

southern Taranaki settlers fled. Still, I do not see how the Maori, heavily outnumbered, had any hope of winning the war.

As always, James Belich writes well and wittily, a gift not given to all our historians. The story is exciting, the pace rapid. Maori boys are massacred, prisoners killed — by kupapa. One section is written like a novel, inviting us to visit Whanganui in 1868 and engage in various activities such as visiting the kupapa leader, Mete Kingi, stopping for a morning draught at James Cathro's hotel, and so on. This comes off very well. The only problem is that, while we feel sure that it could be documented, there are no footnotes, only lists of sources for each chapter, so that we cannot follow up, at all easily, any point which interests us.

During a recent discussion of the 'new history', Dr Belich said that previous historians had forced their readers to 'chomp their way through a dry muesli'. Presumably he belongs to a 'snap, crackle, pop' school of history.

Dr Belich is particularly good at writing pen-portraits of his characters, such as Colonels Whitmore and McDonnell, and Titokowaru, but at least once he misses a trick. He says that E. W. Stafford, the longest serving nineteenth-century Premier, had (and he quotes someone) 'an entire want of social magnetism'. In fact, he was noted for his very great attraction to women: the closeness of his relationships is not known, though an historian is working on it.

And a final point, not at all critical: the photograph on p.64 of Lucy Takiara Dalton appears to be one of another woman, often called 'Queen Victoria' or the Queen of Nukumaru. In one Turnbull photograph she clearly wore a moko, which Lucy Takiara, whose father was English, did not — or, at least, it is not to be seen in her photograph in the Turnbull Library. Lucy Takiara spied on her relative, Titokowaru, for the government. 'Queen Victoria' bore arms. I should add that the author drew my attention to the Turnbull picture of Takiara.

I make these remarks because many photographs in our libraries and books are wrongly labelled. I have seen a picture labelled W. P. Reeves which resembled him only in the fact that the subject wore Edwardian dress. Worse, I have published a photograph of Wiremu Kingi, so labelled in the Turnbull, who turned out to be Patohe, a Hauhau leader and (on a postcard) the last tattooed Maori man in Taranaki. Photographs need as much scholarly attention as documents. One problem is that we usually know who signed a letter or other document, but we never know who labelled a photograph.

KEITH SINCLAIR

University of Auckland

Days of Darkness. Taranaki 1878-1884. By Hazel Riseborough. Allen & Unwin Historical Branch, 1989. 267pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

DAYS OF DARKNESS is aptly named. It is a study of the manipulation of the law by the settler-parliamentarians, in order to destroy one of the largest Maori settlements in the country. This was Parihaka, built in 1867 in the midst of the confiscated lands of Taranaki.

Hazel Riseborough sets out to tell, not the Maori history of Parikaha, but the European reactions to its founder and prophet, Te Whiti o Rongomai. She demonstrates with incision the ways in which, despite the promises made in the original confiscatory legislation that reserves for the tribes would be established, no attempt was made to put those reserves into place. Instead, the government in 1871 apparently abandoned its claims to the lands where Parihaka stood. It attempted to purchase Maori land in the area,

further giving the impression that it accepted the land to be Maori land. Then suddenly, in 1878, the surveys began. The lands, farmed by the Parihaka people, were put on the market for new migrants. In 1879, the pacific protests of the Parihaka began. They ploughed the lands under survey or settlement as a statement of their ownership, and they were arrested.

A commission set up to inquire into the protests in 1880 stressed that it was the failure to make any reserves which had caused the confrontation. Despite this admission, still no reserves were set aside. Riseborough comes to the inescapable conclusion that the settler-politicians were determined to destroy Parihaka, because of the mana of its leader. Seizing the moment when the Governor was out of the country, they ordered the invasion and destruction of Parihaka on 5 November 1881.

Riseborough traces the history of the manipulative legislation that was erected to assert the supremacy of the settlers' interests. The West Coast Settlement Act (1880) enabled the arrest and imprisonment without warrant of any Maori in Taranaki found 'unlawfully' fencing or ploughing or interfering with a survey at any time in the next three years. The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act (1881) placed all Maori reserve land that might be established under Pakeha control and made it available for compulsory lease to Europeans. The West Coast Peace Preservation Act (1882) enabled the imprisonment of Te Whiti and his kinsman Tohu Kakahi (who had directed the initial protests of the ploughmen) without trial: the government ministers knew that they had no charge against them that would survive a court hearing. They could practise their legal chicanery in parliament, but they could not rely on the courts to be equally bent. They refused to allow the legality of the confiscations Act to be tested in the courts. They censored evidence that questioned the justice of their decisions and attempted to prevent publication of that evidence.

In 1927 a Royal Commission established the illegality of the Taranaki confiscations. The justification for the seizures had rested on the premise that Maori there were in rebellion. But as the historians established, and the Commission recognized, the wars in Taranaki were not caused by Maori rebellion. They were the product of a forced land purchase, the legitimacy of which could not be upheld even by a contemporary inquiry.

Riseborough's account is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand critical aspects of New Zealand's past. Although more limited in its scope, it is more soundly researched and documented than its predecessor, Dick Scott's *Ask that Mountain: The Story of Parihaka* (1975). Riseborough has presented a study in quintessential colonialism, or the assertion of European supremacy. It is a part of New Zealand's history which has to be recognized and not buried.

I would, however, question certain aspects of the book. In her determination to show that Te Whiti was a rational man, and not the religious fanatic that he was always portrayed to be in the Pakeha press and ministerial accounts, she understates a critical aspect of his leadership. He was a religious leader and prophet, and had been accepted by the Pai Marire leader Te Ua Haumene as one who would follow him in Taranaki. Riseborough denies this continuity of faith, and asserts that Te Whiti was not bound to any one religion. She blames the emphasis on religious prophecy and predictions concerning the ultimate return of all the confiscated lands, given in the accounts of Te Whiti's regular monthly speeches at Parihaka, on poor interpreters. She denies that Te Whiti ever sought the recovery of all the lands; she insists that he sought only the allotment of the reserves promised. She misunderstands the importance of the continuing tradition of prophetic leadership, and the strong Maori belief, as God's chosen people, in the scriptural promises that their lost lands would be recovered. She forgets that the two most able interpreters, James Mackay and R. S. Thompson, both of whom talked with Te Whiti personally, stated that he rejected the legality of the confiscations. Te Whiti later used Thompson as an interpreter, and

Thompson's accounts of Te Whiti's monthly speeches in 1879 and 1880 are supported by another version. The Reverend T. G. Hammond also made translations of Te Whiti's speeches at this period. The texts are similar, but the variations also make it apparent they are not copies of each other. Both make clear the importance of Te Whiti's religious teachings and his refusal to accept the legality of the confiscations. And as a rational man, why should he not reject them?

Riseborough's book is, on the whole, a thorough and careful study of the European side of the Parihaka story in the years 1878–1884. It is a pity that she felt it inappropriate for a Pakeha to interpret the Maori side of the story. Her reluctance becomes an inhibiting constraint on both her research and her interpretation. It prevents the broadening of the portrayal of Te Whiti as a religious leader. It fails to give a full recognition of the importance of Tohu as the man who initiated the protests of the ploughmen. Tohu and Te Whiti shared the leadership on a rotational basis, as equals, and in May 1879 Tohu was the communal leader. But Riseborough decides neither to look at the members of the community nor at its leaders. She has also limited the time frame so as to exclude the other conflicts of Parihaka in the later 1880s and 1890s. The book leaves many questions unanswered, and these problems arise from the author's deliberately set limitations to her own work.

JUDITH BINNEY

University of Auckland

Tarawera: The Volcanic Eruption of 10 June 1886. By R.F. Keam. R.F. Keam, University of Auckland, 1988. 488 pp. NZ price: \$169.00.

I HAVE had occasion to read this book twice over the past nine months. Each time I have found it enjoyable and informative — though upon each reading in a somewhat different way.

Tarawera deals with the greatest natural disaster in nineteenth-century New Zealand: the violent eruption of Mt Tarawera and the adjacent Rotomahana district. It led to over 100 deaths and to the disappearance and (presumably) destruction of the incomparable and irreplaceable Pink and White Terraces. Through what a layman would consider a natural freak, the sound of the volcanic explosions could be heard as far away as Christchurch in the South Island and Whangaroa in Northland. That perhaps one-third of the colony's population could hear these sounds had a rational explanation which Keam provides: material ejected from vents at supersonic speeds generated shock waves which, ultimately refracted downwards, became audible at ground level many hundreds of kilometres away from the actual scene of the disaster.

As a geophysicist of very good standing Keam could have elected to present his material, as he admits, in the form of a 'geological treatise'. He chose not to do so. He intended that his book be seen primarily 'as a record of the experiences of individuals and communities most closely involved' in the disaster, and 'the reaction of New Zealand as a whole'.

The book effectively falls into five parts: a description of the region before the eruption; the eruption itself as experienced by 'participants'; the aftermath — in which are recorded such things as the nature of the destruction, relief expeditions, widespread public interest, reports of observers, amateur and professional (e.g. academics), and the record of contemporary photographers; a somewhat briefer section on the dramatic