
Reviews

MAIRE BOPP

A Tahitian journalist and advocate for independence. She was a final-year journalism student at USP in 1998.

Turning point for France in the Pacific?

After Moruroa: France in the South Pacific, by Nic Maclellan and Jean Chesneaux. Melbourne/New York: Oceania Press, 1998, 279 pp. F25. ISBN: 1-876175-05-2.

IF YOU take a French historian, and link him to an Australian journalist, you get *After Moruroa*.

This is an up-to-date review of French social, political and environmental politics in the region during the past two centuries that should certainly teach, or at least challenge, any expert's knowledge on the issue.

Now that the nuclear testing is over and France has committed itself to lead New Caledonia toward emancipation, there is still more to discuss.

The legacy of these 30 years of nuclear testing, the on-going pluto-



onium shipments, the distorted economy and politics in French Polynesia, the issue of self-determination in the French territories are among the issues that continue.

For years, Moruroa has been the focus of French policies in the region, but today things are different. France has tightened its relations with the Pacific islands.

With pressure from the European Union changes and globalisation, can

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France retain its antipodean territories? What indeed is the future of French Pacific territories?

The issues are tackled from an historical perspective, but the views expressed are not limited to those of political élites.

Rather, the book outlines the role of a wide range of different people and community groups such as non-government organisations and the churches.

Co-authors, Nic Maclellan and Jean Chesneaux do not pretend to be neutral on the matter, to the disappointment of academics who hope for detachment.

Indeed, the two authors were already committed to the anti-nuclear and indigenous causes when they first met in Melbourne some 15 years ago.

Since then, they put out several publications together. A chapter on "Kanak and the long night of French colonialism" was published in *Politics of the Future* (1989) and the book *La France dans le Pacifique* in 1992 was directed to French speakers. Part of this latter work was translated in and reproduced in *After Moruroa*.

The duo of Jean Chesneaux, French historian lecturing at the Sorbonne in Paris, and Nic Maclellan, an Australian journalist involved in community work for years, is a surprising combination, knowing the antipathy between these two countries

for the past decades.

Maclellan and Chesneaux decided three years ago to write *After Moruroa* to anticipate 1998 which they saw as a turning point for France in the Pacific.

PHILIP CASS

Principal lecturer in journalism at the University of Teeside, United Kingdom, and a former USP lecturer.

From a Suva gossip column to Fleet Street

A Hack's Progress. By Phillip Knightley. London: Vintage, 1998. \$A16.95

TO READERS outside the United Kingdom, Australian-born journalist Philip Knightley will probably be best known for his books such as *The First Casualty* and *The Secret Life of Lawrence of Arabia*. In his autobiography, now released in paperback, he talks about some of the more famous stories he has worked on, including the ground breaking series of articles on the dangers of thalidomide which first appeared in *The Sunday Times*.

Knightley's book is self critical, especially about the value of his writ-