

Human Rights and Sporting Contacts: New Zealand Attitudes to Race Relations in South Africa 1921–1994. By Malcolm Templeton. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1998. 374 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-86940-170-0.

Dancing on Our Bones: New Zealand, South Africa, Rugby and Racism. By Trevor Richards. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1999. 300 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877242-00-4.

SELDOM IN NEW ZEALAND have two such different books about such similar subjects been produced within six months of each other. Although Malcolm Templeton and Trevor Richards take a different angle on the New Zealand-South Africa connection, neither can avoid the simple fact that the issue at hand is rugby. In the long struggle against the impact of South African racial ideology — whatever its name: apartheid or pre-apartheid colonialism — nothing else really mattered. Both Richards and Templeton are clear in their renunciation of apartheid, but there the similarities end.

Apartheid is one of the major issues of New Zealand domestic and foreign politics in the later half of the twentieth century. It has put New Zealand at the centre of multilateral international sporting boycotts (in 1976), seen near civil war (in 1981), made New Zealand the place of the largest anti-apartheid demonstrations outside South Africa (again, in 1981), and made New Zealand the pariah of the Commonwealth. Yet little has been written about it. Only Richard Thompson and Tom Newnham have published general overviews of the New Zealand struggle against apartheid.¹ Despite the plethora of rugby books dealing with New Zealand-South Africa contact, only one has taken the anti-apartheid movement seriously as a theme; the others have at best doffed a cap at the politics of apartheid sport and moved on to the 'real' issue of the match reports.² Richards and Templeton deal seriously with the politics of apartheid sport. Despite this, significant gaps remain.

Trevor Richards needs no introduction to New Zealanders of a certain age. He was Prime Minister Robert Muldoon's public enemy number one during the late 1970s and early 1980s; a position he shared with trade union leaders alleged to be communists and others held to disrupt Muldoon's right-wing populist political agenda. Unlike those who may have sought revolutionary change in New Zealand's political economy, allegations of treason were levelled at Richards because he sought to prevent sporting and other contact between New Zealand and South Africa. *Dancing on Our Bones* is a lively and highly readable account of the anti-apartheid movement in New Zealand. It places the intensity of the protests against the 1981 Springbok tour in an historicized context. In doing so the book undermines an apparent nostalgia where the period is seen as a difficult one-off time, a burst of activity the country went through to blow out the cobwebs and become something new.

This is very much Richards' account of the anti-apartheid campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. There is no one better placed to give an insider's view of the movement. HART (initially Halt All Racist Tours, later HART: the New Zealand Anti-Apartheid Movement) was the leading force, concentrating primarily on struggles against apartheid. Richards was, during the 1970s, the face of the New Zealand anti-apartheid movement and remained the international face of New Zealand's campaigns until the mid-1980s. Despite this personal centrality, Richards is humble about his role. The book does not give the impression that Richards is indulging in self-aggrandisement. Rather, there is a clear sense that he was an activist because something needed to be done and he was well placed to do it.

Whereas *Dancing on Our Bones* carries with it the passion and excitement, the drama, the challenge and, at times, the fear of activism in the anti-apartheid movement, Malcolm Templeton's *Human Rights and Sporting Contact* presents a parallel strand in the geo-politics of apartheid. Templeton was a senior member of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and is, in this capacity, present in this diplomatic history of New Zealand's relations with apartheid South Africa. As a history of diplomatic activity, Templeton has constructed a text from official archives: the bibliography features only nine published articles, three theses and 19 books but there are at least 54 different Foreign Affairs files cited and countless newspapers. These official records tend to be bleached, yet Templeton is also able to conjure up images of the personalities.

Templeton is clear, careful and cautious in his writing and his assessments. There is much in this that I suspect Richards would find disagreeable, perhaps as much a result of the various sources each uses as the perspective each brings to bear. In Templeton's case, the perspective is of one who was involved in many of the issues as a government official required to 'protect New Zealand's national interests and enhance its international reputation' (p.viii). For Richards, his book is the 'reflective recollections of a partisan' (p.5). These differences contribute greatly to the sense that these are companion volumes. Like Richards, Templeton historicizes relations between the two countries including a brief discussion of New Zealand(er)s attitudes to race, linking the South Africa question to the (mainly unofficial) white New Zealand immigration policy.

At various places and in various ways both authors reflect on the New Zealand-South Africa connection and the significance of rugby as the primary point of connection between the two countries. Templeton reflects on the significance of rugby from time to time, and Richards devotes a brief penultimate chapter to 'Look at ourselves' (pp.236-45). Neither, however, seriously grapples with or comes near to answering the question 'why rugby?' Yet this is at the core of the way in which the issue was played out: apartheid gained particular resonance when 15 men in black and 15 men in green and gold ran around a paddock after an oval ball. In many respects this reveals a gap in the historiography, sociology, and cultural analysis of New Zealand, where rugby has been glossed as a key cultural site and historical force. This gap is not so prevalent in South Africa, where rugby has been clearly politicized as a site of cultural struggle, although there is still much to be done in this area there as well.³ The South African advantage is only significant because of the sparseness of material on New Zealand. Both these accounts are passionate narratives of tense, fraught and problematic times. Both carry the reader, portray the intensity, and depict the personalities. But both reveal how much there is to do if we are to develop an historicized understanding of the campaigns against apartheid and a broadened historiography of popular politics, of colonial and racialized social dynamics, and of the cultural politics of sport in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

That these gaps exist does not detract from the value of these volumes. Templeton has meticulously constructed a compelling account of the diplomatic imperatives within New Zealand's oftentimes shameful stance on contact with apartheid. He has also presented us with an invaluable guide to the archives. Richards has taken his readership into the drama and dull grind of activist politics while recounting the dynamics and events of the single most divisive issue in post-war New Zealand. For these contributions, in themselves, both Richards and Templeton should be thanked and the volumes widely used in treatments of modern New Zealand history.

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1 The most recent of these are: Tom Newnham, *Apartheid is Not a Game: The Inside Story of New Zealand's Struggle Against Apartheid Sport*, Auckland, 1975; and Richard Thompson, *Retreat From Apartheid: New Zealand's Sporting Contacts with South Africa*, Wellington, 1975.

2 The exception to this is Spiro Zavos, *Winters of Revenge: The Bitter Rivalry Between the All*