

McEldowney writes easy narrative prose marred by the occasional lapse into too colloquial forms of expression. He slips in the occasional barb aimed at the new managerialism and other intellectual aberrations that manifested themselves in the 1980s and laments the loss of the 'ideal of working together cooperatively for the good of society as a whole which was basic to the Alley era' and its replacement by a 'competitive model, imposed for ideological reasons'.

Alley provides a reminder that although there were giants on the earth in those days even dwarfs can see further if they are prepared to stand on the shoulders of others. It is required reading for all librarians and valuable for students of public administration and for those who wish to understand the major shift in New Zealand society that had its beginnings in the 1930s when a group of gifted men and women were able to tune into the Spirit of the Times.

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Colonial Discourses: Niupepa Māori 1855–1863. By Lachy Paterson. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2006. 250 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877372-26-1.

IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1842 AND 1932 some 34 newspapers aimed specifically at a Māori readership were published by a variety of individuals and organizations, including the government. *Colonial Discourses: Niupepa Māori 1855–1863* examines nine of these publications, produced over a short but critical period in New Zealand history. The emergence of the Kingitanga, war in Taranaki, the looming conflict in Waikato, and Crown efforts to shore up support for its position at the Kohimarama conference and through the 'New Institutions' of Governor George Grey all featured prominently in a number of these papers. But as relations between Māori and the Crown deteriorated in the 1850s some readers of the niupepa remained more concerned about the price of wheat and felt cheated when traders refused to give them the prices listed in their commercial columns.

We know about Māori dissatisfaction with declining wheat prices after 1856 in part because, as Lachy Paterson amply demonstrates, readers actively engaged with the niupepa, sending in correspondence and reports on a wide range of matters. Some runanga transmitted their determinations over land disputes for publication, in other cases Māori sought to have their views on a wide range of political, religious and socio-economic issues known publicly; and all too often, editors complained, individuals simply wished to see their names in print. For some Māori at least the newspapers of this period were an important bridge to a wider world and, Paterson suggests, constituted a kind of taonga.

Te Karere Māori was published by the government throughout the nine-year span covered in this book (though briefly under a different title). Despite a print-run of just 500 copies in 1856, it seems likely that its influence was much greater than this might at first suggest. Indeed, as the author argues, in many kainga the contents of the Māori newspapers were the subject of lively recital, discussion and debate. A simplistic dichotomy between an oral or literate society, it is rightly asserted, is not appropriate for this period. In this sense, the newspapers provide an invaluable insight into the kinds of debate occurring within Māori communities.

Nowhere can their significance be seen more clearly than in the Waikato district. *Te Hokioi*, the King movement newspaper, was established in 1861 following the gifting of a printing press to two Waikato chiefs who had visited the Austrian Emperor two years earlier, and rapidly posed a strong challenge to the more usual religious or political sermonizing of the government and missionary or philanthropic organs. The cold war

which briefly followed early in 1863 after the establishment of *Te Pihoihoi Mokemoke i Runga i te Tuanui* under the editorship of Waikato Civil Commissioner John Gorst was lively if brief. Following the attack on the government press and Gorst's eviction from Te Awamutu in March of that year many considered war in the Waikato an inevitability.

The newspapers in this instance were not simply reporting or even influencing what happened, but directly implicated in the course of events. Yet as Paterson shows, although the government-sponsored niupepa of this period have been criticized as thinly veiled forms of propaganda, the Kingitanga organ was not above similar efforts. Perhaps the most absorbing case study contained in *Colonial Discourses* shows how both government and Kingite newspapers selectively represented the post-independence history of the Caribbean state of Haiti as proxies for broader debates around the ability of Māori to manage their own affairs.

If there is a flaw in this book it is its wavering between constituting a history of the Māori newspapers of this period and a history as seen through the pages of the niupepa. As the former, Paterson's book is frequently fascinating and illuminating. It could never succeed on the latter terms simply because no history of such a substantial and complex range of issues can safely rely on just a small set of available sources, and Paterson has not undertaken the extensive archival and manuscript research of the kind reflected in the works of Keith Sinclair and Alan Ward (both of whose views on the worth of the Māori newspapers he is highly critical of) which would be necessary to provide a more authoritative analysis of such matters.

A number of Paterson's broader arguments thus seem unconvincing. He comments repeatedly, for example, that the King movement sought an independent Māori state, even whilst quoting material from various Crown officials who believed Kingitanga leaders might be prepared to accept a more limited form of autonomy under the mantle of Queen Victoria. We are informed that successive governments were 'unwilling to enforce the law in Māori districts', when surely the whole point is that they were unable to do so. Unlike Māori, it is further stated, Europeans 'possessed a shared cultural identity', although those Irish immigrants infamously declared to be 'between the gorilla and the negro' on the Victorian racial hierarchy by *Punch* magazine in 1862 may have failed (along with their detractors) to have appreciated this point.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, and the occasional factual error (the ultimatum issued to South Auckland Māori to either submit to the Queen's laws, withdraw behind Kingite lines or suffer the consequences was issued in July 1863, not in May 1863, for example), *Colonial Discourses* remains a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Māori newspapers of this period. Paterson is surely right about the need for more scholars to develop the ability to read these in their original te reo Māori texts rather than relying on the all too often less than accurate English translations that appeared in some of the publications. A rich tapestry of korero, waiata and other material await such historians in the pages of the niupepa. If nothing else, it is to be hoped that Paterson's work will inspire similarly detailed studies of the many Māori newspapers published after 1863.

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