

instances, in fact, where the hint of a good story left me wishing for more. In the section on colonial officials, for example, Laidlaw refers to two ‘particularly poignant letters’ from Sir John Jamison to Governor Bourke which discuss ‘the exclusion of his natural daughter from Government House’ (p.107). In cases such as this I would have loved some excerpts from the letters, or at least a few more details.

The final section of the book explores agendas for colonial reform in the later 1830s. Laidlaw argues that ‘the challenges of controlling an ever-expanding empire, when combined with personal politics, domestic pressure, and metropolitan intellectual movements, forced the Colonial Office to reassess the means by which imperial influence was exerted’ (p.169). The colonial ‘information crisis’ which had been building since the 1820s came to a head in 1836 with the loss of Robert Hay’s personal networks. Understood as part of the wider metropolitan enthusiasm for facts and for classifying, Laidlaw shows how the collection and comparison of colonial information was a means of establishing and maintaining imperial authority, and of unifying an overwhelmingly diverse empire. But while she acknowledges the emerging science of statistics as crucial to this ‘information revolution’, Laidlaw misses the opportunity to develop her analysis of colonial networks in relation to the broader intellectual context of mid-Victorian Britain. Scientific and humanitarian networks, for example, remained invaluable sources of colonial information throughout this period. Though the information collected and collated at the Colonial Office was now more carefully ordered and arranged, it still flowed in through a range of different networks all loosely bound together as part of the broader imperial project.

While I would have liked a more careful analysis of the altered form in which personal networks survived the ‘information revolution’ and continued to influence colonial governance, this is an excellent book which is accessible and enjoyable to read. It provides a solid basis for understanding imperial networks in the early nineteenth century and is richly suggestive of further avenues for historical research and analysis.

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*Kanaky*. By Jean-Marie Tjibaou. Edited by Alban Bensa and Eric Wittersheim. Translated by Helen Fraser and John Trotter. Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2006. 327 pp. Australian price: \$34.95. ISBN 1-74076-175-8.

*KANAKY* IS THE LONG-AWAITED ENGLISH TRANSLATION of *La Présence Kanak* (1996), an edited collection of essays by, and interviews with, the late leader of the Kanak independence movement, Jean-Marie Tjibaou (1936–1989). The 34 texts are arranged chronologically and divided into five parts corresponding with different phases of the struggle for Kanak independence in New Caledonia; they encompass Tjibaou’s political career, beginning with the organization of the Melanesia 2000 festival held in 1975 and ending with a speech given only minutes before his assassination in 1989.

Tjibaou came into prominence as spokesperson of the campaign for recognition of Kanak culture and identity. Organizing the Melanesia 2000 festival, Tjibaou helped Kanak present themselves to the world for the first time on their own terms; his eloquent articulation of what it meant to be Melanesian in New Caledonia identified him as one of the voices of the Melanesian Way, comparable in many respects with Bernard Narakobi of Papua New Guinea and Walter Lini of Vanuatu. As one of the leaders of the Union Calédonienne, which came out in support of independence in 1977, and later as leader of the Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) (from 1984), Tjibaou reflected publicly on the possible meanings of Kanaky and Kanak independence, interdependence, sovereignty, decolonization and development.

The background to the majority of the writings and speeches presented is ‘the events’ of 1984–1988 — the often violent political struggle and conflict between supporters and opponents of independence — which ended with the signing of the Matignon-Oudinot Accords (succeeded in 1998 by the Nouméa Accord). He is often remembered for the emphasis he placed on restraint in the face of violent provocation, most infamously the 1984 massacre in which two of his own brothers, and eight other men, were killed. However, as these writings show, it is important to bear in mind the consensual element of his discourse as the spokesperson of the FLNKS — forcefully representing the Front and its various components. Tjibaou described the accords as a gamble ‘using the economy to promote the cultural developments that are our own, and which allow us to affirm our identity’ (p.280). Assassinated one year later, in 1989, by a disaffected militant, Tjibaou had almost no opportunity to see whether the gamble would pay off. Nevertheless he remains one of the founding architects of Kanaky New Caledonia’s political and cultural destiny.

In 2006 what are we to make of these writings and speeches from the 1970s and 1980s? Since 1989, New Caledonia has experienced more than 15 years of peace, building economic investment and undertaking structural and constitutional reforms which have brought the FLNKS into the institutions of government. During the same time Tjibaou has undergone an apotheosis of sorts; the new cultural centre that bears his name stands in remembrance of that struggle and his leadership. The terms of this recognition — of Kanak culture and the campaign for independence — remain ambiguous, however; the 1998 Nouméa Accord sets out a path towards *shared* sovereignty, increased autonomy and perhaps eventually independence or independence in association with France. The relationship between Kanak culture and French culture within New Caledonia and in New Caledonia’s relations with its South Pacific neighbours is still evolving and remains unclear. To what extent has the decolonization process advanced? Is the nation-building project that was ‘Kanak’ still relevant today? In bringing these questions to our attention, this translation is a reminder to New Caledonia’s anglophone Pacific neighbours of this cultural, political and economic project that remains close to the hearts of many Kanak and supporters of independence.

Equally importantly, making these texts available in English is another step towards the much talked about process of reintegrating New Caledonia into the Pacific Islands region. Tjibaou himself advocated building closer relations and cultural contacts with other Pacific Island nations, speaking of the need to ‘develop cultural contacts’ with other Melanesian countries and to ‘re-establish, revive the traditional routes’ (p.93).

French President François Mitterand famously described Tjibaou as a man ‘for whom words mean more than words’ (p.xiv) or ‘for whom speech goes beyond mere words’ (p.221). Indeed, it is this quality that presented the editors and translators with one of their major hurdles — another is the potential for inconsistency as this dual translation of the same phrase implies. Alban Bensa and Eric Wittersheim discuss his education and the influence of ethnologists such as Roger Bastide and Maurice Leenhardt on his thought, but also note the extent to which his conception of Kanak identity went beyond theirs, his relational conception of power and his pragmatism. Each of the translators provides a brief introduction of their own; journalist Helen Fraser’s is the more significant in that she brings to it her personal experiences as a foreign correspondent who knew Tjibaou and followed closely his political career from c.1982 onwards. She writes of his charisma and character and charts the tide of his optimism through the campaigns of the 1980s. Dealing with more technical matters, John Trotter (a former Australian diplomat) points out some of the differences between this translation and the French edition: the omission of the French editors’ original preface as well as the afterword by the Martinique poet Aimé Césaire; an improved chronology of New Caledonia’s history; and a small glossary of French and Kanak terms.

Teachers and students of Pacific anthropology, history and politics will welcome this publication. Though Tjibaou's ideas have been widely commented on and glossed by academics and journalists, this translation will allow many more readers to make independent assessments. There are not all that many published books in English on New Caledonia in these fields — and even fewer of these can be said to be recent. This book is a valuable introduction to Tjibaou and his thought, as well as a rough guide to the political history of New Caledonia between 1975 and 1989.

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*Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity.* By Raeburn Lange. Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies/Pandanus Books, Christchurch/Canberra, 2005. 436 pp. NZ price: \$44.95. ISBN 1-74076-176-6.

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE PLAYED BY INDIGENOUS AGENTS in the acceptance, expansion and consolidation of Christianity in the Pacific in the nineteenth century has received increasing and deserved attention in recent years. Raeburn Lange brings both breadth and depth to this area of study. He has provided an almost encyclopaedic account of both Protestant and Catholic indigenous leaders' roles in converting their own people, going to other islands as evangelists and contributing to the development of local models of ministry. The title '*Island Ministers*' includes the church leaders who emerged under a variety of local names with sometimes overlapping roles as evangelists, teachers, deacons, elders, pastors, catechists, priests and clergy.

As a work of Pacific scholarship Lange's book is ambitious and successful, ranging from French Polynesia to Hawai'i, the Marianas, New Guinea, New Zealand and all the island groups in between. The research required in searching out often obscure details and giving visibility to Pacific Islanders has been painstaking and prodigious. This book takes its place alongside other seminal works about Pacific Christianity: notably, Niel Gunson's *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797–1860* (1978), and John Garrett's *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (1982).

At one level Lange tells the story of the evangelization of the Pacific through indigenous agents, most authorized by missionaries, with a few working on their own initiative. At another level he tells about the struggles to train and promote local leadership, with the ideal of local autonomy often being subverted by European missionary control and dominance.

Account is taken of the ways in which local leadership was influenced by traditional patterns. The mana of the old religious specialist in some cases was taken over by the new indigenous agent; the old oratorical skills, for example, being refashioned in the new preaching patterns of the mission.

There are unanswered questions about motivation and why Pacific Islanders were so eager to take on these new roles. For the European missionaries the individual call from God was usually primary, whereas for many island ministers cultural and community factors were often more important. These factors were also significant: with conversion, the example of chiefs or big men, mana and community solidarity, the attractions of European goods and the impact of literacy, along with the inclusion of all people in the new churches contributed to the complex mix.

Many of the islanders were willing to leave their homes and go to other places as agents for the mission and their new God. The death rate from murder and malaria in Melanesia was horrific. The question as to the culpability of European missionaries in leaving their island agents in strange, disease prone, dangerous situations is not explored.