

racism in New Zealand, as told through the life of one key settler. As such, it is a tough history for twenty-first-century New Zealanders to read, despite being well written and laced with appropriately detailed potted biographies of every character. As Hazel Petrie says on the rear cover, 'This book is far more than a simple biography: it offers a different way of looking at the history of nineteenth-century New Zealand'. For me, as a Māori academic teaching Māori culture and history, I suggest that this book is New Zealand history writing at its very best, even if some of the history covered is New Zealand's population, trader and governmental behavior at its very worst. *At the Margin of Empire* joins a growing list of recent high-quality, incisive New Zealand histories, such as Alan Ward's *An Unsettled History* (1999), Ranginui Walker's *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End* (1990/2004), M.P.K. Sorrenson's *Ko te Whenua te Utu: Land is the Price* (2014), Vincent O'Malley's *Beyond the Imperial Frontier* (2014), Claudia Orange's *The Treaty of Waitangi* (1987), and Angela Middleton's *Pēwhairangi* (2014).

In her epilogue, Ashton comments '[John Webster] would probably have been disappointed with the direction this account has taken, given that it has not been a story of outright triumph and political domination' (p.206); but in the opinion of this reviewer, this book tells a story which should be read by all New Zealanders, both Māori and Pākehā, to show how our country has become what it is today. It will provide answers to those who wonder at the thinking behind Māori aggrieved by land losses, even when those sales were apparently by 'willing' sellers. It will provide grist to the mill of those who feel those land losses still. Most of all, it will help New Zealanders to understand properly who they are. Because of this, I strongly recommend it.

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Ko Te Whenua Te Utu / Land is the Price: Essays on Maori History, Land and Politics. By M.P.K. Sorrenson. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2014. 338pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN: 9781869408107.

This substantive volume, which collects together 13 articles and essays, reminds us of Keith Sorrenson's important contribution to writing the history of New Zealand race relations, Māori history and the history of ideas. These pieces also contain a transnational flavour because of Sorrenson's interest in African history and anthropology. They are, therefore, much more than narrow, introverted essays of little interest or relevance to the wider international audience. Little wonder that this modest but highly productive scholar has had such a major impact upon the work of many practitioners, including myself. It was a succinct but insightful comment made at a NZHA conference that set me off to look more carefully at the Liberals' supposedly benign Māori land legislation and policy. And he has influenced many others, as this careful selection makes clear.

Most of the essays produced here, including those first published in this very journal, are well known. So we are reminded again that there was nothing exceptional about the Treaty of Waitangi that followed both West African and North American precedent and that 'enclosure' turned both English and Māori 'commoners' into 'labourers'. Equally, the baleful influence of dubious land purchase methods upon Māori well-being – physical, psychological and spiritual – is amplified in most of these essays. Then there is the rerunning of Sorrenson's insightful musings on the lengthy and often wayward 'scholarship' on the origins of Māori that all too often revealed more about the prejudice of scholars and the desire to legitimize British colonization than it did about where Māori came from and how they got here.

Sorrenson's work on the extraordinary correspondence between Apirana Ngata and Te Rangi Hīroa is represented by a sympathetic account of the 'home-made anthropology' of the New Zealand-based political activist and the more academic student of material culture domiciled overseas. But the essays that I found most stimulating were the long account of Māori representation in Parliament, produced for the 1986 Royal Commission on the Electoral System, and Sorrenson's reflections on the ways in which the work of the Waitangi Tribunal (on which he has served for so long with distinction) has shaped the way we write and conceptualize our history.

The lengthy account on the struggles of Māori parliamentarians to get anything done for fear of electoral backlash in a majoritarian democracy is both challenging and more than a little demoralizing. It seems that low electoral turnout, especially amongst young Māori, has got even worse since Sorrenson completed this report, so that the third or more of Māori who do not vote have still not been 'politicised by the Maori members of Parliament, or by the political parties' (p.216). Clearly much more careful consideration and discussion needs to be given to resolving a problem that even a separate Māori party seems unable to solve.

In the final three essays Sorrenson argues that both the Treaty itself and the Tribunal that works to redress its numerous breaches are at once challenging to Pākehā and 'therapeutic' to Māori. In his view, resolution of claims is 'an essential part of the continuing adjustments that Maori and Pakeha must make as they continue to live in New Zealand and share its resources' (p.272).

Sorrenson ends with a short epilogue that I would have liked him to expand. In it he warns that 'New Zealand is a fragile nation' and 'there is a danger that our much-improved race relations could be compromised if the significant inequality that prevails today persists' (p.303). He observes that the shared nationality suggested during the debates of 6–7 February 1840 continues to elude us as we wobble awkwardly between assimilation and integration rather than creating a society where both parts are equally empowered and resources are shared equitably.

Valuable as publication of these collected essays is, many of us would have liked a little more engagement with the research carried on in other History departments on related topics such as intermarriage, Victorian racial attitudes, Māori leadership and use of British constitutional forms of protest, and contrasting iwi responses to colonialism. Discussion of how New Zealand's rapidly accelerating multiculturalism is affecting the essentially bicultural story told in these essays would also have been

helpful, as would comment on the intersection between iwi claims and growing awareness of environmental degradation.

Nevertheless, Sorrenson's essays highlight the importance of the quiet voice reporting on careful research. By laying out the story of land alienation accurately and carefully, without overuse of emotive adjectives, Sorrenson's work gains moral as well as historical authority. By concentrating on being a good historian, Sorrenson counters periodic criticism made at history conferences by radical young academics, concerning biased justification of colonialism. His work has thereby empowered the indigenous people of this land while helping us better understand the motivations of its white settlers in a fair-minded and clear-headed way. Such careful scholarship assists redress of Treaty breaches in an effective manner. It also sets an example to be followed by all historical practitioners, whether inside or outside the academy, as well as history students in Aotearoa/New Zealand. What more could any historian want?

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Prendergast: Legal Villain? By Grant Morris. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2014. 260pp. NZ price: \$40.00. ISBN: 9780864739377.

In *Prendergast: Legal Villain?* Grant Morris provides a thorough accounting of the career and contribution of James Prendergast, New Zealand's second-longest-serving Chief Justice. If Prendergast is remembered at all today it is for his infamous dismissal of the Treaty of Waitangi as 'a simple nullity' in the 1877 *Wi Parata* decision. Morris argues that such a reduction of his subject to a 'one-line quotation' is both inaccurate and unfair. As first Attorney-General (1865–1875), and then Chief Justice (1875–1899), Prendergast played a leading and influential role in the development of the New Zealand legal system.

After an unsuccessful stint at the Victoria goldfields, Prendergast (who had been born in England in 1826, and educated at Cambridge University) arrived in New Zealand in 1862. He quickly became a leading figure in the thriving Dunedin legal community alongside such luminaries as Julius Vogel, William Richmond and Robert Stout. Within two years of his arrival, Prendergast became Acting Provincial Solicitor for Otago. Two years later he was appointed its Crown Solicitor. Prendergast's meteoric rise continued with his elevation first to the Legislative Council, and then (in October 1865) to the position of Attorney-General.

The decade Prendergast spent as Attorney-General was 'pivotal' in the development of the New Zealand legal system as settler politicians set about creating 'a new society through legislation'. 'Prendergast was at the forefront of this movement', playing 'an integral role' in the formulation of no less than 926 Acts over the course of his tenure (p.71). In 1867 alone, Prendergast directed the drafting of a number of important criminal statutes, including the Accessories Act, the Coinage Offences Act, the