

to explain the development and nature of the chains of cause and consequence which linked populations in the post-1400 world. The outcome is a tightly structured and elegant book which gracefully avoids the aridity of Wallerstein and the empirical overkill of Braudel.

The two substantive chapters in Part One provide a context for European expansion. The first briefly describes the non-European world around 1400, reminding us of the presence of polities and economies which were larger, more productive and as sophisticated, as any in Europe. The second concentrates on the preconditions for European expansion: the development of long distance trade, the consolidation of small kingdoms, and alliances between rulers and merchants. Linking the two is a chapter on 'modes of production' which is notable, less for its technical contribution to that debate (the suggestion that non-capitalist modes of production are variations on two major types, the Tributary mode and the Kin-Orientated mode) than for its views of the utility of such theories. Modes of production are not rigid categories and there is little point in research which seeks to place the appropriate label on a particular instance. Rather modes of production are 'instruments for talking about the crucial connections': 'heuristic', 'sensitizing' concepts, to borrow epithets from another analytical tradition.

Part Two is concerned with European expansion between the 15th and 17th centuries and while always instructive, the treatment of particular regions is uneven. The first three chapters — on Iberians in America, the Fur Trade and the Slave Trade — deal with their subjects in some depth. The account of the Fur Trade, in particular, provides a wealth of information on the interaction between trappers and indigenous peoples and of the consequences for North American societies, but the other two chapters also maintain a good balance between attention to international connections and to local reactions. By contrast, the chapter on the Orient (India to Hawaii) appears too orientated towards the activities of invaders, be they British, Dutch or Muslim.

It might seem an impossible task to take only 100 pages to analyse the transition to capitalism and industrialization and describe the consequent creation of a world market for labour and commodities, but Wolf accomplishes this with apparent ease in Part Three.

This section is a brilliant demonstration of the value of a historically orientated political economy. The initial chapter traces the development of the capitalist mode of production in the textile industry of 18th century England, the effects on supply areas as widespread as the American South and India, and the growth of new forms of communications. The second, much briefer, chapter deals with some of the theoretical issues, stressing the degree of heterogeneity within both core and 'periphery', and contesting the common view that as capitalism is simply production for profit the world has been capitalist since the sixteenth century. Subsequent chapters discuss the effect of world markets for commodities such as tea, wheat, sugar, gold, opium and rubber on societies ranging from the Karen to the Mundurucu, and on the labourers — 'free', indentured or migrant — whose labour power was bought to produce them.

It is difficult to conceive of a better book on its subject. The skills acquired through a lifetime's writing are apparent in every paragraph, while the hundred pages of bibliographical notes reflect a lifetime's reading. Perhaps a discipline which increasingly seems split into theoreticians and area specialists, a discipline in which brief articles are becoming the standard sources, still includes an audience for such scholarship.

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The Aboriginal Population of Australia.

By L. R. Smith.

Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1980.

Pp. xx, 314, Tables, Figures, Bibliography, Indexes.

Price: \$9.50 (paperback).

In 1970, F. L. Jones wrote a major work on Aboriginal Australian demographic structure and how certain past patterns could be utilized to project future trends. Through a most detailed analysis of how these changes occur both in terms of the national profile as well as by state, Smith has carried the analysis which Jones started to a more definite conclusion. Thus both works must be looked at together to capture the historical profiles which are critical for understanding what the data yields and what it means. Initially Smith de-

velops various issues which are important in identifying what an aboriginal is, and how past censuses have changed the definition which in part explains the overall discrepancy from one period to another. The first part is a statement of what are the cultural, ethnic and biological factors used in determining the idea of Aboriginal and in turn how census materials are used in terms of changing definitions. Smith correctly stresses the factor of self-identification as the major factor in determining what aboriginal is and how it is enumerated.

Part II is a detailed analysis of what historians, anthropologists and demographers have argued in terms of the pre-contact population structure. A number of past and current sources are utilized in determining what the aboriginal population was prior to contact, the findings indicate that the Radcliffe-Brown's version of a population of 250,000 to 300,000 might be somewhat low and Smith notes that the estimates could be pushed up a little. Thus his findings simply correct the earlier accounts, but overall there is no radical departure in his analysis. However, what is interesting in this section is the great length to which Smith devotes to debunking some of the earlier views held by J. B. Birdsell whose work has been so pivotal as a point of argumentation and departure for the study of Aboriginal Australia. What is puzzling is why this is done. Birdsell's views are the most crucial as well as the most visible. Smith's attack is not only hyper-critical, but after attempting to demolish Birdsell's position, Smith himself simply makes no creative effort to go beyond what Birdsell hypothesized back in the 1940s and 1950s. It should be noted that back in the 1940s Birdsell advocated a position that *Homo sapien* entered Australia about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago. This position was attacked mercilessly by virtually every biological anthropologist as well as social anthropologist in this country as if Birdsell had substituted science fiction for science. Yet by the late 1960s and since, all the C14 dates as well as other dates indicate that Birdsell was not only correct, but that his creativity in solving a problem far out-distanced anything which other biological anthropologists had accepted. Now Smith attacks not only the tri-hybrid theory but also the most provocative piece of Birdsell's work, that dealing with the rapidity of human expansion in the peopling of Australia.

Interestingly enough, while Smith attacks this position, he seldom if ever offers a better interpretation. It is interesting to note that human paleontologists and geneticists working with the fossil record from Africa and Asia are now realizing the vitality and creativity of what Birdsell argued, since that very framework makes more sense for explaining human evolution throughout the old world. It is somewhat disheartening to this reviewer to note the baseless dismissal of Birdsell's position in Australia when the convergence of opinion by both human paleontologists and geneticists has moved in a position which Birdsell established over thirty years ago.

Parts III and IV cover population changes throughout the various states, the total national profile, as well as past and present projections. The analysis is detailed, provocative and of utmost importance to social planners who are attempting to ascertain what is the future of the Aboriginal population. Smith concludes that by the year 2001 the aboriginal population would vary between 230,000 to 285,000 or an increase of 2 to 2.5 times the present numbers. With an increase of three to four percent per annum, the relatively high natural growth of the Aboriginal population will continue.

What this volume suffers from is the unreliability of explanations to account for local changes in population. However, in fairness to the author, much of this work is being done by historians who have focused on local histories as ways of determining the extent to which national profile can be used to explain local phenomena. One example will suffice. For New South Wales, the high population increase in recorded figures resulted from the policies and actions of the Aboriginal Protection Board as well as local police registers. On one side, the result was to minimize the Aboriginal population thus stressing the idea that Aboriginals were no longer a problem. But on the other, census data indicated that rates of unemployment among Aboriginals was disproportionately high thus justifying the request for increased local funding as a means of reducing rural poverty. The assessment of such discrepancies involves a keen historical appreciation of the source of such data, and how and why the data was utilized for political ends.

Smith (pages 94-95) notes that high masculinity is a feature of Aboriginal

populations, but again we are left wondering how and why. In the case of New South Wales, the A.P.B.'s policy was to remove children at puberty for 'apprenticeship' which meant that young children were taken to urban areas and housed in welfare agencies as a means of making them ideal citizens. This policy went into effect in 1909 and lasted until the 1930s and focused on the forced removal of girls aged between ten and twelve. Of the 800 children removed, eighty percent were girls, thus accounting for the masculinity of the Aboriginal population, but once the policy ended in the late 1930s and apprenticeship was dismantled the imbalance disappears. Population process and governmental policy must be under-

stood within a totality as Heather Goodall has brilliantly demonstrated. (See 'A History of Aboriginal Communities in New South Wales, 1909-1939', Ph.D., 1982, University of Sydney).

It is time that social anthropologists, demographers and historians converge on local histories as a means of establishing what transpired throughout the continent, and how and why regional and local differences can be explained in their totality as opposed to generalizing from a broader pan-Australian 'fiction'.

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