

foreword written by Hugh Eldred-Grigg deserve mention. Such revision can be a welcome means to re-examine our perspectives, whether to adjust or re-affirm them. However, *Phoney Wars*'s numerous idiosyncrasies, beyond the means to fully dissect here, furnish a lasting impression of a book more invested in cultivating controversy than serious scholarship.

STEVEN LOVERIDGE

Victoria University of Wellington

Farming, Fascism and Ecology: A Life of Jorian Jenks. By Philip M. Coupland. Routledge, United Kingdom, 2017. 304 pp. NZ price: \$72.99. ISBN: 9781138688629.

THE CONVERGENCE OF AGRICULTURE, modernity, politics and the nascent organic movement would be fertile ground for any historian, so it was with considerable pleasure that I took the opportunity to read and review Phillip Coupland's volume on Jorian Jenks, the British journalist, fascist and founding editor of the Soil Association's journal, *Mother Earth*. Born in 1899 into a middle-class academic household, Jenks, who as a small boy loved horses, longed to farm, an ambition he achieved in short bursts and with only mixed results during the 1930s. Frustration at the poor support and low prices directed at local farmers while the nation dined on cheap and often substandard imported food led Jenks away from the strongly liberal politics of his family toward the promise of a more rational corporate state offered by Oswald Mosely and the British Union of Fascists (BUF). Drawing on his own experiences of British farming and two short stints as an agricultural advisor and lecturer here in New Zealand, Jenks's vision of a counter-industrial rural modernity, based around traditional yeomanry and low-cost mixed-crop rotation, also found a comfortable home within the organic movement as it emerged after the Second World War. As I said, fertile ground.

This book, however, like Jenks's farming, brings mixed results. While undoubtedly an impeccably researched volume, a lack of context provided by Coupland largely fails to connect Jenks and his work to the broader political and economic world in which he campaigned. As part of a series on Fascism and the Far Right, the volume may make a valuable reference text to students already familiar with fascism, but it will offer little to those coming from agriculture or ecology who seek to broaden their understanding of this aspect of the era. Mosely and the BUF, for example, are included without introduction, and Jenks has been aligned in the narrative with the union for more than two years before an explanation is provided in the volume of its basic manifesto. But more puzzling still is the almost complete lack of reference to the agrarian reforms being undertaken by European fascist states, concurrent with Jenks's writing, which could not have failed to have influenced his work and its reception. Preference instead goes to a continuous stream of lesser characters and minor publications only a very few of which appear to have had any significant or enduring impact on the political transformation they sought to achieve. One is left with the feeling that fewer facts within the volume in favour of a less detailed but more contextualized and cohesive

argument would be of greater advantage to the university students and their teachers that the series seeks to address.

This said, however, the volume provides many valuable insights. One such is in its critique of early-twentieth-century liberalism and its impact on the British economy, agriculture and national health. In juxtaposing Jenks's 'alternative modernity' with his view of the 'unfettered industrialism, economic values and acquisitive spirit of liberal individualism' (p. 100), Coupland provides a picture of the legislation, political manoeuvrings and betrayals that left farmers struggling within an open market economy geared toward the interests of only a small elite. Amid the current concerns over global food production and food security, he leaves many interesting questions for not only historians to ponder.

Another area particularly well handled is Jenks's attitudes toward anti-Semitism in the build-up to the Second World War. In an effort to balance Jenks's involvement in this notorious aspect of the BUF, Coupland considers attitudes toward the 'Jewish Other' across the British political spectrum, along with the popular assumptions that the union tapped into by making 'explicit what was usually left unspoken' (p. 100). Tucked, a little disingenuously perhaps, under the heading 'Rabbits' — Jenks apparently having drawn the analogy between rabbits and the Jewish population partly as a result of his experience of rabbit plagues here in New Zealand — it is, I feel, one of the best contextualized sections of the book. The case of the ill-fated journal *Rural Economy* is also particularly well handled in giving a sense of the determination but ultimate frustration of radical campaigners such as Jenks in the face of entrenched rural conservatism and, in the post-war period, relative prosperity (p.238). Indeed, there may have been many such treatments within the original copy of the script, the impression being that these may have been forfeited in a substantial reworking following editing and review (p.xv).

All history is a matter of stipulation and priority in the construction of its argument. Although in his volume Coupland's treatment of his material seems a little unusual to me, it is in the first instance a micro-study and, through its detailed handling of Jenks's life, offers us valuable insights into an unusual combination of interests during tumultuous times.

RACHAEL BELL

Massey University

Tears of Rangi: Experiments Across Worlds. By Anne Salmond. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2017. 511pp. NZ price: \$65.00. ISBN: 9781869408657.

IN LATE NOVEMBER 2017 a particularly scathing and incredibly short review of Dame Anne Salmond's *Tears of Rangi: Experiments Across Worlds* was posted on *The Spinoff's* website. The review by Buddy Mikaere, former Director of the Waitangi Tribunal, argued that Salmond relied solely on evidence from European authors and accused her of perpetuating the myth of the 'noble savage' that ignored how nasty, brutish and short life had been for Māori in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth