

their labour. Women are seen as apolitical. We are told that ‘Most women on The Flat probably ignored politics and unions. Some doubtless gave their husbands strong support, but most viewed strikes with fear and regarded the agitation as a type of boy’s game. We *cannot know*.’ [My italics]. These are strong statements in a case that ‘we cannot know’ and the claims will, I hope, enable us to see ways of suggesting how women might fit into analyses of work, politics and society. When Olssen suggests women are excluded from the concept of work and workers, we have to ask whose concept and explore more than the concepts of the census takers or the male unions (who, in arguing for the family wage, were not arguing that women, even married women, should not work). When he excludes women from an independent position in the working class we are challenged to ask more about the way that class was constructed, to shift our gaze away from the factory floor which, as Olssen himself argues, is not a total explanation. And the argument that women were ‘apolitical’ fails to take into account that from 1893 women made up over half of the voters in Caversham. Thomas Sidey, the most successful Caversham politician of his day, realized this — so should we. In discussing the ‘belief that men were born equal’ Olssen uses the word ‘men advisedly because of its gendered ambiguity’. What does he mean? That we should read ‘men’ to include men and women? But surely in this context, almost more than any other, the work of feminist political theorists has shown that no ambiguity was intended or existed. While showing us much about the way skilled men thought about women, Olssen alerts us to the need to re-read the evidence not only for the exclusions but for the way they point to inclusions and alternative meanings.

Olssen sees the skilled workers of Caversham constructing a new world, defined by that other, old world. Certainly their rhetoric suggests a strong sense of purpose in this enterprise. However at least one ritual that is taken to suggest the transference from the old to the new is misread. Olssen speculates that the ‘curious ritual of “flogging the dead horse”, which occurred on many migrant vessels’ may have represented a repudiation of the old world. This ritual, usually referred to as ‘burying the dead horse’ was carried out by sailors, not by migrants. They were in the custom of drawing an advance on their wages and spending this money while on shore. Thus they reckoned that for some time into the voyage they were working ‘for a dead horse’. When they had worked off this debt, they ‘buried’ (threw overboard or burnt) the dead horse and looked forward to collecting their wages for the rest of the voyage. An even more interesting ritual for a labour historian.

As a window on Caversham, Olssen’s book is full of interest; as an exploration of the linkages between skilled work, politics and society it is a return to old debates and a masterly summation of much of his research and writing in labour and political history.

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*Nga Iwi o Tainui: The traditional history of the Tainui people/Nga koorero tuku iho a nga tuupuna.* Compiled by Pei Te Hurinui Jones; edited and annotated by Bruce Biggs. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1995. 402pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 1-86940-119-0.

‘KUA WHAKATERE anoo te waka koorero o Tainui’. This canoe of communication of Tainui is buoyant again, conveying the ‘living presence of our tuupuna . . . a living taaonga

for us all'. With breathtaking timeliness, this awesome canoe heralded the historic resolution of Te Raupatu, the confiscation grievance of Waikato.

Dr Pei Te Hurinui Jones and Professor Bruce Biggs, great scholars of Tainui history and themselves taaonga of the Tainui people, have brought this canoe to its resting place, passing on the knowledge of the many kaumaatua who shared it with them. Today they share those histories with the present generation of kaumaatua and the uri whakatupu. And at the same time, new iwi education programmes are being funded from Crown compensation for the lands where that history was made during many generations before the confiscations.

*Nga Iwi o Tainui* is a history of the tribes, of their settlement and occupation of their rohe, their leaders, marriages, rows, vendettas — 'a sequence of actual events and a roll of real people', in Biggs' words. He has no time for anthropological claims that tribal tradition may be merely an 'elaborate social charter justifying the social and political order that existed when, or at some time before they were first recorded'. Applying the criteria of internal consistency of traditions and of chronology based on whakapapa, and external consistency with traditions of other tribes, how can one conclude that the stories were simply invented, when it was so important to the tribes to preserve a record of kinship links and of insults — avenged and unavenged? Apart from the distant past of Kupe and the voyage of the Tainui waka from Hawaiki, the history is also amazingly detailed from the end of the fifteenth century onwards — 'matched in the Pacific only by other Maaori tribal histories'. But Pei Te Hurinui — unlike Kelly in the earlier history *Tainui* — finished his history at the beginning of the nineteenth century, before the era of Hongi Hika, Te Rauparaha, and Te Waharoa. It was important to Pei Te Hurinui, and to him spiritually appropriate, not to dig up the old hurts of the past; as many people today would understand.

At the heart of the book are the visions, strategies, successes, hurts and failures of real people, a gallery of models for their uri whakatupu today. Tuu-paahau, who lived 300 years ago, at Kaawhia and Maro-kopa, embodies many of the qualities of a skilful leader. A good strategist, he bided his time to avenge insults directed against his people, took the advice of his tohunga, and got under the skin of his enemy by outwitting them at fishing and catching crabs. The people of Tuu-paahau sensed his vigilance, expertise and experience, and there was clearly a strong relationship of trust between him and them which meant that he could retire to make love to his wife when the enemy taua finally came in sight to attack his paa, without causing any panic. Constantly informed by his people of the progress of the taua, Tuu-paahau emerged from his house in time to lead the rout of the invaders.

Men were constantly called on to defend tribal lands and avenge those who had been killed in an earlier generation, and much of the history is about their exploits. But they could be strategists in love, too — like Taawhao, who wanted to marry Maru-tee-hiakina, the beautiful younger sister of his wife Puunui-a-te-kore. In a tender moment he made a raft from bulrushes to send to her, fastened his ivory cloak-pin to the raft and said his karakia as he sent it across Raglan harbour to find her. Maru-tee-hiakina found the raft when she came to swim, and recognised the ivory cloak pin and soon she decided to cross the harbour and marry him. Thus the famous sons of Taawhao, tuupuna of the Tainui people, were born: Whatihua to Maru-tee-hiakina, and Tuurongo to Puunui-a-te-kore.

The stories of women and their initiatives are also woven into this tapestry: Rua-puu-tahanga who abandoned her husband Whatihua because she objected to the attention he bestowed on his other wife Apakura, and because Whatihua had commandeered a precious talisman that she had brought with her from Taranaki, to catch a special eel to satisfy the craving of Apakura; and Heke-i-te-rangi of Ngaati Maniapoto, who rejected

a tribal arrangement for her to marry Toa-kootara of Waikato. She preferred Ngaere, his younger brother ('Kua hiahia au ki a koe hei taane maaku', 'I want you as my husband') and went away to marry him, finally reconciling her father and her husband, with the support of her people, after her son was born. Te Aka-taawhia also rejected the husband chosen for her — Maahanga — by a father who was grateful for the help of Maahanga, but eventually agreed to marry him despite, or because of, his assault on her body and insult to her dignity at the latrine. But she did not agree without singing a song of defiance:

Ka hua hoki au  
 Ki taku ropi ma te ure e titiro.  
 Kaaore ianei, ma te kanohi e titiro . . .

This *ngeri* was later sung by Ngaati Maahanga before going into battle, so that the anger in Te Aka-taawhia's song fuelled their fierceness when they confronted their enemies.

Women played a crucial role, too, in forming the links with other tribes through marriage, many of which are still alive today: the noble woman Rerei-ao, who married Pikiao of Te Arawa, linking their two tribes: Reituu and Reipac, twin daughters of Wairere, who married Ue-oneone of Ngaapuhi and Korowharo of Kaipara respectively, joining Tainui lines with those of the North; and Waitapu who married Te Rangi-ita, linking Ngaati Tuuwhare-toa to the Tainui lines. Other high-born women left their homes to make crucial political marriages into Tainui that were of long-term significance: the best known are those of Mahina-a-rangi of the East Coast with Tuurongo, and Rua-puutahanga of Taranaki with Whatihua, the brother of Tuurongo.

There are 67 stories in *Nga Iwi o Tainui*, all about people that many of the present generations have come to know and cherish and identify with. In this book they can learn more about both their history, and their language — for the Maaori text of Pei Te Hurinui is set out side by side with the English translation of Bruce Biggs, a translation which is a tribute indeed to Biggs' determination to preserve the Maaori idiom. The Maaori text reads easily, and pronunciation of the words has been simplified by the use of double vowels and by the hyphenation of proper names. Biggs' annotation of the text is scholarly and meticulous; he provides both detailed discussions of comparative published and unpublished sources, and identifications of people and places, and he has added three chapters from manuscripts that were not available to Pei Te Hurinui.

*Nga Iwi o Tainui* was launched at Tuarangawaewae Marae on 26 September last year, not long before the Waikato settlement with the Crown was finally brought to its conclusion when the settlement legislation was passed by Parliament in October, and then signed by Queen Elizabeth II. That same evening a travel scholarship was established in memory of Pei Te Hurinui to encourage university graduates of Tainui descent to study in Britain, and complete projects that will benefit Waikato-Maniapoto. Speaking to those gathered, descendants of the ancestors whose history this is, Te Arikini Te Atairangikaahu addressed the young people who might have been conscious of some of the recent protests at the time of the settlement: 'You do not have to go anywhere else to find your rangatiranga', she said, 'you will find it in this book'.

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