

astoundingly second-hand programme schedules to the hapless viewer and listener. He proves particularly adept at unravelling the twisted history of commercial and state-owned broadcasting, rooted in radio's earliest days but flowering grossly in ours.

As all this suggests, those who have read *Radio Days* will find little to surprise them in *Voice and Vision*. Once again we find very detailed accounts of events, organized chronologically. Once again Day proves commendably comprehensive, exploring political negotiations, programming issues and technical developments in great detail. The last of these is particularly welcome, given most previous academic discussion of New Zealand broadcasting's obsession with the former two. That he encroaches on so many living people's experience has led to some of his evidence being challenged, but a bit of controversy never hurt anyone. In its own terms, if *Voice and Vision* has a fault then it comes from technical, financial (and, intermittently) administrative caesurae between radio and television. To have brought the radio story up to date then returned to the 1950s to chronicle television's birth and warped upbringing would have introduced redundancy and confusion; but to run the two tales together means that Day requires his readers to get off one horse and mount the other very frequently, and often in mid-stream.

If this book's virtues are familiar from its predecessor, then so are its drawbacks. Once again we have a one-damn-thing-after-another narrative, with little attempt at interpretation. Once again we have an account whose gaze stays firmly within New Zealand's borders. Some comparative discussion — of Australian arrangements, if none other — might have rendered our broadcasting pattern fruitfully bizarre. One example: New Zealand's small population always made advertising-supported television unavoidable, but Day never explains how we come to lack anything approximating Australia's ABC or the USA's PBS.

One final grouse. One of Day's virtues is his democratic enthusiasm for sub-national entities — Maori broadcasting, local radio stations — often overlooked in broad-brush accounts that never leave head office files in Wellington. Sadly, he seems to think that democratic is a synonym for demotic; that to be progressive one must be philistine. From the YA stations to the Concert Programme, attempts to educate, while entertaining, (in his framework, attempts to serve a particular oppressed group — New Zealanders who suspect that there is more to life than Paul Holmes and Richard Prebble), earn an automatically curled lip. He is wrong. If the strongest contrary cases — Walter Benjamin springs to mind — prove meat stronger than he can stomach then he might abstract his mind and think of Karl Marx. One does not need to plot revolution *or* read Homer in the original; one can do both. And we are going to need somebody who can do both if we are to construct a broadcasting system in New Zealand that reflects this country's diversity while not pandering to the lowest common denominator. Or even, Heaven help us, to Murray McCully.

IAN CARTER

*The University of Auckland*

*Spitfire: The New Zealand Story*. By Gerard S. Morris. Reed Books, Auckland, 2000. 376 pp. NZ price: \$80.00. ISBN 0-7900-0696-0.

YES, IT IS YET ANOTHER BOOK about that idolized British fighter aircraft. And yes, it is as big and heavy as any tome already decorating your coffee tables. And yes again, there is no way you can take it to bed, spouse or no spouse. But Gerard Morris has produced the first serious study to appear in this country (and one that is most attractively

packaged, thanks to his excellent publishers) of an emotional and aesthetic bond forged between thousands of New Zealanders and a weapon of war.

Some flew the Spitfire in combat long ago with amazing skill and courage; others found it far too hot to handle. A few earned decorations, national fame, and a personal satisfaction never afterwards equalled; others found only an early grave, agonizing injuries or a long-lasting memory of failure. For many of us it is both a beautiful object and a symbol of victory over vile regimes in Europe and Asia.

The book contains hundreds of photographs, many unfamiliar, all clearly reproduced, some in colour, and accurately captioned. There are also maps, diagrams, cartoons, several lists (of everything you might wish to consult in the way of men, machines, locations, operations flown, victories, losses and survivals) as well as abbreviations, glossary, bibliography and index. It is, in short, a work of careful scholarship and not at all a glossy quickie of a kind with which aviation historians around the world are only too familiar. Morris has read the books, visited the archives, and interviewed as many as possible of the ever-dwindling band of wartime pilots and ground crews.

The first half of the book deals with World War II and offers a thorough account of 485 Squadron's record: about 200 New Zealanders served with that squadron, 20% of all those who flew a Spitfire (or the Seafire, its naval version) at least once. Stories about 485 and its motto — *Ka Whawhai Tonu (We Will Fight On)* — have often been told, but rarely in such detail, and never so accurately. New Zealanders who flew Spitfires with other squadrons receive fair attention — including those who served in Burma, India and Ceylon, far from the superior glamour (in the eyes of those safe on Mother Earth) of combat over Britain, North-west Europe and the Mediterranean.

Morris then turns to an entirely different story: that of the post-war survival of a handful of Spitfires. He traces the fortunes of those with a New Zealand connection in loving detail. No longer weapons, these machines have become a combination of revered icons, absorbing wrecks to reconstruct, expensive toys to fly, fascinating examples of ancient engineering technique, movie stars and centres of attraction, whether displayed in museums or mounted on plinths or alive and well at air shows. Unsurprisingly, the author loves Wanaka and all those who help to make it an irresistible magnet for boys and girls of all ages. But if you would like to see — and hear — one of these beautiful artifacts cavorting in the sky, do not miss any reasonable opportunity: of the 22,000 that were built (or, if you prefer, created) only about 50 remain airworthy. At present, of the five Spitfires in New Zealand, one can fly and that number is unlikely to rise above three.

A pilot deserves the last word. Flight Lieutenant — later Reverend — J. Norby King recalled what it was like to fly a Spitfire: 'I was dancing with a new and lovely, lively dancing partner. Waltzing in the clouds with Deanna Durbin.'

VINCENT ORANGE

*University of Canterbury*

*History of New Zealand and Its Inhabitants.* By Dom Felice Vaggioli. Translated by John Crockett. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2000. xxiii + 340 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 1-877133-52-3.

IS THIS A DANGEROUS BOOK in the hands of the uninitiated historian? Written by an Italian Benedictine priest who worked in New Zealand from 1879 to 1887, it has all the hallmarks of nineteenth-century sectarian bigotry shaped by nationalism and religion. Vaggioli excoriates Protestants and their missionaries, British settlers and colonial