

The collection is rounded out with a chapter by John Goodliffe on Soviet-era published perspectives on New Zealand society, an interview featuring some typically forthright reflections by Gerald McGhie, New Zealand's last Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Aaron Fox's assessment of the cases against William Sutch and Ian Milner, two New Zealanders accused of spying for the Soviet Union. The latter chapter is a meticulously thorough and fair-minded analysis of recently declassified American, Australian and New Zealand official files concerning these two cases. Ironically, Fox concludes that any definitive conclusions about the two men's guilt or innocence still await the declassification of relevant Soviet sources.

In reality, it remains an open question if archival revelations from the former Soviet bloc will ever yield anything of great significance for New Zealand historiography. With the possible exception of the relationship between international and domestic communism or espionage cases, they are only likely to show us how communist states regarded New Zealand rather than to alter our existing knowledge about this country's participation in the Cold War. Consequently, these two volumes only reinforce the fact that, for New Zealand, the Cold War was more about the management of relations with allies, through the brokering of national and international interests within coalitions of like-minded states, rather than about engagement with distant ideological adversaries.

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*Adventures in Democracy: A History of the Vote in New Zealand.* By Neill Atkinson. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2003. 319 pp. NZ price: \$39.99. ISBN 1-877276-58-8.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION is charged with the unenviable task of encouraging political participation in the face of an increasingly jaded and cynical public. They have sought to do so by a variety of means, including the commissioning of this history of the vote, a project initiated to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first parliamentary elections in 1853. It is to their great credit that they have chosen the form of a detailed monograph rather than a 'once over lightly' history. This is a serious piece of research. We have come to expect nothing less from the History Group, the recipients of the commission, and once again they have delivered a work that will become a standard reference tool for years to come.

Taking the publication beyond the realm of 'reference work' was a challenge for Neill Atkinson. At face value this is not a naturally compelling subject. Political scientists, especially psephologists, have refined the art of turning elections into dull, dense tomes, often devoid of humanity except as aggregates. Many historians have simply turned their backs on politics, especially electoral politics, in favour of more 'interesting' subjects in the realm of social and, more recently, cultural history. Atkinson has taken up this challenge and succeeded in producing a highly readable work, with a nice balance between context, legislative and administrative detail, statistical analysis and anecdote.

The book is divided into seven main chapters. These are divided chronologically, each exploring a period of roughly 20 years. The chapter divisions, and therefore the periodization, are largely determined by 'turning point' elections. That most readers will guess the dividing points before opening the book may be a problem for some. But this is to miss the point of the book. The author's brief was also, perhaps principally, to discuss electoral law, its administration and the processes by which elections were conducted at the ballot box level. Given that this inevitably leads one into certain technical and procedural detail, Atkinson has written a remarkably engaging and accessible text. In

some instances detail may be familiar from earlier work on specific aspects of political history (most of which is now rather old), but most of the content will be familiar only to those few with a special interest in such issues. The synthesis aspect of this work is one of its great strengths.

The book is extensively illustrated and most images have detailed captions. Many of the images are new to me, including a number of fascinating election posters. There are also several extremely useful appendices. One provides a succinct chronology of key dates in the history of electoral reform. Another provides details regarding elections including dates, numbers of registered electors and turnout. A third, somewhat clumsily formatted, gives the party results by seat and percentage of vote. I can see myself strip mining these in the process of preparing lectures, always a sign that a new book meets at least one key test for an academic. A website created to supplement this book (<http://www.elections.org.nz/elections/pandr/vote/index.html>) is very well designed and adds considerable value for those interested in taking aspects of the book further. This emerging History Group model of books and websites complementing each other is to be applauded. The two media have a role in supporting rather than replacing each other; thankfully it need not be an either/or proposition.

When analysing the meaning of the story that he describes so well, Atkinson argues that the results are often a complex interaction between pragmatism and principle. This is perhaps a rather banal argument, but it is helpful to be reminded that even some of the most celebrated outcomes in expanding the franchise, where we 'led the world in democratisation of government', were not always the result of a vision of equality and the spirit of democracy we frequently like to pride ourselves on. It was at the level of analysis that I was left wanting more. What explains our pragmatism? Were New Zealanders inclined to vote by habit as Austin Mitchell suggested? How do we explain the contradiction between our self-perception as progressive and our willingness to accept a ban on communist radio broadcasts in the 1960 general election?

Some of these issues are part of a vision for a broader project on New Zealand political culture than the work Atkinson was asked to produce. Perhaps with this project having been so successfully concluded more work on New Zealand political culture can be expected.

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*The Wonder Country: Making New Zealand Tourism.* By Margaret McClure. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2004. 318 pp. NZ price: \$44.99. ISBN 1-86940-319-3.

TOURISM IS A MAJOR PLAYER in the New Zealand economy yet the history of tourism in this country has received little attention in books written for either academic or general audiences. For this reason *The Wonder Country: Making New Zealand Tourism* is to be welcomed. The book was commissioned by Tourism New Zealand and is a history of the government's involvement in tourism. It provides a descriptive account of the way New Zealand tourism has been developed and marketed for international visitors by governmental agencies. Episodic case studies are provided to propel that narrative in an engaging and interesting way. The book is also lavishly illustrated, which not only illuminates the text but gives an indication of the changes that have taken place in New Zealand society. It would be easy to criticize the book for not including domestic tourism, which has always been of greater value to the New Zealand economy than international tourism, but that would be churlish as governmental policy and particularly the policies of Tourism New Zealand and its predecessors over the last 100 years have not been primarily concerned with what local tourists do or want.