

Foundations

By **KARIN SPEEDY**

Historian Karin Speedy's writing on power struggles and colonialism becomes personal when she investigates her own family stories. Her memoir reminds us that "...fascinatingly, unknowingly, sometimes spookily, we can find ourselves on paths once trodden by our forebears".

Genre: Memoir, history, literary nonfiction

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Blurb

Every day we face decisions, crossroads that can take us on wildly different rides. Our lives are never certain, no matter how well we plan. Although, fascinatingly, unknowingly, sometimes spookily, we can find ourselves on paths once trodden by our forebears...

In *Foundations*, Karin Speedy takes us on a whirlwind journey through time and space as she navigates intersecting personal, local, family and global histories, stories that help her reckon with who she is and where she stands in this complicated (post)colonial world. If colonialism, slavery, violence and heartbreak feature heavily in her memoir so too do friendship, love, poetry, books, music, laughter and resistance. Warm, funny, quirky yet also confronting and, at times, shockingly brutal, her childhood and young adult memories bring to life the scenes and sounds of 70s, 80s and 90s New Zealand. At university, Karin's unquenchable thirst for knowledge and social justice see her embark on her first research project, a decolonial study of Louisiana Creole, research that cements her future as an anti-racist, activist scholar. Forever questioning the master narratives, digging deeper and peeling back layers to expose what lies hidden beneath and behind, Karin reminds us that history and trauma are all around us, ingrained in our lives, etched into our landscapes and at the very foundations of our cities and infrastructure. When she begins to examine her own family stories, rooted in colonisation and working-class struggle and embedded in the national histories of Aotearoa and Australia, she uncovers astonishing inter-generational palimpsests and starts to grasp the importance of listening to her ghosts.



Author: Historian, academic, writer, literary scholar, linguist, poet and literary translator, Associate Professor Karin Speedy has published extensively on transnational, colonial and anti-colonial Pacific and Francophone history and literature, as well as Creole languages, slavery and forced labour and African and Indian Ocean diasporas in the Pacific. In addition to her scholarly writing, she is a published writer of creative histories, particularly in the form of poetry. 'Foundations' is her first memoir/literary nonfiction novel. In 2013, she was awarded the John Dunmore Medal for research, recognising her major contribution to knowledge of French language and culture in the Pacific. Karin is a Visiting Research Fellow at The University of Adelaide and lives in Wellington, New Zealand.

For more information see Karin's [Author Page](#).

