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*Culture and the Labour Movement. Essays in New Zealand Labour History.* Edited by John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor. The Dunmore Press, with the assistance of the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs and the Trade Union History Project, Palmerston North, 1991. 316pp. NZ price: \$30.00.

THIS COLLECTION contains 19 of the papers given at a labour history conference in Wellington on 20-21 October 1990, sponsored by the Trade Union History Project, Historical Branch and the Public Service Investment Society. The conference coincided with the centenary of this country's first Labour Day and was New Zealand's largest and most diverse gathering of labour historians and activists to date. Now, thanks to the commendable decision to publish most of the papers, they are available to a wider public. The title of the book comes from the theme of the conference and is indicative of the progress New Zealand labour history has made over the last decade, from its narrow preoccupations with the concerns of mostly Pakeha men in the organized labour movement to a much wider interest in all aspects of working people's lives. The impact of the new social history has been profound here.

The range of papers reflect, to quote the editors' engaging introduction, 'the many ways that the labour movement reproduces and communicates its ideas, values and experiences over time, including oral, visual and printed forms, festivals and demonstrations, and the experience of work and its associated cultural forms, patterns of association and community.' Indeed, this book itself is a valuable contribution to that process.

Ripples of international debates and reflections on recent developments in labour history are contained in the keynote addresses by Alun Howkins from Britain and Lenore Layman from Australia. A strong trans-Tasman element is evident in several other papers. This international dimension is a sign of a new maturity in New Zealand labour history's outlook. But criticism is levelled in some areas too. Maori labour activists Tom Murray, Nora Rameka and Joe Tepania, in collaboration with Kerry Taylor, identify the serious neglect of Maori participation in the labour history of Aotearoa. Their challenge remains to be answered. Rae Frances argues eloquently for the continued application of gender analysis and makes practical suggestions as to how this can be done. The ground is not yet won and she warns against the complacent acceptance of recent calls for a return to more institutional labour history. Other papers by activists, academics and professional historians examine political ideologies and organization of the working class; analyse struggle on the job for control of the labour process; evaluate art and literature of the intellectual left; interpret icons of the labour movement; probe the relationship between education and children's labour; and discuss the lives of working-class figures of the past. In the final paper Bert Roth charts the development of Labour Day, not into an expression of working-class solidarity, but into just another holiday.

Several of the conference presentations are not reproduced in the book. The editors explain that those with substantial audio-visual content could not be included satisfactorily. But they are silent on why Stevan Eldred-Grigg, whose *New Zealand Working People* was launched by TUHP during the conference, does not allow his controversial paper to appear.

*Culture and the Labour Movement* is a well produced paperback. Eighteen papers have endnotes and many contain illustrations and photographs of very good quality. The typeface is large and the format easy to read. The lack of an index limits quick access to some material, but this slight shortcoming is one which is shared with most collections of conference proceedings. *Culture and the Labour Movement* is a significant publication and will have wide appeal. It is a welcome sign of a confident New Zealand labour history, determined, as Alun Howkins observed, to put working people back at the centre of the historical process.

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*Selfish generations? The Ageing of New Zealand's Welfare State.* By David Thomson. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1991, p.233. NZ price: \$29.95.

DAVID THOMSON with his *Selfish Generations?* has provided his readers with a demographic whodunit. In contrast to the authors of the more traditional detective novel his principal task is to establish that there is a victim and that, in fact, a crime has been committed. But of course one cannot have a whodunit without a villain; and punishment must follow crime. This is why a hullabaloo has accompanied the publication of his book. For Thomson the victim is the baby boom generation, now reaching their thirties and forties, as the welfare state, as we have known it, disintegrates. The crime, it is a case of wholesale fraud, is the breaking of the social contract that has underlain the welfare state since its foundation, an implicitly hidden welfare contract in his words, that the generation which pays the heavy taxes today, i.e. the baby boomers, will be rewarded later in life by a subsequent generation. This, he argues, will not happen. The generation born between 1920 and 1940 received the benefits when they were young; and are now continuing to receive benefits as they age, well beyond anything like the amount they contributed during their working life. They are the villain of the piece. The baby boomers have to pay for their benefits by heavy taxes, or reduced welfare incomes. Two parallel welfare states have been created; one's membership is determined not by need but by date of birth. Transference of entitlement is prohibited.

By a skilful handling of data which itself leaves something to be desired, but about which little can be done by way of improvement, by the inclusion of some notable work by American and British authors, Thomson establishes his case. There can be little doubt that the benefits of the welfare state have been slanted in favour of the older generation. This process he terms, the ageing of the welfare state. It has little to do with an increased proportion of older people in the population. Twenty-one per cent of the adult population (i.e. 20 or more years of age) were over 60 in 1945; that proportion had risen by only 1% by 1981, and in 2001 it will still remain at 22 per cent. An increased proportion of the aged is forecast to occur after the millenium. Ageing is a phenomenon apparent in many western welfare states. It is represented by a rising proportion of welfare expenditure being committed to the older generations. In 1971 the over 60s received public expendi-