

British Policy in China, 1895-1902. By L. K. Young. Oxford University Press, 1970. x, 356 pp. U.K. price: £3.50.

This professional, scholarly work exemplifies the strength and limitations of the current British school of diplomatic history. Based on a wide range of sources, unpublished and published, Chinese as well as European, Young fills in the details of Langer's *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* and Grenville's *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy*, covering a key period in the development of British East Asian policy, from the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 to the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902. His focus is on the activities of statesmen and diplomats, and this approach enables a high degree of exactitude since most of the records are now available. The hero, if there is one, is Salisbury himself who stands out from his rival Chamberlain, or his imitator Lansdowne, by his realistic appreciation of Britain's relative decline, his refusal to take impulsive action to counteract it and the intellectual rigour with which he analyzed the consequences of every diplomatic move, as for example the apparently anti-Russian manoeuvre of the Yangtze agreement with Germany in October 1900. Salisbury may have lacked the creativity which Chamberlain had in overabundance, but Young shows that he was certainly not, as Bismarck claimed, 'wood painted to look like iron'. This careful study of Salisbury's Chinese policy can only enhance his reputation as a diplomat.

Since the outline was already known, the strength of the book lies in the detail: two examples from many demonstrate this. First, with regard to the origin of the scramble for concessions, Young describes how the dispatch of a powerful British naval task force to Chemulpo on 7 December 1898, after a false report that the Russians had done the same, encouraged Germany to stay put at Kiaochow and Russia to occupy Port Arthur. 'While it cannot be argued that this British move initiated the general scramble for ports . . . it undoubtedly contributed to the process by removing any hesitation the other powers may have felt up to this time.' Faulty Admiralty intelligence thus played a role alongside high policy in unleashing a major Far Eastern development.

Second, Young makes a valuable contribution, in passing, to the problem of whether the Boxer rebellion was primarily anti-foreign or anti-Christian. He shows that Salisbury, Lansdowne and Satow (British Minister in Peking) were consistently opposed to the missionary interest and deliberately underplayed the anti-Christian character of the movement. 'Evidence of Chinese hostility towards missionaries and converts was deliberately hushed up by Salisbury.' The Chinese, on the other hand, 'persistently regarded the rising as a conflict between "converts and people"' and references in post-Boxer imperial decrees to 'missions' and 'anti religious societies' had to be amended by Satow to 'foreign establishments' and 'anti-foreign societies'. The secular interpretation of the Boxer rebellion as a nationalist response to imperialist pressure may therefore have its roots in the British government's tendentious representation of the facts at the time.

Turning from the detail to the broad perspective, the limitations, not so much of this particular book, but of this genre of historical writing, begin to appear. Young's account may be satisfying to the diplomatic historian, but it will be less so to the sinologist. Young is concerned with the relations between Britain and China in the late nineteenth century, yet these

two evolving entities are never defined nor is the relationship analyzed in any depth. Young states, for example, that 'Great Britain's principal interest in China during the nineteenth century was trade', but this is nowhere demonstrated: that trade was more the propaganda of the relationship than its substance is the more tenable thesis. Too often Young's argument remains within the closed world of public record offices and there is no correlation of diplomats' opinions with other realities. How welcome by contrast the synoptic approach of the French historians, Dermigny's book on Canton, Gilbert Gadoffre's volume in the *Cahiers Paul Claudel*, or the American insight into alien systems, as in the work of the late Mary Wright on the T'ung-chih restoration.

Within its self-imposed limitations, however, Young's book is solid and serviceable, even though Mrs R. Quedsted's researches on Manchuria may eventually necessitate some modification of his assertions about Russian activity there before 1897. This is professional history at its most professional, not a layman's book, but a scholar's.

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World Catalogue of Theses on the Pacific Islands. Compiled by Diane Dickson and Carol Dossor. Australian National University Press, 1970. xii, 123 pp. Australian price: \$3.90.

IN MANY AREAS of academic enquiry but especially — and most inconveniently — in one of recent rapid growth such as Pacific studies, the amount of valuable material available in published works is exceeded by that tucked away in unpublished theses. In this situation not only may a scholar's findings remain unknown to those to whom they may be of use but wasteful duplication of research efforts is a real danger. A bibliographic tool such as the volume under review is, therefore, to be welcomed by all students of the Pacific Islands (including New Zealand), whatever their discipline. The *World Catalogue* lists about 1,000 works in Dutch, English, French, Spanish and German not only in anthropology, linguistics and history but also in medicine, geology, psychology, economics, art and literature.

The need for a disquietingly long addendum notwithstanding, such comprehensiveness does credit to the compilers. It is, however, unfortunate that they can take less satisfaction from their attempt to indicate which theses had been published up to 1967. Omissions include Parnaby on the Melanesian labour trade, published in 1964 (p. 4), Schwartz on the Paliau movement, 1962 (p. 20), Strauss on Americans in Polynesia, 1963 (p. 55), Babbage on the Hauhau movement, 1937 (p. 84), Butchers on Maori education, 1929 (p. 86), Harré on Maori-Pakeha marriages, 1966 (p. 88), Henderson on the Ratana movement, 1963 (p. 88), Winiata on Maori leadership, 1967 (p. 95), and Routledge on Mr Ludson in Samoa, *Historical Studies*, 1964 (p. 100). Future editions of the *World Catalogue* should also correct the spelling of Wiremau Tamahana in the title of M. C. Thorne's thesis (p. 94), which was presented at Canterbury in 1929 not Auckland in 1930; should state that Vayda's study was of Maori