

elsewhere. As it is, Bohan is in the false situation of having constructed a lock and then exhibiting the key to it quite separately.

In trying to humanize Grey, Bohan has failed to break through the 'Romance of a Proconsul'. The source of both the charm and the horror that Grey emanated is left intact. Even the eccentricities Bohan details were only 'positive' symptoms or defence mechanisms that highlight the isolation Grey experienced with his contemporaries. Still, the coy enthusiasm Bohan has felt for him is an important step in Pakeha New Zealand towards owning up to Grey. A pervasive disavowal over the past 40 years has made it easy for us to dissociate ourselves from him, as an imposition from outside on one who was simply *sui generis*.

It would be a huge step if we could own up to both Grey's brilliance and our complicity in the evil he did. I look forward to the books that Xhosa, Zulu, Aboriginal and Maori historians will publish on their own people's experience of this tormented and tormenting man.

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The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Volume Four 1921–1940. General Editor Claudia Orange. Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books and the Department of Internal Affairs, Auckland, 1998. 650 pp. NZ price: \$130.00. ISBN 1-86940-203-0.

THIS LATEST — and penultimate — volume of the DNZB covers lives of note of the years 1921–1940. It is formatted in exactly the same way as its three predecessors and again achieves, seemingly (not in fact of course) without effort, the same high standards of design and usability, the same sure touch with respect to choice and representativeness of entries. Obviously with a period so much shorter than a life span there is considerable overlap into earlier and later periods, but by and large the editorial team has succeeded in keeping the focus firmly on those years which ever since 1939 have borne the label 'inter-war'. It seems superfluous to comment, therefore, on these aspects and this review instead considers the contribution of the volume to the present and future historiography of the inter-war period.

Is anything harder to capture than passionate commitment to a cause which has died? Volume Four performs good service in reminding us how important monetary reform was for so many — H.G.R. Mason, A.R.D. Fairburn, A.N. Field, Harold Rushworth for instance — in the 1930s. It is less successful in conveying a much more pervasive faith — that in imperialism, or, in its Labour Party guise, attachment to the British Commonwealth. I am not sure a reader of this volume would be able to discern what a near-universal ideology this was (rather like today's 'Europeanism' in continental Europe). In both cases historians need to be alert to these now unfamiliar dimensions of a not unfamiliar world.

One 'empire' which is remembered is New Zealand's own Pacific one. Indeed this reviewer picked up two further entries which did not make the end-list of those with Pacific connections. Fred Furkert, the engineer and hydro dam builder of the 1920s, advised the administration in Samoa on hydro development. R.A.K. Mason evidently related the beginnings of his disillusionment with New Zealand nationalism to what he had learnt of the New Zealand record in the Pacific on an island trip in 1931.

The many biographies of labour activists and socialists of this era — individuals like Jean Devanny, Alex Galbraith and Sid Scott as well as trade unionists like Dan Sullivan and Ken Baxter, Elizabeth McCombs and Robert MacFarlane — convey a

sense of possibility, of belief in their cause. That belief was central to the social and political climate of the inter-war period, but is not now. Should we be therefore thinking differently about 'then' as well as 'now'?

The entries on business people suggest something about both biography and history. The relationship — tension — between the individual and society animates the art of biography. Business people often — it seems — took formative decisions in their lives quite young and created new institutions rather than making careers in old ones. The individual imprint looms large and the entries are all the more readable, in that respect bearing comparison with those of protestors and reformers, and contrasting with those of many parliamentarians, public servants, academics or doctors.

These business biographies also suggest new directions for history. John McKenzie, the businessman, born in Victoria in 1876, came to New Zealand in 1909 on a motorcycling holiday and was 'so impressed with the country and the opportunities it offered that he decided to relocate his businesses'. His and many other stories of 'domestic' business — the selling of beer and bacon, cars and concerts, 'pictures' and plane travel — to the population, particularly the urban population, have resonance today. But neither in the eras of 'heroic pioneering' and 'long pink cloud' historiography, nor in the more pluralist and inclusive phase of historical writing that succeeded the latter, have these stories been prominent.

This volume, as those before, has reviewed the lives of more men than women (a 70/30 division, the same proportion as in Volume Three) but has nonetheless brought before today's reading public many women who had become 'invisible'. These included larger-than-life figures such as Esther James, the champion walker and promoter, Katerina Nehua, the endurance swimmer, and Hedda Dyson, the founder of the *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*. And best of all, 'Ma' Hallam, for whom the lead-in information — 'property-owner, boarding house keeper' — is austere to the point of deception.

A phrase found in a large number of the women's biographies is '[xx] never married'. Indeed, of the total of 186 women's entries, over 80 were unmarried (thanks to Hilary Stace for information on this latter figure), a far higher proportion than the proportion of unmarried women in the adult female population. That is suggestive of the extent to which women achieved 'prominence' either at the cost of, or because of a wish to avoid, the traditional domestic role. It can be noted that, although some of these women (Ursula Bethell, Eileen Duggan for example) are linked with lifetime female companions, none are explicitly identified as lesbian. Is the DNZB being careful or cautious? As it is, it seems curious rather than illuminating that 'she never married' is eschewed for Bethell.

With respect to the biographies of Maori it is striking (perhaps it was planned) how alongside those entries on individuals versed in Maoritanga, such as Himiona Kamira of Te Tai Tokerau, there are those of others who also played a role in the non-traditional world, individuals like Ned Ellison, Sam Emery, Joe Fluerty and Ike Robin. Some, like Rongo Halbert, the Jones brothers, and Rangi Royal, were completely confident in both worlds. These patterns have not yet been the subject of sustained analysis, perhaps because they pose both conceptual and procedural difficulties for Pakeha and Maori scholars. The range of biographies in this volume suggests that such investigations could nonetheless be very fruitful.

Reviewers should demonstrate that they have read carefully. I place in evidence at least one 'icon' (p.8), a word best left to art historians, and the curiosity of describing an Englishman as 'Anglophile' (p.207). Finding such slim pickings in near 600 pages of text is but one way of registering the accomplishment of this volume and the lasting value it will have for inter-war historiography.

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