

TE RIRI PAKEHA: The White Man's Anger
Tony Simpson
Alister Taylor Publishers: \$12.95

The aim of this book is found in the last paragraph of the introduction. It is clearly written by a Pakeha for Pakehas, and in the concluding pages this is made very clear by frequent use of the words "we Pakeha" and "them" — meaning the Maori. With this in mind the book becomes a better book than I thought it might be on first reading, when I suppose I wore my Maori hat and found it easy to be "resentful" and "sullen" as Simpson says we often are in the face of Pakeha patronage.

In order to do the book and writer justice, I felt obliged to read it again and to do so, if I could, wearing a non-Maori hat.

The book tells Maori little that they do not already know about their own land problems but it does piece together policy, legislation and administrative chicanery on a broad canvas. I have the feeling that little in the book was new to me but to the well-meaning, academic yet ill-informed and often deliberately misinformed Pakeha, Tony Simpson may well become unpopular because he will have disturbed some people's precious illusions about New Zealand and its multi-culturalism.

I fear that while Maori readers will applaud the exposures and will probably identify with those land deals which affect them and their families personally, they will see the work as essentially one by an outsider. If Simpson had had a base in Maoridom from which to launch his denunciation of colonisation in New Zealand, Maori would probably have received it better. As it is, however, I hope they will see it for what it is — a thoroughly professional objective consideration of facts, opinions and conclusions augmented by a critical analysis of the techniques used by the administration to facilitate the alienation of Maori land.

In his introduction the writer tells us how his conventional education dealt with Maori and their place in our nation's story. He was exposed to the same kind of potted historical nonsense that I was and which I suppose still passes for history in our primary schools. I remember some years ago being interviewed in Australia by a young reporter from the *Australian* because I had been critical of Australian racial policies and, in particular, of the apparent policy of ethnic extermination of the Aborigine. The reporter seemed surprised that I should know much about this vanishing race. In conversation I asked what he knew about them and especially what he had been taught about them in school. It seems that not only was he taught nothing but he said that the official attitude was that the Australian Aborigine (he said Abo) was indeed a non-person. At the time I was appalled and said so. Today I am not so sure. I feel it might be better for the Maori if in the histories and school curricula they ceased to exist rather than to continue to be the subject of so much misinformation which is a barrier to real inter-racial understanding. Simpson's book aims to correct Pakeha misconceptions about New Zealand's history and the Maori place in it.

Many young Maori people would also benefit from this book. The bulk of the



Above Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the colonising con-man who devised his scheme for New Zealand's settlement while in prison for abducting an heiress. To launch his venture he sold 100,000 acres of land he didn't own and had never even seen.

Below John Bryce, Native Minister and bully. In 1868 he took part in the slaughter of Maori children, and in 1881 he led 2,500 armed men against the pacifists of Parihaka to arrest Te Whiti and destroy the settlement.



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book deals with the years prior to the turn of the century when the land issues and the wars over them were primary. Since then social factors and the complexity of the whole national and international situation make analyses so much more difficult, and this section of the book which consists of only about 30 pages appears something of an afterthought. This perhaps is understandable when one remembers that Simpson has no base in Maoridom. Research in the scrum of modern Maoridom is much more difficult than researching a bibliography. One has to talk to people rather than read the views of other observers. Nevertheless, Simpson is a highly skilled researcher and I am pleased to see that he has also tackled some of the implications of more recent legislation such as the disinheritance measures contained in the Acts of 1953 and 1967. He also draws conclusions about crime, education, health, employment, incomes and party politics.

The thrust of the last fifty years is the platform from which the future of the race will be launched. Fifty years ago it seemed as if the Maori would become a sort of brown Pakeha because of policies of assimilation. The Department of Maori Affairs has gone through many agonising reappraisals in the last fifty or sixty years — I suppose in much the same way that all custodians of the true faith have had to shift ground over the ages to meet the demands of changing times. The trend towards brown Pakeha status seems to be arrested and a refreshing new Maoriness is emerging.

Tony Simpson's final chapter is called "The New Net Goes Fishing". In 1900 the new net which went afishing was the "Young Maori Party" led by Ngata, Buck, Carroll and Pomare. These were all politicians and were all products of an élitist upbringing, and all are denounced by Simpson in his book. I have already indicated that research in this new era is much more difficult than in respect of the period of colonisation. It is difficult and even risky to draw conclusions because even before they are published they could be shown to be totally wrong. It is much safer to display wisdom after the event. Tony Simpson has wisely chosen to review a past which cannot creep up on him and prove him wrong. I hope, however, that someone soon will go into the boilerhouse of Maoridom and analyse the present and from his analysis project the future, even if his prediction turns out to be wrong.

PAUL POTIKI

One book *not* to buy is *Mrs Byrne's Dictionary*, published by Granada Paperbacks. The very last entry in the dictionary is the word *zzxjoanw*, which the author claims is "a Maori drum". If Mrs Byrne had done her homework she would know that fifty per cent of the letters in the word do not even exist in the language, and even if they did they could not possibly exist in this combination, and she would know too that there is really no such thing as a Maori drum. Maybe there's no such word either. Our thanks to Mr Trefor Davis for bringing this idiocy to our attention.
