

instead promised to abstain should the need arise. Did it feel its isolation and limited responsibilities too much to exercise a veto, as Bennett suggests, or were New Zealand's best interests served by maintaining imperial solidarity, even at the expense of the League?

Bennett is at his best in his concluding pages, where he assesses the significance of this 'moral' foreign policy in New Zealand's history. He argues that the policy was based on a sense of internationalism rather than a sense of independence, and his comments are penetrating. Whether the policy was internationalist in outlook or not, it is certainly time that the myth of New Zealand's being unquestioningly faithful to the policies of Britain was laid to rest. New Zealand leaders undoubtedly saw the importance of maintaining imperial solidarity, but within the councils of empire they were more than prepared to make their interests known. Independence within dependence has, until 1984, been the expression of New Zealand's international identity. Bennett helps to lay to rest the old myths associated with New Zealand's foreign policy. However, in trying to establish a tradition that Labour governments pursued 'moral' foreign policies, he is in danger of constructing a whole new set.

The successful amalgamation of the story-teller with the political scientist and the sociologist is a rare achievement. The work of John Lewis Gaddis and Christopher Thorne, for example, has shown how richly rewarding this synthesis can be. Ingram is right when he exhorts historians to be story-tellers, warning that 'the difficult task of explaining what happened seems to have been given up by historians for the much simpler task of explaining why it happened'. Both McIntyre and Bennett tell a good story. More importantly they also prompt the reader to think about a range of issues. Not every historian could claim as much.

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The American Connection. Edited by Malcolm McKinnon. Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, Wellington, 1988. 153pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

THIS COLLECTION comprises papers first presented at the third annual Stout Centre conference in 1986. As suggested in the title, the conference examined various aspects of the influence that the United States has had on New Zealand life. It is testimony to the diversity of this influence that the 14 contributions to the collection range widely in their specific subject matter, approach, and chronological focus.

The individual papers in the collection will interest New Zealand historians according to their areas of specialization. Labour historians will find that Erik Olssen's article on 'American Influences on the New Zealand Labour Movement, 1885-1920' sheds new light on a neglected source of antipodean labour radicalism. Social and cultural historians will be more likely to turn to the four papers that explore the ambiguities of New Zealand reactions to US culture and raise questions concerning the issue of cultural imperialism. Diplomatic, military, and economic historians will be most interested in the five final essays which assess how the realities of US power since World War II have affected New Zealand's foreign policy, defence strategy, and foreign economic policy.

A striking feature of almost all these interpretations of the 'American connection' is the one-dimensional nature of their analysis of New Zealand-US relations. With the exception of David Hamer's essay on American visitors to New Zealand and Anne Philbin's personal observations as an expatriate American living in Wellington, these papers tell us little of US perceptions of New Zealand. Admittedly, such an outcome is

hardly surprising when talking about the relationship between a superpower and most small states. While the relationship may be of central importance for the latter, it is bound to be peripheral for the former. Accordingly, most US influences on New Zealand are unconscious ones and we are but one of many recipients of those influences. Given this obvious reality, however, it is disappointing that these essays describe New Zealand reactions to American influences without evaluating what has been unique about our absorption and/or rejection of American models and values. Some comparisons would have greatly enriched this collection.

There are also some surprising omissions in what is generally a wide-ranging coverage of US influences on this country. In a period when race relations are such a central issue in New Zealand life, it is ironic that the sole US contributor to the collection is the only one to mention the subject. Have the experiences of black Americans and native American peoples had no impact on those of Maori and Pacific Islanders in New Zealand? Given the suspicion of the US which emerges as a major theme in some of these essays, it is also surprising that the collection does not include a paper specifically assessing the character of anti-Americanism in New Zealand.

In general, the greatest strength of this collection is its ability to suggest the diversity of US influences on New Zealand. It does so at the cost of eschewing intensive analysis of the 'American connection' in any one area or in a broader comparative context. Such enterprises, however, are obviously beyond the scope of short conference papers, and the contributors should not be criticized for falling short in those respects. Rather, they should be congratulated for highlighting specific areas where further empirical research is warranted and for demonstrating the general need for more systematic scholarly interpretations of New Zealand's interaction with the twentieth century's most internationally influential nation.

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Shades of Darkness. Aboriginal Affairs, 1925-1965. By Paul Hasluck. Melbourne University Press, 1988. vi, 154pp. Australian price: \$24.95.

Frontier. Aborigines, Settlers and Land. By Henry Reynolds. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987. ix, 234pp. Australian Price: \$26.95.

The Law of the Land. By Henry Reynolds. Penguin Books. Ringwood, 1987. xii, 225pp. Australian price: \$12.95.

WRITING ABORIGINES back into Australian history has become something of an academic industry in the last 20 years. Those involved have tended to assume that Aborigines were totally neglected by earlier historians. This may have been true of many of the general histories of Australia but there were several useful earlier monographs that dealt broadly or regionally with Aborigines, usually in the context of 'native policy'. These include E. J. B. Foxcroft's *Australian Native Policy* (1941) and Paul Hasluck's *Black Australians: Native Policy in Western Australia* (1942).

Hasluck had begun his career in the 1920s as a journalist who, unusually for those days, took an interest in Aborigines. Subsequently he took an MA in History, writing for his thesis the study that was published as *Black Australians*. Later again, from 1951 to 1963 when he was Minister for Territories in the federal government, he had the opportunity to make history, his own 'native policy'. He did of course move on to higher things, becoming, as a grand finale to his career, Governor-General of Australia. His *Shades of Darkness* is a warmly nostalgic if, on his own admission, a rather bland view of Aboriginal