

REVIEWS

Mothers Never Told Us, he and his fellow contributors seem blind to the fact that the men they are writing about were gendered subjects too. Prisoners of war are not mentioned, and the only piece that deals with the difficulties of the post-war transition is John Battersby's essay on the formation of the United Nations. Almost none of the contributors use oral history to supplement the official record, though they make good use of the available manuscript and archival records. The abiding impression is of much work left to be done. More, and more diverse, histories of the war please.

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New Zealand in World Affairs III, 1972–1990. Edited by Bruce Brown. Victoria University Press in association with the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 1999. 336 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473-372-0.

THE PERIOD 1972 to 1990 witnessed a significant shift in the conduct of New Zealand foreign policy. It began on the cusp of Britain's entry into the European Economic Community, and ended in disillusionment with New Zealand's traditional allies following the ANZUS dispute and the *Rainbow Warrior* tragedy. The days of Commonwealth solidarity in the Holyoake years seemed long gone. In Washington, generous access to the policy-making élite, carefully built up over previous decades, was cut almost overnight. The New Zealand Prime Minister was welcome at Disneyland, but not the White House. These historical facts are well known. The principal task for the authors of *New Zealand in World Affairs III* is to explain how and why this process occurred, placing the period under review in the historical context of post-1945 New Zealand foreign policy. A difficult task perhaps, given that the period is so recent, but nonetheless the only criteria by which the book's value can be assessed.

The essays contained in the book cover a fair spectrum of themes and issues that dominated the making of New Zealand foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s. The increasing multilateral framework of diplomacy is discussed in chapters on trade negotiations and the development of international law. Key bilateral ties, in themselves an indication of the growing diversity of New Zealand's overseas interests since 1972, are set out in essays on relations with Japan, China, Oceania and Australia. Defence policy is addressed in an article tracing its development from the Vietnam to Persian Gulf conflicts, while the pivotal issue of ANZUS is discussed separately. The collection is completed by a discussion of the public dimension of foreign policy, recognizing that, especially in this period, professional diplomats were not the final arbiters of the direction of this policy.

An underlying theme in the book is that, during this period, New Zealand finally broke the shackles of dependence. According to Merwyn Norrish, a Secretary of Foreign Affairs in the 1980s, New Zealand now made foreign policy after careful consideration of its own national interests, and was less inclined to follow the lead of others. However, in the context of the history of New Zealand foreign policy, this thesis does not do the initiators of that policy full justice. As long ago as 1945 New Zealand clearly defied — and considerably annoyed — both Britain and the United States in criticizing provision for a 'great power' veto in the UN Charter. It is myth to suggest that the pursuit of New Zealand national interests was undermined, in itself, by the allegiance given to Commonwealth associations and the American alliance. For those who made foreign policy at the time, respect for the latter was essential to successful pursuit of the former. New Zealand national interests were expressed through these institutions rather than

through denunciation of them. It was only the irreversible weakening of some of these institutions, particularly the Empire/Commonwealth, which lead eventually to the cocktail of 'nationalisms' referred to in Malcolm McKinnon's essay. The ANZUS dispute displayed these often contradictory political emotions of lingering loyalty to established allies; the fear of isolation; and the determined advocacy of some interests which pitted New Zealand against its closest allies.

A concern with *New Zealand in World Affairs III* is that too many of the essays appear to be a narrative of events, rather than an explanation of the shifts and continuities in New Zealand's foreign policy. What is of interest to the reader is not the minutiae of how CER was negotiated, for example, but why it came into being at all, given the historical — and mutual — aloofness in trans-Tasman relations.

Given that the book is an ensemble of issues and contributing writers there are, perhaps not surprisingly, different interpretations at times about the same event. This is a strength, not a weakness, and marks the area out for future debate. In his excellent analysis of New Zealand's defence policy, Ian McGibbon sets out the circumstances of the coups in Fiji in 1987, and the insistence of Prime Minister David Lange that New Zealand's defence forces — including an SAS detachment — be on stand-by to intervene if required. In his essay, John Henderson (head of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at the time) argues that any military involvement contemplated was limited, and would only have been with the permission of the Fijian authorities. The question of whether any armed incursion, if that was required, would have been opposed or not, is obviously a matter for further scrutiny and debate.

Overall, *New Zealand in World Affairs III* works well as an introduction to some major themes in New Zealand foreign policy, many of which are still with us today. It is to be hoped that some of these issues will be taken up in further research. New Zealand has a proud history of involvement in world affairs that deserves greater attention than it often receives from professional historians. In the context of opening the debate on New Zealand's recent international history, the editor and contributing writers have done a good job. Of course, like great wine, it will take many years yet for that debate, and the historiography, to mature properly.

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Victoria University of Wellington 1899–1999: A History. By Rachel Barrowman. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1999. 432 pp. NZ price: \$69.95. ISBN 0-86473-369-0.

IT WILL be left to future historians to ponder the bitter ironies of Victoria University of Wellington celebrating its centenary as angry and demoralized staff and students stood by its gates protesting against the university's divisive management style. For many, 1999 was Victoria's *annus horribilis* — to use a term popularized by an heir of the institution's namesake — with an unprecedented vote of no confidence by staff in their senior managers, a series of strikes, and threats of boycotts and lockouts.

It was in the midst of this turmoil that Rachel Barrowman's impressive history of Victoria was launched. While some wondered what there was to celebrate, others searched for a 'useable past' to contextualize their present troubles. Many gained strength from Victoria's night-school roots (it was to be a 'People's University'), strong tradition of protest (from the von Zedlitz affair to Vietnam) and democratic forms of administration (the first New Zealand university to have student representatives on administrative committees). This knowledge was used by critics to charge university management with