

# Individualism versus Collectivism in New Zealand and the British Empire: Individual Rights and Biopolitics

## A Symposium

Saturday 8 April 2017  
9am - 5pm

History, Victoria University of  
Wellington - Te Whare  
Wānanga o Te Ūpoko o Te Ika  
a Māui  
Old Kirk 406 Wood Seminar  
Room

All welcome.  
No registration fee but places  
limited.

Please register your interest in attending  
by 31 March, email to  
charlotte.macdonald@vuw.ac.nz

Programme overleaf.



*Top: Employees of W W Corpe's butter & cheese  
factory, Makino, c.1900. Palmerston North.  
Libraries and Community Services*



*Lower: Mrs Brent and Ida at tea. c.1890-97.  
Cameron, J G :Negatives of the Cameron and  
Haggitt families. Ref: 1/2-024950-G. Alexander  
Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.  
<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22797851>*

Capital thinking. Globally minded.

Draft Programme

- 9.00-9.45 **Anna Clark (University of Minnesota)**  
Rage Against the Machine
- 9.45-10.15 **Barbara Brookes (University of Otago)**  
Nineteenth-Century Asylums: The liberty of the individual and the collective solution to 'madness'
- Chair: Charlotte Macdonald**
- 10.15-10.30 Morning tea
- 10.30-11.00 **Katrina Ford (University of Auckland/AUT)**  
'Oblivious to their responsibilities': collective individualism and public health in New Zealand in the late nineteenth century
- 11.00-11.30 **James Keating (University of New South Wales)**  
'Surely a little enquiry would have made the matter clear': Britain, New Zealand, and the 1895 Contagious Diseases Act 'Scandal'
- Chair: tbc**
- 11.30-11.35 short break
- 11.35-12.05 **Raewyn Dalziel (University of Auckland)**  
[Understanding William and Mary Steadman Aldis: Sects and Sex](#)
- 12.05-12.35 **Hirini Kaa (University of Auckland)**  
Te Toa Takitini: The Young Māori Party and Tribal Individualism
- Chair: tbc**
- 12.35-1.30 Lunch
- 1.30-2.00 **Kate Hunter (Victoria University of Wellington)**  
'My son is a New Zealander': Competing collective identities in Australasia during the Great War
- 2.00- 2.30 **Hera Cook (University of Otago – Wellington Clinical School)**  
[What is Socialism without Collectivism?](#)
- 2.30-3.00 **Jane McCabe (University of Otago)**  
An Intimate Trade: Family Farms and Inheritance Practice in Taieri and Hokianga
- Chair: Jim McAloon**
- 3.00-3.15 Afternoon tea
- 3.15 – 3.45 **Richard Boast (Victoria University of Wellington)**  
[Individualism and Collectivism in Maori land policy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries](#)
- 3.45-4.15 **Katie Pickles (University of Canterbury)**  
Collective Ferment in late 19th Century Christchurch and Beyond
- 4.15-4.45 **Michael Belgrave (Massey University – Albany)**  
Chiefs, gentlemen and the rabble: King Tāwhiao in London and threat of democracy.
- Chair: tbc**
- 4.45-5.00 **Closing remarks**

Anna Clark, Project Overview

In the nineteenth century, reformers often lamented that society was becoming too mechanical, that people were being treated like cogs in a machine, especially in the great new institutions of workhouses, schools and factories. These institutions can be characterized as a form of “biopolitics”, that is, the management of people and their bodies for greater social efficiency. In response, reformers and radicals asserted the importance of individual rights – but in complex and contradictory ways. How did these debates play out differently in colonial context? This project compares case studies in New Zealand, Ireland and India.

New Zealand was seen as a place where people could be free of mechanical society. Yet governments still wanted to manage the people – especially the Maori. Individualizing Maori land was part of a wider effort to “individualize” their families and culture (and appropriating their land). How did the project of individualizing the Maori shape white settlers’ self-image and political ideas? How did Maori movements respond to this project by creating new forms of collectivism? Why did some Maori around 1900 support individualization?

Politicians enacted the social reform measures of the 1890s in response to trade union and feminist agitation, but they also intended them to make New Zealand society more efficiently – and fend off socialism. In the process, feminists, individualists, trade unionists, utopian socialists, and government officials debated about local control of pub licensing, prostitution, protection of workers, hospitals, and contagious diseases in similar ways to their British counterparts – and may have influenced them. British socialists denounced the aristocracy for controlling land, in New Zealand owners of the large estates were seen as holding back opportunities for small-farm owning white settlers. How much was the “collective individualism” of New Zealand based on whiteness?

**Anna Clark is Professor of History of History, University of Minnesota and Fulbright Scholar 2017, Victoria University of Wellington**

Her publications include: *Alternative Histories of the Self* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming, 2017); ‘James Hinton and Victorian Individuality: Polygamy and the Sacrifice of the Self’ *Victorian Studies*, 54 35-61, 2011; with Aaron Windel. ‘The Early Roots of Liberal Imperialism: "The science of a legislator" in eighteenth-century India’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 14 online, 2013. [Link](#); *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*, University of California Press, 1995; *Desire: The History of European Sexuality*. Routledge, 2008; *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*. Princeton University Press, 2004; ‘Wild Workhouse Girls in 19th Century Ireland’, *Journal of Social History*, 39 389-409, 2005.

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