

of settlers, brave people who risked much to find, and to make, a new place for themselves and their children. 'It is about the growth of a shared identity, shared with all comers, reasonably, and by choice.'

While examining the process by which the Irish became 'colonial', O'Farrell skilfully weaves several other strands through his book. These include a piercing analysis of the effect of Irish dominance over the Catholic Church in Australasia, and the corrosive influence of Irish politics on the assimilation process. He teases out the links between the Irish Catholic community and emergent Labour. Nor are the Protestant Irish neglected, as the author provides an illuminating contrast in case studies of the New Zealand Farrells and the Australian Andrews. The dominant notes in *Vanished Kingdoms* are complexity, ambivalence, regret — it is not light fare, but the author pursues his subject with a tenacity and an often painful honesty which makes for compelling reading. O'Farrell's strictures on the 'clerical thugs', whose Irish obsessions are seen as damaging and limiting colonial Catholicism, are balanced by a loving depiction of his former teacher, the Marist Brother Egbert.

Eileen Duggan, Pat Hickey, William Massey are other figures who flit across the pages of this book, whose author is himself Greymouth-born. He defends the term 'colonial' and 'Australasia' as avoiding inappropriate distinctions in discussion of the immigrant Irish and their destinations. There is a valuable lesson in O'Farrell's critique of his Australian colleagues: 'historians [who] took — still take — an English view of appearances, accept English priorities, reflect Protestant value-judgements. The sub-world of Irish Catholics had no real existence for historians who wrote from and about the walled gardens of the establishment.'

Two minor reservations. Does the author minimize the extent to which colonial clerics (including French ones) were captured by the idealized image of the island of saints and scholars? Even New Zealand-born prelates like James Liston and Matthew Brodie allowed their enthusiasm for Ireland to embroil them in bitter dispute with the enemies of Irish self-determination. Nor were the Marists quite the holy innocents, unsoiled by grubby ecclesiastical politicking, that he would have us believe. That they resisted the Irish secular invader for so long is proof of that.

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France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History. By Stephen Henningham. Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1992. xvii. 292pp. Australian price: \$24.95.

DESPITE a well-known contrary opinion, it is doubtful if there has ever been a need for 'a really good 5-cent cigar'. An up-to-date, comprehensive, factual narrative survey of French rule in the Pacific is, however, a different matter. For the past decade the peoples and countries of the region have needed one. At last, in Henningham's book, they have got it. This is an important work, for while France impinges heavily on the sensibilities of the Pacific nations, even those which are not under its control, a language barrier inhibits understanding in the Anglophone neighbourhood of what is going on in the French territories. France's continued colonial presence is (like Rabuka's coup of 1987 in Fiji) an affront to the ideals of democracy embedded in the public philosophy of most of the South Pacific nations, while its continued nuclear testing is viewed by them as reprehensible.

Admittedly, the numerous outbursts of political violence that have marred French rule during the 1970s and 1980s, the main period covered by this book, have been noted in the regional press, but the treatment of them has been fragmentary. Henningham's achievement has been to order these events, and many others, into a synthesis that embraces all France's Pacific territories. Moreover, he sets them solidly within the context both of local affairs (of which there are at least three elements: indigenous, settler and administrative) and of metropolitan policies.

The first case he describes is that of Vanuatu which, thanks to British involvement in its colonial government, managed to obtain independence in 1980. Not the least merit of this chapter, as of others in the book, is his identification and explanation of the alphabetically-labelled political factions that seem to flourish in the French Pacific (UPNH, MANH and UCNH have a plethora of analogues). There are also a couple of weaknesses. In dealing with France's efforts to remain in the then New Hebrides, Henningham ought to have laid more stress on the politics of *francophonie*, as seen in the expansion of French scholarship during the 1970, and in regard to the rebellions against Lini's government in 1980 he could well have given more attention to that on Tanna, for it, too, like that on Santo was encouraged by the retreating French regime.

The 'happy ending' of the Vanuatu debacle contrasts with the unresolved, and often tragic, contest in New Caledonia. The history there is one of lost chances. During the 1950s France was tolerant of the indigenous nationalism articulated by the Union Caledonienne. A peaceful future seemed in prospect. But in 1963 that tolerance was abruptly withdrawn, and the pre-eminence of colonial and imperial concerns was reinstated, largely as a result of De Gaulle's decision to carry out nuclear testing in the Pacific. A more aggressive nationalism emerged in the 1970s, and intensified as at each turn it was met by stronger French resistance.

There were, of course, many subtleties in all of this. The indigenous *kanaks* were not tightly united in their political demands. Nor were the indigenes of French Polynesia, where there is also a strong nationalism. Henningham illustrates the complexity of politics in both areas in rich detail. He also deals more fully than any other writer with the politics of Wallis and Futuna. In doing so he points to the irony that it was during the period of the nationalistic Union Caledonienne administration that migrants from those islands were brought into New Caledonia to work in the nickel mines, but that they have subsequently unified the demographic balance, thereby politically disadvantaging the *kanaks*. The Polynesian immigrants ally themselves with the French settlers against the Melanesian nationalists.

In telling his tale, Henningham avoids the temptation to generalize or to predict, although the continuing French rule in the Pacific is surely perfidiously anachronistic in the late twentieth century. This is a good book, but it is sad to think that any updating of it is likely to contain accounts of injustice additional to those it already records.

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