

to place muscle and flesh on his characters, he shows considerable flair. His discussion of Joseph Zillwood is masterful: 'Meanwhile the vicious circle common to the lives of many policemen had begun for Zillwood: financial problems had led to depression, depression to drink, drink to financial problems of greater magnitude and his wife left him.' Zillwood is no cardboard figure. Hill tells of a man who tried hard to be a dutiful constable, failed, and committed suicide. There is pathos in the coroner's jury verdict that Zillwood's death was a felony against the Crown.

Richard Hill's Marxism is present in his text, but it is not intrusive. However, his assumption that a proto-social Darwinism permeated colonial and British racial and class attitudes in this period is dubious. All in all, he emerges as a talented researcher who has written one of the most significant works on New Zealand's history in the last decade.

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The One Best System? A Revisionist History of State Schooling In New Zealand. By Roy Shuker. Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1987. 286 pp. NZ price: \$38.95.

CARR'S DICTUM strikes again: the work of the historian really does mirror the society in which s/he works. With education in the thick of national controversy, with disputes rumbling on over reviews of all aspects of educational provision, it should not surprise us that there have emerged challenging and argumentative works addressing the social and political significance of education. These include Openshaw and McKenzie's recent collection, and the present contribution of Roy Shuker. *The One Best System?* seeks to explore the historical construction of state schooling in New Zealand, in particular the role of schools in reproducing social and economic divisions.

Shuker argues that the school system has acted overall to create and maintain hegemony in the interests of dominant groups, but that this process has been a contested one which has been influenced in different ways by the 'cross cutting factors' of gender, race, location, age, and religion. The work concentrates initially upon the 'basic configuration of the state, economy, and class', outlining the pursuit of equality of educational opportunity over the past century, and emphasizing the importance of the period from 1890 to 1930. The role of the state education system in regulating the social activities of youth and children, disseminating ideologies such as patriotism and a commitment to political democracy, preparing young people for the changing needs of the labour market, are then dealt with in detail. The persistence of the academic curriculum and the use of intelligence testing demonstrate, for Shuker, the reproduction of existing structures of inequality that have been obscured by an 'ideology of egalitarianism'. A similar message is conveyed in discussions of Maori education, gender and education, religion and schooling, and rural and urban education. Throughout, Shuker's work is lively and readable. It makes competent use of recent research findings both here and overseas. And it succeeds in developing an integrated critique — the case for the prosecution, as it were — against many aspects of state education that had escaped critical attention until quite recently.

While his book reflects the conflicts of New Zealand in the 1980s, Shuker's 'revi-

sionism' belongs equally to the American historiographical debates of the 1960s-70s. The title, *The One Best System?*, is itself a somewhat mysterious echo of David Tyack's history of urban education in the United States, published in 1974. Such engagement is refreshing in a field that for many years was notable for its lack of international or theoretical vistas. Thanks in no small part to Shuker's efforts, historians of New Zealand education can now relate their own work to a well developed 'radical' paradigm as well as to the received liberal view. Even so, it must be noted that in the United States 'revisionist' theory in the narrow sense that Shuker conveys has been under heavy attack for at least a decade and has lost much of its former dominance. New Zealand historians of education need now to be careful not simply to replace one outmoded and imported myth with another. It is clear also that a large agenda for research still remains. Shuker's concentration upon the role of the state means that local, regional, and community attitudes towards education continue to be neglected. Our understanding of primary education, of technical education, of universities, independent schools and informal agencies of education will similarly fail to be advanced by the present work.

The One Best System? is a major contribution to the history of education in New Zealand, one that deserves close attention from historians. It should find a prominent place in the literature for some time to come. But it should be addressed, like the work of Butchers and the Cummings, as a baseline against which other historians can direct in a critical manner their own experience and interpretations.

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Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940. By Jeremy Salmond. Reed Methuen, Auckland, 1986. 246 pp. illus. NZ price: \$38.50.

THE NEW ZEALAND house has had its admirers and its commentators, but not until now its chronicler. Among the commentators are some well known names in New Zealand architecture. Paul Pascoe, Ernst Plishke, Gerhard Rosenberg and recently Sir Michael Fowler have each helped in their own way towards an appreciation of the development of the New Zealand house. Jeremy Salmond is the first, however, to study the subject in depth, and he has produced the definitive work on the vernacular New Zealand house.

Roy Worskett, Planner to the city of Bath, came here as guest speaker for the New Lives for Old Buildings conference in 1980. He startled many of us by advocating the listing and protection (as best our meagre conservation legislation allowed) of the ordinary and typical houses that make up the bulk of the inner areas of our cities and towns. It is from this time (though not under Worskett's sole influence) that the Historic Places Trust has been consciously classifying the typical house as well as the one that is special because of historical association or unusual architectural skill in its design.

Salmond's book provides ample justification for this policy. He has made a serious and disciplined study of what has been regarded as commonplace. In doing so he has drawn a full and coherent picture of the development of the New Zealand