

Vahitahi in 1930, but unlikely to have been derived from missionary contact, so closely parallel the first chapter of Genesis (pp. 225–8)?

Taken singly, any of these questions could easily be dismissed; taken together however, they appear to constitute a genuine problem which requires a serious and comprehensive answer. Langdon offers this, with a wealth of detail, in attributing them to the survivors of the vessel which left four early sixteenth-century cannons on the reef of Amanu atoll. This was most likely the Spanish vessel *San Lesmes*, which disappeared in the south-eastern Pacific in 1526. From Amanu Langdon traces the genetic and cultural impact of castaways throughout the Tuamotus and even as far as New Zealand over the next few centuries.

In regard to New Zealand, however, the balance of probability is less clearly in Langdon's favour than it is in respect of the islands with which the bulk of his book is concerned. On the basis of Tahitian and Maori oral traditions he identifies a Europe-bound party of Spaniards with the occupants of the Tainui canoe under the command of a man called Hiro. But the historical value of such traditions has not yet been validated to the point where they can sustain such a weight of interpretation. (D. R. Simmons' article, 'A New Zealand Myth: Kupe, Toi and the "Fleet"', *New Zealand Journal of History*, III, 1 (April 1969), 14–31, offers a warning here.) Nor does the fact that observers have commented on the occurrence of 'European' types among the Maoris prove anything. What are European features? Physical form and pigmentation vary widely among Europeans, as with other peoples. Also inconclusive is the sixteenth-century 'Spanish helmet' dredged up from Wellington Harbour towards the end of last century. Its condition was far too good for it to have been in the water for any length of time (see Evelyn Stokes, 'European Discovery of New Zealand before 1642: a review of the evidence', *New Zealand Journal of History*, IV, 1 (April 1970), 3–19.

However, New Zealand, like Hawaii and Easter Islands, is only peripheral to the main argument. It is now up to other scholars to disprove Langdon's conclusions if they do not like them. For while he may not have established truths he has at least contributed a new crop of questions to the debate on the origin and nature of the Polynesians. And they cannot be ignored.

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Ask That Mountain. The Story of Parihaka. By Dick Scott. Heinemann/Southern Cross, Auckland, 1975. 216 pp. N.Z. price: \$8.50.

DICK SCOTT's revision of his earlier work on Parihaka is the beneficiary of the extremely efficient Heinemann publicity machine and has been lavishly advertized as a 'magnificently researched' documentary history, 'superb', 'gripping', 'startling', 'a revelation'. The advertising men have gone too far, of course. Scott's book is none of these things. It is substantially a collection of quotations from fairly orthodox sources, arranged in chronological order but unrelieved by much explanation or analysis. Scissors and paste appear to have been the main literary tools employed and the book is as near to papier-mache as to history.

The basic technique employed — that of stringing together quotations with

narrative — makes the book very uneven in style. Much of it is in nineteenth-century prose, or a close paraphrase of it, and the claim that it 'reads like a thriller or a story out of the Wild West' is manifestly absurd. Readers in search of thrills will find Scott very heavy going. They will be quickly exhausted by the repetition and the plethora of adjectives which Scott seems unable to do without. Alas, if the book is not a thriller, it is not a substantial piece of historical analysis either. And it is not new. *Ask That Mountain* is a puffed up, padded out version of the *Parihaka Story*, now twenty years old, and that in turn follows fairly closely the version given by G. W. Rusden in his nineteenth-century histories. The text and arguments of Scott's earlier book are substantially intact, and many of the illustrations are the same. Heinemann/Southern Cross have converted the *Parihaka Story* into a solid, moderately handsome book, but the change has been achieved mostly by the technical people responsible. In the 1975 version the margins are much more generous, the paper is thicker, the pages larger, the cover more stylish, and the illustrations more clearly reproduced, but the difference is cosmetic, rather than substantial, and far more than the skeleton of the 1954 version has been carried over into the 1975 book.

Ask That Mountain begins with a brief, selective account of the land wars of the 1860s and Te Whiti's growth as a Maori leader. When the wars ended huge tracts of land in Taranaki were confiscated and much of the confiscated land was sold to whites who began to farm it. But a large block of confiscated land, which included the land around Parihaka and the Waimate Plains, was left unoccupied by the pakeha and it was to this land that Te Whiti returned after the fighting stopped. At Parihaka he and his people created a stable, prosperous community where Maori mana, so battered by the wars, could be restored. Parihaka became a place of refuge and recovery for Maoris of many tribes. In 1879 when the Grey government decided to subdivide and sell the remainder of the confiscated Taranaki land they ran headlong into Te Whiti's resistance. The Grey (and later Hall) governments were prepared to negotiate over granting reserves to the Maoris. Te Whiti ignored the question of reserves as an irrelevance; he challenged the validity of confiscation in the first place, and, by implication, the whole basis of pakeha land-holding in Taranaki. The bulk of Scott's book deals with the drama of this confrontation, the heroic resistance and eventual martyrdom of the Maoris and the destruction of Parihaka in 1881. The concluding chapters describe the rebuilding of Parihaka in 1883 and give a brief account of its history up to the deaths of Te Whiti and Tohu, its principal chiefs.

The most disappointing feature of the book is the lack of explanation in it. The reader is told what happened but not why. There is no satisfactory explanation of Te Whiti's mana, his capacity to hold his people's loyalty even in apparently hopeless situations and even when he himself was absent from them and a prisoner. Scott reports what Te Whiti said but does not explain why his people believed him so fervently and obeyed so implicitly. In another place Scott takes academic historians to task for seeing history 'from the point of view of the exalted' (*New Argot*, III, 1 (March 1975), 3). *Ask That Mountain* is a glaring example of the inadequacies of such a method of historical approach. Maori attitudes are seen through the eyes of Te Whiti almost exclusively. Occasionally Tohu or Titokowaru warrant a mention, but we are not told what the experience was like for the tribesmen who came to Parihaka (especially those from distant tribes). Surely Scott's oral sources could have been of more help to him here? In the same way that Maori attitudes are portrayed almost exclusively by the chiefs,

pakeha villains are represented mostly by cabinet ministers and officials. Settler opinion is quoted when it is racist enough to make us wince, but Scott does not even try to explain what the Parihaka incident meant to settlers in Taranaki. Nineteenth-century Taranaki was by no means homogeneous. In 1880 parts of the province had been settled for forty years and there were considerable differences of outlook between the earliest settled, more established areas, and the newest, more struggling settlements. New Plymouth opinion often differed from that of the rural areas, and by the period Scott writes of, it had attained some maturity. Our nineteenth-century ancestors may not have been an especially lovable lot, but they were not simply land-stealers and murderers. On pages 81–82 Scott tells that in 1880 the Hall government had been at pains to whip up 'the most intense feeling against Parihaka' in New Plymouth, yet a jury deliberated for an hour and still could not agree to convict fifty-nine Maori prisoners. The Maoris were eventually convicted only after a speech from the judge. Scott uses the incident to illustrate the vindictiveness of the pakeha judicial system, but surely it also shows that the mood of New Plymouth was more complex than he suggests. If all the Taranaki whites were as vindictive and hysterical as he says they were, then the Maoris would have been convicted more easily.

In his Introduction Scott claims that *Ask That Mountain* attaches more importance to Tohu's role at Parihaka than did *The Parihaka Story*. The promise is not fulfilled. Tohu remains a shadowy figure, scarcely mentioned at all in the first half of the book, and an appendage to Te Whiti in the second half. The mysterious rift between the two chiefs is not adequately analysed — nor are the tantalizing comments of Tohu's followers after his death when, according to one reporter, they said 'the grass shall be allowed to grow on the road to Parihaka'. This did not happen: Tohu's people did not completely forget Parihaka. Scott does not explain.

To a twentieth-century pakeha reader many of the sayings of Te Whiti and Tohu are difficult and obscure. Scott does not help very much. Many of the allusive speeches are quoted without interpretation and it would have helped readers to understand Te Whiti and his movement much more clearly if its intellectual and psychological context had been more fully explored. *Ask That Mountain's* two-dimensional narrative does not do Te Whiti justice. It leaves him acting out a role in a narrative. He has yet to wait for an interpreter.

As well as the major failure of explanation there are faults of historical accuracy. On p. 30 and p. 56 Harry Atkinson is referred to as 'Henry' Atkinson and a quotation on p. 30 leads the reader to confuse him with Henry Richmond. More seriously, on p. 163 Scott claims that William Pember Reeves 'took 5000 acres of Taranaki Maori land on the Paparahia leasehold near Awakino (financing the investment by persistent graft)' and gives as a reference to support this statement an article by G. R. Hawke in the *New Zealand Journal of History*, April 1973. Hawke's article in fact shows that Reeves was not the sole owner of the leasehold and that far from financing his investment by persistent graft, he used his political position to help disentangle himself from the Paparahia investment. On p. 12 Scott blandly refers to the Taranaki Land League as an established fact, whereas for more than a decade now historians have known that the League was more a figment of Pakeha imagination than an incident in Maori history.

Ask That Mountain was a profound disappointment to this reader. The new material is scant — there is little sign in the text of the influence of new sources,

and especially of the much-vaunted oral information. The interpretation is rigid and unsatisfying, and the handsome cover and layout frame a second-rate picture.

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The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922. By William Reynolds Braisted. University of Texas Press, Austin and London, 1971. x, 741 pp. U.S. price: \$15.

HERE is a massive example of the new model of naval history. It is not about warships, tactics, battles and sea-dogs, but about diplomacy and strategy; departmental wrangles and inter-service rivalries; estimates, votes and cuts; war plans, bases and dockyards. It could hardly be otherwise. In contrast to his 1958 volume on the McKinley-Roosevelt era, here Braisted has no great operational landmarks to tell of, like Dewey's victory in Manila Bay or the great White Fleet. The only operations in the Pacific in the Taft, Wilson and early Harding periods were gun-boat activity in China and the ill-starred Siberian intervention of 1918-22.

The book is really about the *failure* of the Navy to get into the Pacific in the way it wanted. The completion of the Panama Canal; the opening of a graving dock at Pearl Harbour; a plan for building a major base in the Philippines, and the acceptance of capital ship parity by Britain, were all stages in a momentous shift in the world balance of power. Yet Braisted's conclusion is that the Washington treaties and the policy of a 'navy second to none' (rather than supreme) marked a set-back for navalists.

The book is solidly based in the Navy Department archives and filled out from private papers, State Department records and Japanese material held on microfilm in the Library of Congress. But unlike Captain S. W. Roskill's *Naval Policy Between the Wars* (Vol. 1, London, 1968), with which it overlaps for the post-war and Washington period (half the book), Braisted's work does not have the added dimension provided by research on both sides of the Atlantic. His material from the British side comes from the printed diplomatic documents (notoriously thin on strategic material) and some Admiralty memoranda in the Borden papers in Canada. Stylistically Braisted is less easy to read than Roskill.

One of the disadvantages of the new-style economic-political-diplomatic-strategic naval history, as opposed to the old battles-and-bulldogs variety, is that, while the latter usually had the climax of the great engagement as its focus, the new mode has as a major subject years and years of abortive plans and half-fulfilled promises. As these changed so frequently with turns of the political and financial weathercocks, the detail is, necessarily, complex.

At another level, that of strategic doctrine, the subject is a little like scriptural exegesis. Certain basic texts are handed down, which each generation of staff officers interpret to the faithful — usually reducing it all to a simple numbers game with (highly symbolic) colour codes. How many battleships are needed by