

Kinds of Peace: Maori People After the Wars, 1870-85. By Keith Sinclair. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1991. 161 pp. NZ price: \$24.95.

KEITH SINCLAIR shows that there has been a gap in our race relations historiography: the period after the New Zealand wars has been neglected. Sinclair sets out to remedy this neglect with his latest book. He examines the establishment of diplomatic relations in the King Country between the Maori King, Tawhiao, and the colonial governments. He reassesses the role the Parihaka prophets, Te Whiti and Tohu, played in the failure of diplomatic relations and the resulting 'chaos' in Taranaki in the 1870s. He also examines Maori who followed neither King nor prophet but who became involved in Parliamentary politics, Maori Komiti (Committee) or East Coast land Repudiation movements. That is, he focuses on post-war Maori political accommodation to, and resistance and protest against Europeans. Above all, he questions the idea that Maori became alienated after the wars. This idea was promoted by M.P.K. Sorrenson in his 1956 thesis which focused on the purchase of Maori land. Sinclair argues that rather than 'giving in', Maori continued a vigorous response to their situation, at least until a denouement in the early 1880s. I will return to this point but I want, first, to put Sinclair's book into a wider historiographical context for, oddly, he distances himself from the debate. He claims to have 'no thesis'. He states simply that there has been a growth in historical research on race relations since the late 1950s and that the focus of his book and his analysis is 'rather different from' that of recent historians (pp. 8-9). Do not be put off by this disclaimer!

Sinclair's latest book contributes to a debate which he helped to set in motion 30 years ago. The task, in retrospect, has been to challenge the interpretation of nineteenth-century race relations as a 'dark age' for Maori. The golden pre-European age gave way to an era of Maori cultural despair during the nineteenth century. A renaissance dawned after 1890 which was personified in the Young Maori Party whose members moved comfortably between both societies and began healing Maori society.

Historians differed only about the nature and exact timing of the Maori cultural plague. There have been four main versions. First, the 'dark age' is said to be the direct result of contact with Europeans. Maori adopted European guns, sexism, literacy and Christianity to the detriment of their society. The disrupting cultural effects of Europeanization are alleged to be epitomized in Christianity. Three-fifths of the Maori population are said to have embraced Christianity, or at least attended church services of one form or another, by 1845. Maori converted but then reverted, reinterpreting Christianity and developing syncretic religious movements in a dark age of cultural bewilderment. It was not until the early twentieth century and the Ratana movement that Maori were mostly Christian again.

Secondly, the cause of the 'dark age' is said to be the introduction of European disease. Maori well-being was shattered by the brutal and tragic penetration of white men into the Pacific. Europeans had a fatal impact on Maori who experienced a long downward demographic slide. The collective Maori response to dwindling numbers was fatalistic. Demographic decline was accompanied by spiritual decline. The Maori had neither the ability nor the will to stop themselves from succumbing to a 'superior race'. Maori did not start to recover their numbers and spirit until the turn of the century.

The third cause of the 'dark age' was the New Zealand wars. The Maori armed themselves for the intertribal warfare of the 1820s and 1830s but it was culturally disastrous for them when they began to aim their muskets at Europeans. Most have argued that the Maori were good fighters. Despite a strong showing, however, the empire ultimately defeated them. Maori retreated to their strongholds having lost the balance of

power and their vigour. Economic achievement went to seed and Maori did not recover until the twentieth century.

Finally, the cause of the 'dark age' is apathy and despair at the alienation of critical portions of land in the late nineteenth century. Some, such as Hazel Riseborough, point to government insensitivity for Maori malaise: the 'days of darkness' revolved around post-war confiscation of Maori land, maladministration of reserved lands and the government's sacking of Parihaka. Others, particularly Keith Sorrenson, argue that rather than war or land confiscation, changing land sales procedures sent Maori into a cultural tailspin. Under the 1862 Native Land Act, Maori were no longer dealt with as tribes. Consequently, land sales went up and Maori well-being went down. Maori have still not recovered their land.

Since the 1950s, historians have been reconsidering the idea of Maori decline or cultural devastation. Doubts have been raised over whether Maori cultural disruption was a precondition for their acceptance of Christianity. Instead of reversion, Maori biblicism is being regarded as a constant feature of Maori Christianity; the salvation of the tribe rather than personal salvation was always emphasized. Secondly, questions over the early high estimates of the Maori population and better understanding of the nature of antibodies have tarnished the fatal impact thesis. Thirdly, James Belich has exposed the myth of defeat, arguing that Pakeha failed to decisively beat Maori. The Maori military achievement was to retain important centres of independence which only slowly faded after the wars. Finally, Ann Parsonson has argued that the Maori were not alienated and detribalized after the New Zealand wars through the Native Land Court; Maori used the court for their own purposes. More generally, she has offered a positive rather than a negative view of the nineteenth century: Maori were innovative and selective and, rather than facing a dark age, the highly competitive Maori society expanded during the nineteenth century.

Readers need to be aware of the historiography in order to appreciate Sinclair's contribution. His main focus is Sorrenson's argument but he takes issue with others along the way. For instance, Sinclair agrees with Bronwyn Elsmore about the importance of the Old Testament scriptures to the prophet movements but he questions her view that the prophet movements entailed rejection of Christianity and reformulation as syncretic cults. He reviews Ian Pool's work on the nature of communicable diseases but doubts that we can prove that kupapa and Kingite fertility differed. He spends some time criticizing Hazel Riseborough's opinion that Pakeha cannot understand Te Whiti's speeches; an appendix is devoted to showing how much historians can know of Te Whiti's teachings. Sinclair's book is rich with his comment on many aspects of the major issues of debate.

And despite his denial, Sinclair does have a central argument. He argues that rather than being alienated, Maori were vigorous in the immediate postwar period. However, in the early 1880s, the protest movement stopped throughout the country. The Repudiation Movement died out, the King Movement split apart and weakened, Te Whiti and Tohu were crushed, and so on. After an interlude, the rise of the Young Maori Party provided a new, more successful leadership of adaptation rather than rebellion.

It is most curious that Sinclair's revisionism should end in the early 1880s. Of course, we can over-revise but Sinclair does not risk that danger. He makes the point nicely in the prologue as he traces Wiremu Kingi's peacefully 'coming in' to Waitara from the bush in 1872. Maori abandoned armed rebellion but they 'had not given in'. Wiremu Kingi went through Waitara en route to Te Whiti and Tohu, prophets of rebellion, at Parihaka. By the same token, Sinclair fails to observe that the sacking of Parihaka in 1881 did not stifle Taranaki Maori protest which continued to be at least of the same order of magnitude as Kingi's symbolic protest in 1872. Significantly, he makes no mention of the boycott Te Whiti led against accepting lease rents from Maori reserved lands after 1883. Parihaka

people tramped through Taranaki on impressive protest marches in the mid-1880s. Protest spread beyond Parihaka through Taranaki after 1887 when rents were reduced and confirmed leases were unilaterally altered by the Public Trustee. A war of petitions slowly mounted. The last of the ploughing protests did not occur until 1897-98. If we study the Taranaki experience there does not seem to be a denouement of rebellion in 1881. Sinclair is, then, selective in what he defines as 'not giving in'. He is not interested in the Nga Puhī and the Ngai Tahu people who were not directly involved in fighting nor in their movements such as Kotahitanga. This is fair enough but his selectivity, even in his sphere of interest, limits his revisionism.

Sinclair delays the timing rather than demolishes the late nineteenth-century alienation thesis. Belich has shown that Māori offered one of the most impressive military resistances of tribal people against Europeans but he is not much concerned with the peace. Sinclair begins to show that Māori also offered one of the most sustained and impressive political and legislative resistances of indigenous peoples but he cautiously stops short.

In the end, for all his questioning, Sinclair accepts Riseborough's view that Parihaka protest ended in 1881 and so on. He retains a very short dark age somewhere in the 1880s and 1890s.

Despite the limits of his revisionism, Sinclair's book stands out. Above all, his book is written with vim. There is great depth in nineteenth-century race relations historiography and Sinclair's book contributes to it with its enthusiasm, wit and, dare I say it, debate.

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Te Iwi Māori: A New Zealand Population, Past, Present and Projected. By Ian Pool. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1991. xvi, 271 pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

TEIWI MĀORI supersedes Ian Pool's earlier book entitled *The Māori Population of New Zealand, 1769-1971*, carrying forward arguments about the size and nature of the Māori population to take account of the findings of more recent investigations and simulations, and then assessing current population trends and evaluating future implications of change, particularly of age composition.

This is not a book for the fainthearted: it brings together the complex issues of Māoritanga and demographic principle (with Pool himself acknowledging the inherent difficulties of being a Pakeha writing on Māori population changes) and explores this facet of the Māori world in a densely written and closely argued text supported by 76 tables and 20 maps and diagrams.

The book is divided into four equal parts. The first and fourth sections are very short. Part One, entitled Interdependent Demographic Transitions, deals with basic demographic concepts and processes, and the complex definitional issues of being Māori. Part Four, the final section, is even shorter and is a brief review of the aims and findings of the book. The substantive discussion is largely confined to the second and third parts, each of which comprises four chapters. Part Two, Māori Population from First Settlement to 1945, analyses and evaluates the evidence for Māori population growth in the prehistoric