

valuable attention to New Zealand solidarity, particularly Māori solidarity, for Kanaky, Tahitian, Belau and Bougainville independence movements, and the campaign for a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. The 1987 Fijian coup also receives some investigation. However, I would have liked more explanation of what Māori activists wanted a nuclear-free and independent New Zealand to look like, and the context for peace-movement Māori sovereignty politics.

Leadbeater writes: ‘You can look at the 1990s as a time when the peace movement declined into relative inactivity, or alternately you can look at it as a time when working for peace took new forms’ (p.250). The decline of the peace movement is not investigated, but an economic analysis could have born some fruit. Between the mid-1970s and 1990s, structural unemployment, the working poor and child poverty emerged in working-class and some middle-class communities across New Zealand. State sector workers lost their security of employment and trade unions lost the backing of the state. Ordinary New Zealanders no longer have the resources to wage a peace campaign; they are too busy surviving. This is the tragedy of neoliberalism and other reforms successfully legislated by the fourth Labour government and continued by the fourth National government.

CYBÈLE LOCKE

Victoria University of Wellington

Mateship and Moneymaking: Australian Shearing: The Clash of Union Solidarity with the Spirit of Enterprise 1895–1995. By Rory O’Malley. Xlibris Corporation, Bloomington, 2013. 379pp. Australian Price: AUD\$32.00. ISBN: 9781483600888.

This is an important book with a refreshing approach to the history of industrial relations in the Australian shearing industry. Eschewing the all-too-common hagiography of working-class heroes banded together to confront heartless squatters in order to build a better world, O’Malley sees a constant struggle for those seeking to improve the circumstances of themselves and their families against those who maintain that all who are prepared to work deserve a good living. The latter attitude was succinctly expressed in 1917 by Frank Lysaught, himself a gun shearer: ‘The slow man has to live as well as the fast man’ (p.97). O’Malley argues that working-class people fed into both groups, as shearing contractors, strike-breakers and union stalwarts. The conflict between the Australian Workers’ Union and shearers who sought to improve their earnings by adopting wide combs is used to demonstrate how those contrary tendencies can set working people against each other. The extent to which ‘union solidarity’ and ‘the spirit of enterprise’ are entirely contrary might be questioned – witness how many working people have built lucrative political careers on an early reputation for militancy – but the point is well worth making.

Unfortunately there is some tendency here towards the alternative teleology so favoured by the New Right. According to this view the Harvester Judgement of

1907 was a grievous mistake that condemned the Australian economy to crisis in the 1980s. Perhaps – but perhaps it also helped in the meantime to make life for working people in ‘the lucky country’ the envy of their counterparts in most of the rest of the world. Having earlier demonstrated that the expansion of Australian sheep numbers during the twentieth century was overwhelmingly due to closer settlement, O’Malley appears to agree with criticisms of government support for that process. Presumably Australian exports of wool would have been substantially less during the years of high prices had such advice been followed. Nor was it the folly of the high reserve price set by the Wool Corporation in 1990 that reduced the Australian wool flock from 173 million to less than 70 million in two decades. Despite being much less dependent on wool, the unprotected New Zealand sheep industry suffered a decline of similar magnitude. O’Malley is wise to declare that ‘it is going too far to suggest that wool could have withstood the global forces that wore it down’ (p.346).

Any book that deals with an industry which spans the Tasman in the way that shearing does is necessarily of interest to New Zealand historians and there is much to feed that interest here. In a very welcome chapter entitled ‘Shearers of Aotearoa’, O’Malley suggests that Rollo Arnold’s argument that New Zealand shearers were typically the sons of ‘yeomen’ (independent small farmers) or would-be ‘yeomen’ saving to acquire their own farms, whereas Australian shearers were proletarian ‘nomads’, was ‘probably overstated’ (p.299). Arnold argued that the ‘yeoman’ background made New Zealand shearers less inclined to militancy than their Australian counterparts, indeed led many of them to be not averse to strike-breaking on ‘the other side of the ditch’. O’Malley not only provides examples that support Arnold, but also extends the scope of Arnold’s basic argument to Australia itself. Areas in which family farming enjoyed considerable success, such as eastern Victoria and Tasmania, were apparently fruitful sources of ‘free labour’ when trouble erupted in western New South Wales and inland Queensland, where vast sheep stations predominated. That such men were also prepared to travel to New Zealand to break strikes when sheep-owners there could not find enough spare ‘yeomen’ is hardly surprising and certainly does not invalidate the fundamental argument. The relative industrial peace in the West Australian industry (and widespread acceptance throughout of wide combs, as in New Zealand) is also traced to the large proportion of the state’s shearing workforce that came off its arable farms.

Matship and Money moves along at a rattling good pace, helped by the use of short chapters and a very approachable writing style. It is a very welcome addition to the rural historiography of Australasia.

JAMES WATSON

Massey University