New Zealand Journal of History, 48, 2 (2014)

A Window for Revisionism

PRESENTING TE TIRITI IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLETINS, 1957

AS THE FOUNDATION DOCUMENT of Māori–State relations, the Treaty of Waitangi has become integral to New Zealand government policies over the past four decades, including those of education. Understandings of the Treaty, however, remain under constant interpretation and negotiation. The broad tenets that underpin the Treaty today are themselves the result of a radical reworking that occurred in the early 1970s as scholarly and legal interest in the Treaty met with an upsurge of Māori radicalism and protest. Central to this reworking was an article by New Zealand historian Ruth Ross, whose careful examination of the Treaty text and outspoken conclusions shifted the historical view away from the traditional focus on British colonial office intentions, towards what it had meant to Māori here 'on the ground', within the New Zealand context.[1] Rather than seeing it as a celebratory document, Ross's work problematized the Treaty and made explicit for the first time the paradox within its translation. Her observations on the use of the terms kāwanatanga and rangitiratanga to represent the concepts of sovereignty and governance have withstood a wealth of scholarship. Four decades on from its publication, her article is still considered to be the 'most penetrating critique' of its time.[2]

Although not published until 1972, Ross's article was taken directly from conclusions she had reached in the 1950s; following a scholarly rebuff by established historians of the time, she had not continued to advance in the academic arena but published her arguments elsewhere. Disheartened by the initial reception of her ideas at Victoria University College in 1956, Ross had turned to the Department of Education's School Publications Branch and, in 1957, had worked her views into *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, a primary school bulletin for 11 and 12-year-olds.[3] As something of an enclave of historical revisionism, and contracting many of New Zealand's upcoming empirical historians, the Branch had welcomed Ross's alternative and challenging view of the Treaty. With the sympathetic editing of Michael Turnbull, soon to be known for his own revisiting of New Zealand Company founder Edward Gibbon Wakefield[4], she produced a deceptively simple yet nuanced and sophisticated account of the Treaty signings at Hokianga. Through an

amalgamation of 'fact and fancy, reconstruction and deduction'[5], as she termed it, she conveyed to children a problematic and ambiguous view of the Treaty that it would take mainstream New Zealand a further 25 years to acknowledge. This article considers the conditions and influences within the New Zealand historical community that brought Ross to her conclusions on the Treaty, and those within the Education Department and the School Publications Branch which enabled them to find expression.

School Publications material in New Zealand has attracted a small but steady stream of historical analysis. Apart from Colin McGeorge's study of the early textbook *Our Nation's Story*,[6] most research has concentrated on the *School Journals*, readers that had been published regularly by the Branch since 1907 and which offer valuable insight into the priorities and values in education over more than ten decades. Studies of the *Journals* have traced, for example, imperial values and attitudes to war,[7] as well as representations of Māori[8] and of gender[9]. Few studies, however, have addressed the Primary School Bulletins, a series of distinct publications designed to meet needs within the syllabus as they were perceived at the time. Research on the bulletins has principally concentrated on Ans Westra's controversial work, *Washday at the Pa* (1964). Barbara Brookes's 2000 analysis of the debate surrounding the withdrawal of this bulletin, for example, has been followed by several further studies, most recently by Lawrence McDonald in 2012 and Brian McDonnell in 2013.[10] The enduring interest in *Washday* lies in the extent to which the debate juxtaposed a simplified and monolithic perception of Māori culture by Pākehā against the modern aspirations of post-war Māori.[11] As such, Westra's bulletin has served as a lens for broader cultural discourses, including an emergent biculturalism and a 'new cultural politicisation for Māori'.[12] While Ross's work on the Treaty and her 1957 bulletin also addressed these issues, inasmuch as they challenged the oversimplified and romanticized view of New Zealand history held by many Pākehā at the time and sought recognition of the complexity and ambiguity of Māori positions on the Treaty, the focus here is more historiographical. What follows is an examination of a conscious attempt by post-war historians to use empirical methodology to redirect New Zealanders' historical understanding, and to use history to shape a more robust and informed national identity.

Ruth Ross began her historical training under J.C. Beaglehole and Fred Wood at Victoria University College, Wellington, in 1939. Both Wood and Beaglehole were young lecturers keen to share their overseas training in empiricism with a new generation of historians whom they hoped would establish a more factually grounded and critical view of New Zealand's colonial history. Beaglehole, particularly, gave considerable thought to the

role of history in the community and in establishing a national identity. Placing the historian at the interface between rigorous 'scientific' research and the development of a felt national tradition, he sought to direct and enhance the meaningful but largely unconscious relationship between a nation and its past. Fundamental to this endeavour, he believed, was the historian's ability not only to establish and accurately interpret facts from the historical record, but also, under the funding of a sympathetic government perhaps, to convey these to the broader community and work them 'without fuss into a pattern of life'.[13] The historical surveys and popular histories produced by the government's 1940 Centennial Branch, the massive War History project to record New Zealand's participation in World War II, and the significant expansion of the School Publications Branch were all manifestations of this vision in and around the post-war period. They were all projects in which Beaglehole – an influential and tireless campaigner for historical causes – and his students, including Ross, had a part.

Working alongside Beaglehole and mentored by him, it was not surprising that Ross came to her Treaty project by a similar path. Beaglehole had recognized in Ross the sharp analytical and critical skills needed to provide that 'healthy scholastic layer'[14] of pedantry he advocated for New Zealand history, and he maintained close contact after she left work for marriage. When in 1953 the opportunity arose to provide an introduction to a facsimile copy of the Treaty planned by the government printers, he recommended her for the job. Thus she joined a small but significant group of trained women historians who, while participating less formally in the workforce and balancing their research with the needs of young families, produced a number of finely crafted and impeccably researched pieces in the post-war decades, and whose contribution to New Zealand history, if collated, would 'run to many pages'.[15]

Ross's approach to the Treaty in her introduction was markedly different from that of those before her. Established works on the Treaty, by the journalist/historian T. Lindsay Buick (1914, 1932, 1936), prominent Māori politician Sir Apirana Ngata (1922) and Auckland University historian James Rutherford, all recognized discrepancies in translation between the English and Māori versions of the text to a greater or lesser degree; yet they had all concentrated on the British intentions of the Treaty.[16] From this political perspective the Treaty was approached primarily as a document of cession, confirmation that sovereignty had been transferred from Māori to the Crown. Ross was, from the outset, more sceptical. By applying strict empirical methodology, she approached the Treaty on a purely textual basis, as a historical document to be subjected to the same processes of verification, external and internal

criticism, or hermeneutic style, as any other. Her intention was to strip away the cultural and political overlay that had accumulated around the Treaty and to consider it afresh at its most elemental level.

The results of her alternative approach were revolutionary in their time, although they have come to constitute many of the basic facts and understandings of the Treaty today.[17] While the details of her methodology are dealt with elsewhere,[18] an outline of her findings may be briefly summarized. To begin with, by constructing a 'genealogical tree', Ross was the first to identify that the various sheets of the Treaty circulated for signing in the early part of 1840 represented, in fact, five separate versions or drafts and that the original document in English – from which the translation into Māori was taken and which rightfully might have been regarded as 'the Treaty of Waitangi' – was missing. In the absence of the English original, the emphasis fell, as Ross always believed it should, on 'te Tiriti', the Treaty in Māori, as its principal version. She next considered the language of this document and analyzed the terms the Māori signatories believed they were agreeing to. Ross noted that the language used to translate the Treaty from English was not traditional Māori but a 'mission' version that relied heavily on neologisms to convey complex and largely incommensurate cultural institutions. Seeking precedents within the early mission bibles and Māori dictionaries, she was led to conclude that the terms selected for use in the Treaty by its principal translator, the Reverend Henry Williams, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) leader and at the time of her research one of New Zealand's most venerated historical figures, were ambiguous. This was possibly to the point of misleading Māori as to the meaning of the Treaty and the extent of the sovereignty being transferred.

Ross had long been sceptical of the motives and competencies of the CMS missionaries and of the wisdom of their endeavour. Like other empirically trained historians of her generation, she was at pains to extricate New Zealand's early contact history from the 'rose tinted'[19] gaze of amateurs and from the documentary bias afforded by mission records at the expense of the scattered and fragmentary accounts of Māori and trader activity. In one of her earlier children's stories, for example, also written for School Publications in 1955, she had used the story of the Pākehā trader, John Rudolphus Kent, living happily with his Māori wife and her hapū, to challenge the interference by missionaries in traditional Māori values and their discrediting of Māori spiritual beliefs.[20] This attitude, along with her emphasis on the Māori Treaty text, had made her considerably more sceptical of the intentions and competencies of the missionary translators than the historians who had gone before her. Following her investigation into the seemingly haphazard way in

which drafts and redrafts of the text had been circulated for signing, she came to extend this scepticism to the Treaty process as a whole. The omission of the term 'mana', in particular, from Article One of the Treaty, as the term she believed would have most accurately conveyed the concept of Māori sovereignty being ceded to the Crown, struck her as particularly sinister.[21] It confirmed for her not only the confusion surrounding the Treaty, but also her belief that the missionaries, as its advocates and circulators, had neither the legal understanding nor sufficient distance or disinterest in the outcome to have been objective advisors to Māori.

These, then, were the views and findings that Ross presented to the staff and senior students of the History Department of Victoria University College and which, along with her comments on a number of other documents concerning the proclamation of sovereignty in 1840, caused consternation.[22] Due to the primacy given to the Treaty in English and the intentions of the Colonial Office as taught in the history programme at Victoria at the time, her preoccupation with the Māori text, its neologisms and the process of 'missionary translation of English thought into Maori' was seen as being too detailed, too pedantic – 'historically worthless' even – by her peers.[23] Although Beaglehole was away at the time, he too chastised her for 'haring off' to rewrite the 'history of … Pakeha–Maori relations' on his return.[24] Ross, however, now working well away from her Wellington colleagues and living with her husband and children at Motukiore Māori School on the Hokianga harbour, could not agree. As a freelance historian, and free also from the elitism and narrowing confines of academic research, her life as a Pākehā in this remote Māori community served only to confirm for her the validity of her approach.[25] Living near the site of the Hokianga signings and among the descendants of men who had given their signatures, the simple celebratory view of the Treaty held by Pākehā and the largely theoretical one held by academics struck her as equally absurd.[26] Her own view, on the other hand, that 'the Treaty is and was a farce', struck at the heart of New Zealand identity and was so contrary to current sentiment that the reaction of the Victoria historians seemed only the start of what she anticipated would be a very hostile reception.[27] 'Much of it is dynamite, I know', she had written to Beaglehole early on in her research. 'The Maori Magna Carta is entrenched New Zealand myth, it[']s holy.'[28] Doubting the wisdom of including such views in an official publication, she decided to forego the facsimile project.[29]

Ross did not turn her back on the Treaty altogether, however. Since 1951 she had been writing for the School Publications Branch, producing bulletins and journal stories in New Zealand history for the new Social Studies syllabus.

In this long-standing relationship lay another avenue for her findings. If the older generation was set in its views, perhaps there was a younger one that wasn't.

An expanded School Publications programme had been established in 1939 following changes to the school curriculum inspired by the 'New Education' movement.[30] It was part of a swing away from the English proficiency system toward a more child-centred, nationalistic and citizenship-based model of education in New Zealand. History, once viewed as a 'soft option' by those with serious matriculation ambitions, was combined with Geography to form Social Studies and elevated to a central position in the curriculum.[31] The new syllabus had a strong New Zealand focus and, as most texts were still published in Britain and contained British material, there was an urgent need for locally based teaching material. The School Publications Branch, responsible until then primarily for the *School Journal*, was not only called on to meet production but became 'central to the whole movement of educational reform'.[32] A series of bulletins were produced at both primary and post-primary levels as quick and flexible alternatives to new textbooks. All were written by 'accepted authorities' in their field and were intended to stimulate class discussion on New Zealand topics.[33]

In its early years, 1907 to the 1920s, the *School Journal* had been used to instil, among other things, a sense of Empire and a love of England into its readers, reflecting, it has been suggested, an educational conservatism 'born of twelve thousand miles of cultural isolation'.[34] Indeed, as a 1939 review noted, one of the most 'astonishing' features of the *Journal* had been the 'absence of references to the social setting which makes New Zealand unique'.[35] A principal goal of both the reworked *School Journal* programme and the new bulletin series, therefore, was to generate interest in New Zealand on its own terms. Bulletin writers were sought who had 'a story to tell or a conviction to express'.[36] Within the first few years of the programme these had included both Beaglehole and Wood, as well as Eric McCormick, D.O.W. Hall, John Pascoe, Mary Boyd, Nan Taylor, Dan Davin, W.B. Sutch, W.H. Oliver and Keith Sinclair. Ross produced one post-primary and three primary school bulletins and five additional stories for the *School Journal*.[37] *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* was her last piece.

From its inception, the bulletin programme was sprogressive in outlook. At the primary school level, particularly, it moved away from the rote learning of fact toward experimental styles of education. The desired outcome of the Social Studies bulletins was not so much a 'detailed knowledge' of a problem as a quickened interest and a general feeling for a historical situation.[38] All bulletins at primary school level were in story format. The first objective was

to 'make the story attractive so that the pupils will feel a positive interest' in the topic. The second was to 'present an accurate picture of the period as seen by the characters in the story'.[39] The concept behind the bulletins, therefore, was history as a felt background in much the way that Beaglehole's nationalist model had envisaged as forming a sense of national tradition and identity. In the context of the post-war baby boom, with more children attending New Zealand primary schools than ever before, it may not have been too much to argue as he did that the School Publications Branch held something of the 'New Zealand future in its hands'.[40]

The Branch's policy on the New Zealand history presented in the bulletins was relatively loose, certainly loose enough to give scope to the revisionist-style history favoured by Ross and her peers. From the inception of the bulletins, the Branch had encouraged a degree of controversy and debate within the stories. This was seen as an integral part of historical study, and a stimulus to classroom discussion: 'By this means a critical attitude should be developed toward printed matter, and particularly towards historical matter, whether in fictional form or otherwise. If, after discussion, the judgements presented in books always turn out to be what we now agree with, then a firm and uncritical reliance on the truth of printed matter will be developed and one object of education will be defeated. Therefore, all judgements must be dealt with as the judgements and opinions of fallible men, likely to be wrong, and not of infallible and impersonal "History".'[41]

For Ross, the bulletins and journal stories became an opportunity to confront assumptions about the benign nature of Britain's colonization and early race relations. She used her writing to introduce many of her own contentious views on early traders, Pākehā-Māori and missionary practices. A repeated theme was the need for early settlers to accommodate themselves into the dominant Māori culture – a reminder to her largely Pākehā readership that a willingness to meet Māori halfway was an essential foundation, as she saw it, to New Zealand identity.[42] In *Te Tiriti* she chose to present the signing from a Māori perspective and to incorporate many of the issues of interpretation and understanding that had arisen from her earlier research and which she had discussed with Māori colleagues at the time.[43] She used Pākehā documentary records of the Hokianga Treaty meeting in 1840 as the basis of the bulletin but created fictitious conversations and Māori characters to convey how ambivalently the Treaty was perceived by Māori and the gulf in understanding that existed between the two cultures.

'It's a curious sort of thing', she wrote of *Te Tiriti* to her friend, New Zealand's Chief Archivist, Michael Standish, 'fact and fancy, reconstruction and deduction, past and present all inextricably mixed. I don't know that you

could call it history, except for the “Meeting” itself. Though I didn’t realise it at the time, I drew as much on my own experience as I did on historical records … I could never have written this bulletin without knowing the area and the people. Not only is the scene Motukiore but the people of the hapu are Motukiore people, living and dead.’[44]

This fictional, or hybrid, form of writing was pivotal to the working of the bulletins.[45] It allowed history to be presented at a level authors hoped children could relate to. In terms of fostering national identity, it was also a way of resolving the conflict between strict empiricist standards and felt tradition. A central aim of empirical method was to detect and eliminate embellishments within records that, while making for lively narratives, distorted historical fact; yet facts alone did not constitute a tradition. They required an interpretative medium to make them accessible and to carry them into national life. Early attempts at bulletins in which Ross had relied only on factual information were, by her own admission, ‘as dull as ditchwater’ and had required substantial reworking.[46] Judicious use of fiction allowed bulletin writers to distil the historical essence from an event or document and to refashion it into a more engaging format with such telescoping of events, descriptive detail or characterizations as needed to create an authentic atmosphere. The sound empirical base to the story legitimated the fictional interpretation. As Geoffrey Elton was later to claim of empirical method, when a historian was thoroughly aware of his evidence, its range and its limitations, it was possible to extend ‘beyond the strict confines of evidence; even his guesses bear the stamp of truth’.[47]

Although using fiction ran the risk of resorting to historical stereotypes, in the event many of the historical bulletins were far more subtle and nuanced renderings than the medium might suggest. Ross used fiction particularly to incorporate, or superimpose, a degree of analysis onto events as they occurred in the story. In *Te Tiriti* it enabled her to present a number of conflicting opinions and interpretations. Her aim was to problematize the Treaty for her readers, to show that it was neither a simple document nor simply accepted. Her principal techniques for conveying this were atmosphere, description and conversation.

Ross used atmosphere to show the difference in perception between the two Treaty parties. The suspense and indecision of late-night conversations among Māori leading up to the Treaty meeting were contrasted with the irritation and impatience of the British official party waiting in the bright sunlight of the mission gardens. The natural environment, a source of identity to the Māori, was perceived as a hostile jungle to the British officers, pressing in on them and making a mockery of their English clothing.[48] Language also

emphasized difference: the poor pronunciation of Māori by the British was set against the Māori unfamiliarity with English terms and their reference to Lieutenant-Governor Hobson and Queen Victoria only as te Kawana and te Kuini.[49] One of the most moving contrasts in the bulletin was between local hapū struggling to find the biblical precedent for the Treaty in the ineffectual governorship of Pontius Pilate and Hobson's simple pleasure at being chosen to convey the glad 'blessings of British rule and the royal protection of our gracious Queen'.[50]

While the contrasts between British and Māori were emphasized, so too were their internal tensions and divisions. Conversations among Māori suggested that acceptance of the Treaty was as likely to be effected by long-standing animosities between hapū and their recent religious affiliations as by the Kawana's speech. Similarly, competition and ill-feeling between missionaries and within the band of British officials complicated Pākehā relations. Pākehā-Māori , early traders and sawyers now integrated into Māori communities, were both irritants to Hobson and a source of advice to Māori. The reactions to the Treaty by the characters in the bulletin, therefore, were as much the result of complex human relations as they were of the inherent quality of the Treaty document or the offer of sovereignty by the Crown.

Ross presented the section dealing with the signing of the Treaty as a play. This not only increased its possibilities for classroom teaching but also enabled her to lay out the historical record as succinctly as possible. She had chosen the Hokianga signing specifically because it was so 'rich in eyewitness accounts'.[51] The play format enabled her to quote from these directly, although in a simplified format for children. It included a version of the Māori text of the Treaty translated by the Wesleyan missionary John Hobbs and an attempt to protest against the Treaty by the Irish settler, F.E. Maning.

Analysis was provided in the following section, 'After-thoughts', in which Ross reverted to the use of fictitious conversations to review the meeting and some of the issues it involved. The conflicting understandings of sovereignty were incorporated into a dialogue between Hobbs and his colleague Mr Woon. It is worth particular mention here as an illustration of the ability of fiction to convey complex historical issues simply. A number of the conclusions Ross had come to in her research for the facsimiles, and which were later to have such an impact in her article 'Texts and Translations', were included in this single piece:

> 'I wonder how much [the Treaty] all meant to them.' Hobbs was doubtful.
> 'My dear Mr Hobbs, you explained matters most fully,' Woon assured him.
> 'I did my best, Mr Woon, but how *can* one explain, in Maori, the meaning of sovereignty?'

Hobbs asked impatiently. "Why, I'm not sure I know myself all that sovereignty implies. Do you?"

'Well,' hesitated the other, 'the power and authority of a sovereign, a ruler, I suppose.'

'Yes,' broke in Hobbs, 'that is just the point. The power and authority of the Queen of England is rather different from the power and authority of a Maori chief, isn't it?'

'It is, I agree.'

'Then do you imagine that the chiefs consider they have handed over their authority, their mana, to the Queen?'

Woon sat up with a jerk. 'No,' he said abruptly. 'I do not. Nor do I recollect, Mr Hobbs, that the term "mana" was used in the wording of the Treaty.'

'It was not,' Hobbs said crisply. 'Yet surely the real meaning of the chiefs' cession of sovereignty to the Queen is that their mana will be dwarfed by the mana of the Queen?'

Woon nodded in agreement. Then he said rather heatedly: 'The whole business has been too hurried …'

'Perhaps so, Mr Woon,' said Hobbs wearily. 'But when you come to think of it, what do any of us missionaries know of treaties, and sovereignty, and other matters of law?'[52]

This discussion was followed by the missionaries' summing up of points for and against the signing of the Treaty, and by a parallel conversation between members of the local hapū, showing their perspective on the ceremony and their sense of foreboding and loss. Here the exchange between Maning, who was staying with the hapū, and Pero, the chief, summarized the issue of voluntary cession and the position of Māori under the Treaty. Pero and others, after reconsidering the pre-emption clause that prevented the selling of Māori land to anyone but agents of the Crown, had caught up with Hobson the day after the ceremony, returned the blanket they had been given and asked for their names to be removed from the sheet. Maning commented to Pero:

'It matters little, Pero, whether your name is on the treaty or not … The Kawana has a hundred other names and will have hundreds more before he is finished. It is too late. He has come and he will stay.'

'Aue! So the Kuini will have the selling of my land after all,' Pero said hopelessly.

'Aye, that is the way of things. Times are changing …'

These conversations and others in the bulletin conveyed not only information but also a sense of tension and the fracturing of social order. Some amounted to no more than hints and allusions; others were presented more directly. Many broached issues or topics well outside of the contemporary, conservative interpretations of the Treaty. They may be compared, for example, to those in a bulletin for nine and ten-year-olds by the Victoria College Librarian, Harold Miller, produced only three years earlier, in which he described the CMS missionaries' endeavours as 'one of the most splendid things in our history'.[53] He then listed among their principal achievements having persuaded the chiefs to sign the Treaty of Waitangi and thus 'submit'

to the 'rule of the great white queen', and stated that they had 'made many of the Maoris into better men'[54]. Recognizing this approach, Ross had sought guidance on the extent of the argument she could present within the bulletins. The lack of policy was, she had found, very much to her advantage.

In its broadest context, the loose policy applied to the bulletins was not so much a lack of firm direction as the conscious effort to balance curricular requirements against the creative freedom necessary to attract quality scholars to a programme where freshness and 'sincerity' were considered essential conditions of good teaching.[55] Outlining the Branch policy in 1957, C.E. Beeby, the Director of Education, wrote: 'Lively publications come only from fresh and lively minds, and, while creative writers, artists and editors draw strength from working in their own way within the broad framework of a vigorous educational policy, they become flat and dull if they are expected to work to order on subjects not of their own choosing.'[56] (Elsewhere, however, Beeby confessed to being somewhat in awe of the 'temperamental' nature of the workers at the Branch, where he had found that 'a helpful suggestion, or even a word of praise, spoken at the wrong time or to the wrong person' could upset the 'delicate balance' the editors maintained amongst their staff.[57] He remained content to manage it from afar.)

With regard to the history bulletins, the field was so wide and the material so scant that there was ample scope to engage the interests of the newly trained empirical historians, many of whom, as the earlier list suggests, were more than willing to participate. Indeed, as Gregory O'Brien has noted, the quality of work sought by the Branch over the years has 'funded the literary and artistic activities of generations of talented New Zealanders … offering them a forum where remarkable work could be presented'.[58] The initial bulletin plan, under Pat Earle, was largely geographic in its content, providing a grounding in contemporary New Zealand life. The arrival of Turnbull as editor in 1954, however, coincided with the completion of this early work to allow more specific aspects and events to be addressed. With Turnbull's own work challenging the settlement myths of Pākehā, six bulletins by writer Roderick Finlayson covering Māori history from the arrival of the musket to the present day, and the four by Ross, he was part of a very conscious endeavour to give greater credence to Māori perspectives in mainstream history.[59] Ross oversaw the historical content of several of Finlayson's bulletins and, along with her husband Ian, critiqued the drafts: her input into the programme, therefore, was also considerable. In fact, in addressing her earlier 'suspicions' on the lack of firm departmental policy in this area, Turnbull had gone so far as to reply, 'You are right, there is none – except that you and me, Rosses, we are the policy [on] New Zealand

history.'[60] For her own part, she felt the 'Turnbull–Ross combination' was such that it 'just might pull something off'.[61]

Although there was scope in the direction of the bulletin series, content was still subject to departmental overview. Finished bulletins and all *Journal* material required approval by the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools or his assistant, not without justification. The furore over *Washday,* for example, had been anticipated to some extent more than a decade earlier, when the vernacular used in a series of *Journal* stories, 'Our Street', had met with strong opposition; and Ross herself had been incensed with the 'present day wowser thinking' that had denied characters in her story of a Northland whaling port any mention of alcohol – even to the extent of banning a toast drunk to the Queen.[62] In recognizing that inspectors' concern centred on language, alcohol and – as she had found out in an earlier bulletin – religious tensions, however, Ross worked this system to her advantage in *Te Tiriti* by including conspicuous 'red herrings' to divert attention from the key historical points she wanted to get across.[63] She had inserted references to alcohol and had Maning call Hobson a 'damned sea-lawyer'; these were duly cut, in what she considered predictably 'Victorian prissiness' on the part of the Branch, but she was 'amazed' at how much of the far more contentious material she was able to get away with. 'It's all so very different from the popular class-room treaty', she wrote to Michael Standish after the delivery of the bulletin to the schools appeared to have been delayed: 'Wouldn't it be a lark if some senior inspector had got hold of an advance copy and, lifting his ignorant hands in horror at this travesty of the great charter of Maori rights, di-dah di-dah, had made representations in various places.'[64]

No such representations were made, however, and *Te Tiriti* was available in the classrooms from 1958. Even so, no matter how carefully written, its impact relied on the willingness of teachers to engage with the bulletin and elaborate its issues for the children. It was a shortcoming of the bulletins as a means of reforming the New Zealand historical tradition – and, indeed, as Beeby recognized, of the education reforms as a whole – that while many of those at the School Publications Branch and the Education Department may have been committed to addressing long-standing assumptions in New Zealand history and elsewhere, some teachers were considerably less inclined.[65]

Ross felt that on the whole teachers were uncomfortable with New Zealand history. They'd 'all much rather "do" "Meg the Pit Girl"', she wrote, referring to a history bulletin on the life of a coal worker in early industrial England.[66] In the case of her Treaty bulletin, she did not hold out much hope for co-operation with her stance, believing that most teachers, with classes that were predominantly Pākehā and themselves in line with the general perceptions of

the Treaty, had a 'vested interest in the story that NZ became a British colony by the treaty [sic] of Waitangi, 6 February 1840'.[67] For the new Bulletin editor, James K. Baxter, who had replaced Turnbull in 1956 and had therefore overseen the actual publication of *Te Tiriti*, the problem was more pragmatic. In pursuing the Beaglehole model of influencing and reshaping the national tradition Turnbull and Ross had been guilty, he believed, of using history in the bulletins in 'light of what it may lead up to' rather than as a teaching tool for the present.[68] In doing so they had missed the mark. The bulletins were pitched too high, were too abstract, and, although they contained admirable historical arguments, were discouragingly 'heavy going' for the Form One and Two pupils they were intended for.

A 1965 study on the use of the history bulletins suggests a combination of both.[69] In a survey of Wanganui Form One and Two teachers' use of the Turnbull, Finlayson and Ross bulletins, T. Kenyon found that while some teachers' knowledge of New Zealand history was 'very incomplete' – 'abysmal' in fact[70] – the wordiness and abstract nature of the bulletins did indeed make them difficult to use. Although many of the teachers in the survey appeared to find the bulletins apposite and popular with more able students, a chart outlining problems with the texts showed that *Te Tiriti* scored the highest number of comments in the 'difficulties in terms of language' category, especially with regard to its many Māori phrases, while Turnbull's bulletins filled three of the four highest places in the 'intrinsically dull or uninteresting' slot. *Te Tiriti* filled the other.[71] As Ross predicted, the repeated emphasis on Māori perspectives also grated on some teachers, with one acidly remarking that by Form Two their students were 'surfeited with stories extolling the virtues of the Maori which do not fit in with what they have seen, heard, or experience[d] outside of school' – to which Kenyon wondered 'could any better reason be found for studying the Maori?'.[72]

The primary school history bulletins produced in the mid 1950s, then, represented something of a bold if not entirely successful experiment in the redirection and rewriting of New Zealand tradition. The aligning of the school syllabus toward more New Zealand-based topics had begun in the 1930s as part of a new state commitment toward an informed citizenship and distinctly New Zealand identity. Within academic circles, the move toward evidence-based, empirical history was coupled with a similar enthusiasm within government toward creating a sound, factually based understanding of New Zealand's past. Together these found voice in the expanded School Publications programme, and, from a history perspective, in the primary school Social Studies bulletin series in particular. From 1954 to 1956, with

much of the early groundwork completed, an opportunity existed under Turnbull's editorship to give full voice to alternative views of history that challenged the somewhat self-congratulatory assumptions among Pākehā and sought recognition of Māori as intelligent and active historical agents. With regard to the Treaty, Turnbull provided a window for the particularly outspoken conclusions Ross had reached from her reading of the Treaty texts, but which lay outside the conventions of both the academy and popular understandings at the time.

Gauging the impact of Ross's bulletin is difficult. Kenyon's study, at least, has suggested a rather ambivalent reception by teachers and highlights the fact that, although a rich and nuanced national tradition may have been the goal of some, all historical material remains open to interpretation. It may or may not have the impact desired. The Turnbull, Ross and Finlayson bulletins formed part of a groundswell, an early challenging of the simplistic forms of national identity that were to be sorely tested over the following decades. Clearly, from the correspondence of Turnbull and Ross and from their stated priorities, the intended impact of their bulletins was not so much upon the teachers as on future generations. While there is little opportunity to access the impression left by *Te Tiriti* or the series it was part of, it is interesting to consider that the Social Studies programme, and the reformed syllabus in general, was part of the schooling of that generation of urban-educated Māori who began a new wave of radical protest in the 1970s, and more particularly in this context, perhaps, their liberal Pākehā supporters. As an indicator of the programme's impact on one Pākehā child at least, a reminiscence by Sharon Crosbie, an influential reporter of the 1980s, does suggest some bearing. Although Crosbie is writing about the *School Journals*, one might hope that it was a generalization that extended to the bulletins also – a distinction unlikely to be obvious to a child at the time: 'In the tight, middle-class world of the fifties, there were children you didn't play with ("not quite nice!") and things you didn't *do*! – therefore it was the *School Journal* that opened my eyes to Maori culture. The *Journals* were years ahead of their time as I remember them.'[73]

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NOTES

1 Ruth Ross, 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi: Texts and Translations', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 6, 1 (1972), pp.129–57.

2 Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End,* 2nd ed., Auckland, 2004, p.90.

3 Ruth Ross, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi,* Primary School Bulletin, Wellington, 1958. Although published and distributed in 1957, *Te Tiriti* had 1958 listed as its year of publication on its cover.

4 Michael Turnbull, *The New Zealand Bubble: The Wakefield Theory in Practice*, Wellington, 1959.

5 Ross to Michael Standish, 21 November 1958, MS 1442, 91:2, Auckland War Memorial Museum Library (AWMML).

6 Colin McGeorge, 'What was "Our Nation's Story"?: New Zealand Primary School History Textbooks between the Wars', *History of Education Review*, 28, 2 (1999), pp.46–59.

7 E.P. Maloney, 'The New Zealand School Journal and the Imperial Ideology', NZJH, 7, 1 (1973), pp.12–27.

8 Diana Beaglehole, 'The Maori in the School Journal: 1907–1981', *Education*, 31,1 (1982), pp.38–41; Joanna Dickson, 'The Visual Representation of the Maori in the School Journal, 1907–95', MA thesis, University of Otago, 1996; Margaret Stratton, 'Labouring to Learn or Learning to Labour: Representations of Maori in the School Journal', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 2002.

9 Emily Ngaio Cater, 'Like a Girl: Representations of Girls in the School Journal 1960–2009', MA thesis, University of Auckland, 2011.

10 Barbara Brookes, 'Nostalgia for "Innocent Homely Pleasures": The 1964 Controversy over *Washday at the Pa*', in Barbara Brookes, ed., *At Home in New Zealand: History, Houses, People* Wellington, 2000, pp.210–25; Lawrence McDonald, 'Camera Antipode, Ans Westra: Photography as a Form of Ethnographic And Historical Writing', PhD thesis, Massey University 2012; Brian McDonnell, 'Washday at the Pa (1964): History of a Controversy', *Journal of New Zealand & Pacific Studies*, 1, 2 (2013), pp.131–49.

11 McDonnell, p.147.

12 Mark Amery, in Mark Amery & Ans Westra, *Washday at the Pa*, Wellington, 2011, p.37, cited in McDonnell, p.146.

13 J.C. Beaglehole, 'The New Zealand Scholar: Margaret Condliffe Memorial Lecture, Canterbury University College, 21 April 1954', in Peter Munz, ed., *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History Presented to F.L.W. Wood and J.C. Beaglehole on the Occasion of their Retirement*, Wellington, 1969, pp.237–52, p.249.

14 Beaglehole, 'NZ Scholar', p.251.

15 Mary Boyd, 'Women in the Historical Profession: Women Historians in the 1940s', *Women's Studies Journal*, 4, 1 (1988), pp.76–86, p.85.

16 T. Lindsay Buick, *The Treaty of Waitangi or How New Zealand Became a British Colony*, Wellington, 1914, 2nd ed. 1933, 3rd ed. 1936; Sir Apirana Ngata, *The Treaty of Waitangi, an Explanation / Te Tiriti o Waitangi, he Whakamarama,* trans. M.R. Jones, Christchurch, 1950 (Ngata's booklet was first published in Maori in 1922. In 1950 it was translated into English and republished as a dual text); J. Rutherford, *Hone Heke's Rebellion, 1844–46: An Episode in the Establishment of British Rule in New Zealand*, Bulletin No. 34, Auckland University College, 1947; J. Rutherford, *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Acquisition of British Sovereignty in New Zealand 1840*, Bulletin No. 36, Historical Series No. 3, Auckland University College, 1948.

17 For discussion on the eventual publication of her research and its impact see R. Bell, 'Ruth Ross: New Zealand Scholar / Treaty Scholar', MA thesis, Massey University, 2005.

18 R. Bell, '"Texts and Translations": Ruth Ross and the Treaty of Waitangi', NZJH, 43, 1 (2009), pp.39–58.

19 Ross to Ormond Wilson, 13 July 1972, MS 1442, 99:1, AWMML.

20 Ruth Ross, *Early Traders*, Primary School Bulletin, Wellington, 1955.

21 This conclusion, initiated by Ross, has since been challenged. Lindsay Head, for example, has criticized the 'implausible linguistic incompetence and an implausible conspiracy to deceive' that Ross and others have attributed to Williams, arguing for the appropriateness of the terms chosen within the context of the concern over land dealings at the time: 'Williams', she concludes, 'translated the Treaty of Waitangi for his day, not for posterity': Lindsay Head, 'The Pursuit of Modernity in Maori Society: the Conceptual Bases of Citizenship in the Early Colonial Period', in Andrew Sharp & Paul McHugh, eds, *Histories, Power and Loss: Uses of the Past – a New Zealand Commentary*, Wellington, 2001, pp.105, 108 respectively.

22 This meeting had been organized for Ross by history lecturer Mary Boyd and was held at her home in March 1956.

23 Ross to Beaglehole, 2 July 1957, MS 1442, 91:2, AWMML.

24 Beaglehole to Ross, 19 May 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.

25 Ross to Pat Kenny, 15 April 1956, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.

26 For an account of her time at Motukiore, see Ruth (R.M.) Ross, 'The Autochthonous New Zealand Soil', in Munz, pp.47–59.

27 Ross to Beaglehole, 2 July 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.

28 Ross to Beaglehole, 1 April 1954 & 2 July 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.

29 The facsimiles were eventually reissued in 1960 under the preface of the original 1877 publication with an introductory note by C.H.R. Taylor, Chief Librarian, Alexander Turnbull Library. The concept of the Treaty as a treaty in English and containing the 'simplest and clearest ideas' for a people with 'no experience of a civilised legal code' was continued: C.H.R. Taylor, 'Introductory Note', in H.H. Turton, ed., *Facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence and the Treaty of Waitangi*, 2nd ed., Wellington, 1960.

30 C.E. Beeby, 'Introduction', *The New Zealand School Publications Branch*, Paris, 1957, pp.5–7.

31 C.E. Beeby, *The Biography of an Idea: Beeby on Education*, Wellington, 1992, p.27.

32 Thomas K. Prebble, 'Strategies of Change: A Study of Some Aspects of New Zealand Education during the First Half of the Directorship of Dr C.E. Beeby, 1940–1949', MA thesis, Massey University, 1970, p.75.

33 Beeby, *Biography of an Idea*, p.146.

34 Prebble, p.3.

35 D.R. Jenkins, *Social Attitudes in the New Zealand School Journal*, Wellington, 1939, p.26.

36 P.B. Trapp, 'The Post-Primary School Bulletins', *Education*, 5, 3 (1956), p.37.

37 R.M. Ross, *European Trade and Settlement in New Zealand before 1940*, Post Primary School Bulletin, Wellington, 1952; *The Journal of George Simmonds*, Wellington, 1954; *Early Traders*, Wellington, 1955; *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, Wellington, 1957; 'The Jubilee Mug', *School Journal*, Part 4, 50, 1 (1956), pp.2–6; 'The Family Tree', *School Journal*, Part 4, 50, 2 (1956), pp.53–59; 'Crossing the Bar', *School Journal*, Part 4, 50, 3 (1956), pp.10–16; 'Muka', *School Journal*, Part 4, 50, 3 (1956), pp.10–16; 'The Cruise of the Magnet', *School Journal*, Part 4, 55, 3 (1961), pp.14–25. Note that 'The Cruise of the Magnet' was written by Ross for the Branch in the early 1950s but not published until 1961.

38 'Primary School Bulletins', EMT, 1, 4 (1948), p.265; 'New Zealand Topics in History and Geography, Use of School Journal', EMT, 1, 1 (1948), p.17.

39 'New Zealand Topics in History and Geography, Use of School Journal', EMT, 1, 1 (1948), pp.15–16; 'Primary School Bulletins', EMT, 1, 4 (1948), p.265.

40 Beaglehole, 'New Zealand Scholar', p.248.
41 'New Zealand Topics in History and Geography, Use of School Journal', EMT, 1, 1 (1948), p.17.
42 See particularly Ross to H.T. Robertson, October 1955, MS 1442, 90:3; Ross to Rear Admiral John Ross, reply to 31 August 1973, MS 1442, 99:2, AWMML.
43 As well as conversations with the people of Motukiore, Ross sent drafts of *Te Tiriti* to Pei Te Hurinui Jones, Matt Te Hau and Bruce Biggs, among others.
44 Ross to Michael Standish, 21 November 1958, MS 1442, 91:2, AWMML.
45 Ian Ross to James K Baxter, 'Notes for Discussing School Bulletins', 23 October 1957, 32/2/1, NA.
46 Ross to Beaglehole, 19 April 1955, MS 1442, 24:5, AWMML; Michael Turnbull to Pat Earle (General Editor, School Publications), 2 November 1954, 32/2/1, NA.
47 G.R. Elton, *The Practice of History*, London, 1967, p.19.
48 Ross, *Te Tiriti*, pp.13, 15, 19–20.
49 Ross to Matt Te Hau, 31 March 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.
50 Ross, *Te Tiriti*, pp.12–13, 17.
51 Ross to Matt Te Hau, 31 March 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.
52 Ross, *Te Tiriti*, p.43.
53 Harold Miller, *The Maori and the Missionary*, Wellington, 1954, p.31.
54 Miller, p.31.
55 Memo, 'The Primary School Bulletin Programme', 4 April 1950, 32/2/1, NA.
56 Beeby, 'Introduction', p.7.
57 Beeby, *Biography of an Idea*, p.147.
58 Gregory O'Brien, *A Nest of Singing Birds: 100 Years of the School Journal*, Wellington, 2007, p.152.
59 Later published together as *The Springing Fern*, Christchurch, 1965.
60 Turnbull to Ross, November 1955, MS 1442, 90:3 AWMML.
61 Ross to Turnbull, 23 September 1955, MS 1442, 90:3, AWMML.
62 Ross to Pat Kenny, September 1955, MS 1442, 90:3; Ross to Pat Earle, 14 June 1954, MS 1442, 90:2, AWMML; Ross, Journal of George Simmonds, p.32.
63 Ross to Michael Standish, 21 November 1957, MS 1442, 91:2, AWMML.
64 Ross to Michael Standish, 21 November 1957, MS 1442, 91:2, AWMML.
65 Beeby, *Biography of an Idea*, p.145.
66 Ross to Baxter, 15 November 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.
67 Ross to Matt Te Hau, 31 March 1957, MS 1442, 91:1, AWMML.
68 Baxter to Ross, 19 July 1957, MS 1442, 91:2, AWMML.
69 T. Kenyon, 'The Use of the Bulletins in the Upper Primary School', MA thesis, Massey University, 1965.
70 Kenyon, p.21.
71 Kenyon, p.11.
72 Kenyon, p.15a.
73 Sharon Crosbie, in Margaret Smith, 'Tales Out of School: Well Known New Zealanders Look Back on the School Journal', *Education*, 31,1, (1982), p. 43. (Italics in the original).