

respected civil servant who is rather too decent to tell us everything we would like to know.

JAMES HOLT

University of Auckland

Samuel Ironside in New Zealand, 1839-1858. By W. A. Chambers. Ray Richards, in association with the Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, Auckland, 1982. 284pp. illus. Price: \$30.00.

TODAY when all Pakeha are exhorted to repentance over the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in our history, this biography makes intriguing reading. Samuel Ironside signed the Treaty as a witness. He ended his New Zealand career as a Methodist minister in New Plymouth fully convinced of the rectitude of the settler viewpoint on Maori land. Those who view the past in relation to present-day concerns will find this the major puzzle of his life, though he was by no means unique in this sequence of belief. Those who follow the sackcloth-and-ashes school of historical interpretation will want to know what was so wicked about Samuel Ironside that led him to such conclusions. They will have little help from this book. It confirms the impression that Ironside was a plain, honest, reasonable man.

He is probably best known as the Cloudy Bay missionary who attempted to prevent the Wairau affray between the Nelson settlers and Te Rauparaha's party. He risked his life to bury the victims and produced a balanced report which helped ensure the authorities did not over-react. At this point he was the honest mediator between the races. But the episode ended his missionary career; thereafter he acted as a minister to settlers, with some Maori work, in Wellington, Nelson, and New Plymouth, finally departing for Tasmania. At this stage 'he considered that Selwyn's Maori predilections often led to the unjust condemnation of the settlers and the violent overbearing Maori had been excused and his excesses winked at'. (p.229).

The distinctive feature of this well-presented biography is the close identification of author and subject. Wesley Chambers is a Methodist minister and the book captures well the inner spirit and motivation of nineteenth-century Methodism. The disadvantage of this is the inward-looking quality of the book. There is thorough research, but it is largely limited to Methodist sources and the newspapers of the day. Thus the description of the Waitangi discussions is based on Ironside's later recollections and not checked against contemporary accounts which differ in several respects. Later, we are assured that there was in the 1850s a Maori Land League to prevent the sale of land, that it stemmed from Anglican influences and was supported by every non-Wesleyan Maori family from Otaki to Whitecliffs. This was firmly believed by Taranaki settlers at the time and no doubt the sources the author has used told him this. Historians such as Keith Sinclair and B. J. Dalton have been more sceptical. The book is primarily

addressed to committed church people, and Sir John Marshall in his urbane introduction says it will provide 'many stories for many sermons'. Secular people will find it of value as a straight presentation of the life and thoughts of a nineteenth-century missionary and minister from his own point of view.

JOHN OWENS

Massey University

International Socialism and Australian Labour. By Frank Farrell. Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1981. 284pp. Aust. price A\$24.95 hard cover, A\$11.95 soft cover.

EVER SINCE William Lane boldly proclaimed that Australian labour parties were 'socialist from the jump', historians have been endeavouring to tease out and evaluate the socialist elements of labour platforms or propaganda. Dr Farrell's book takes up the task for the inter-war years—a time when socialist aspirations were riding high. In Europe, international socialists had disintegrated before the calls of patriotism and nationalism. In Australia, the efforts of the Labour prime minister, W. M. Hughes, to promote conscription split the labour movement. The outcome, however, was that radical and socialist unionists achieved a greater degree of authority within the organized labour movement than they had been able to attain previously. Indeed, in the last year of the war, and for a few years afterwards, Australian labour veered abruptly to the left and trade unions adopted a militant stance. The gradualist and nationalist stance which the Australian Labour Party (ALP) had previously offered the electorate came under increasing attack. And in 1921 the ALP, in deference to the demands of radicals, wrote a socialist objective into its platform. At about the same time other avenues opened up for the socialists. The Communist Party was firmly established between 1920 and 1922 and a number of other sects pressed their claims to be recognized as the legitimate voice of socialism. Indeed, as Farrell points out, by the early 1920s the struggle for influence within the labour movement was between a cautious moderate isolationist wing dominated by labour politicians and their supporters, and a radical working-class internationalist group led by left wing socialists based in a few powerful unions.

Other historians, most notably Robin Gollan and Alastair Davidson, have journeyed down this road before. They have shown how the socialist initiative waned and how by the end of the 1920s the heartland of socialist aspiration was the Communist Party of Australia. They have demonstrated also how the latter came, as Farrell writes, to be embedded in the perennial socialist dilemma: 'how did they lift the sights of the rank and file within the labour movement from mere economism or laborism for sufficiently long to carry the socialist revolution to Australia?' Farrell is also travelling down a familiar path when he traces the process by which Communist influence, especially among trade unionists, grew in response to changing Australian conditions and fresh Comintern directives in the