

The intervention of the state came late in the story, and it was seldom full-hearted. Touring a production of *Faust* was one of the ways in which the Centennial was celebrated, despite the onset of war, in 1940. But while the national orchestra project was revived in 1947, no opera company was set up, though the last major JCW tour aroused great enthusiasm in 1949. Theatre, ballet and opera companies were, however, created in the 1950s.

All toured. Only the ballet company now survives, and it still tours. The New Zealand Opera Company, the creation of Donald Munro, rose to its pinnacle, Simpson suggests, with its 1965 *Porgy and Bess*. Uncertain funding, the problem of orchestral support, transport costs, the advent of TV, sheer bad luck, all made it difficult to advance, and the company went down with a rather impressive *Aida*.

Attempts to revive a national company, in which the present reviewer had some part, were, Simpson thinks, mistaken. The future pointed to regional opera, and three professional companies developed in the 1980s and 1990s, in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The companies each offer two or three operas a year, largely drawn from a repertoire even more limited than that of opera companies in the rest of the world. They are administrative cadres, not well placed to build up expertise or audience.

Adrienne Simpson's book is well-written, only occasionally taking on something too much of the tone of a broadcast talk, and it contains few errors. She makes a real attempt to recapture the authenticity of the operatic experience, the most difficult task facing the historian of this as of other performing arts. Going, say, to a present-day performance by the City of Birmingham Touring Opera may offer a closer analogy to going to a Musgrove performance than going to Covent Garden or the Aotea Centre: the orchestra reduced, the production simple, the chorus small. But opera survives that, even in ears attuned to the three tenors or eyes accustomed to Metropolitan videos.

The author's main focus is on the fortunes of companies and singers, but she displays a sound grasp of the larger factors, economic, social and cultural, that affected their fortunes. The book will be read by lovers of opera. But it also suggests that it is time that historians of New Zealand in general took fuller account of the history of its performing arts, which, though not easy to handle, ought to be integrated rather than marginalized.

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*The Immigrants: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand, 1830-1890.* By Tony Simpson. Godwit, Auckland, 1997. 240 pp. NZ price: \$34.95. ISBN 0-908877-94-3.

TONY SIMPSON'S ACCOUNT of British migration to nineteenth-century New Zealand offers broad conclusions about the impact and consequences of that process on this country's subsequent development. In his view, the migrant saga was a distinctly plebeian affair that largely comprised ordinary workers seeking better lives elsewhere. For these people, the decision to leave constituted an act of resistance to profound changes wrought by the evolution of industrialization and commercialized agriculture. Hence emigration was not simply a collective response to pressures generated by market forces, but a strategic site for the development of working-class consciousness. In New Zealand, he argues, immigrant workers endeavoured to recover and recreate aspects of an intensely

egalitarian 'moral economy' based on clear perceptions about the meaning of concepts such as 'equity' and 'natural right'. During the process of emigration and adjustment, newcomers constructed a political culture through which they enacted far-reaching social and economic programmes closely resembling those espoused by 'Chartists, trade unionists and others' in nineteenth-century Britain. Their actions bequeathed a rich and enduring legacy to the nation continuous with 'the nature and experience of New Zealanders in the twentieth century'.

At a very general level this interpretation is not without merit. Simpson rightly directs attention to the kinds of cultural resources migrants transposed to the colony and hints at ways that these acquired new meanings in a different context. Implicit here is a notion of 'democratic radicalism' shaped by Old World memories which, in turn, helped ordinary immigrants exert some measure of control over their new environment.<sup>1</sup> Although it is never carefully defined, the term 'moral economy' gives this argument a certain resonance and reveals a densely textured set of rights, values and customs that underpinned the emergence of a distinctive political culture in late nineteenth-century New Zealand. Nevertheless, the claim that emigration was one of the most important defining moments in the 'self-creation' of working-class consciousness seems a rather strained reading of the evidence and one that ignores the findings of recent scholarship. Whatever plausibility it has is eroded by an overly-consensual portrait of working-class culture which leaves no room for variety, ambiguity or contradiction. This confusion stems partly from Simpson's teleological view of the whole migration process where events lead inevitably towards a pre-determined end — the prolific flowering of New Zealand's political culture. But I think it also reflects his unwillingness to construct a sophisticated cause-and-effect model which accords with the actual workings of large-scale emigration from nineteenth-century Britain. Such a model would need to account for important local variations in the manner and timing of departures as well as differences in the anatomy of diverse migrant streams. By simply collapsing this process into a single dominant pattern, Simpson evades the need to interrogate complex evidence in order to explain the specific mechanisms at work in facilitating mass population movements.

As a broad survey of nineteenth-century emigration from Great Britain to New Zealand *The Immigrants* is deeply flawed. A central problem is that Simpson's lack of interest in the emigrant flow creates a number of conceptual and empirical difficulties which are never satisfactorily resolved. In particular, he represses critical research questions about the demographic features of the trans-oceanic exodus that might have further illuminated diverse migrant experiences. There is no attempt to explore patterns of chain migration. Nor does he examine the impact of emigration on various sending regions in Great Britain. Instead, Simpson treats migrants as an undifferentiated mass and obscures the way that population movements were structured and selective in relation to their points of origin and destination. By taking this approach, he also perpetuates an Anglo-centred framework that marginalizes England's neighbours and fails to acknowledge the separate emigration histories of Ireland and Scotland. The absence of any reference to major works in the field of British and Irish migration history by Dudley Baines, Charlotte Erickson, Malcolm Gray and David Fitzpatrick is equally striking. Simpson makes little use of unpublished theses and ignores a perceptive essay by Margaret Galt which explores the geographical origins and social background of British settlers to New Zealand between 1840 and 1889.<sup>2</sup> Such glaring omissions reinforce the impression that he has overstated the evidence in order to make a case.

In his own defence, Simpson might well argue that he has directed his text at a popular audience whose interests have been ignored by narrow, academic readings of New Zealand's past.<sup>3</sup> Yet what do we get from the champion of popularism other than 'a nice read'? There is certainly much to admire in his compelling description of the voyage out,

which features vivid cameos by well-heeled emigrants such as the snobbish Martha Adams. And who could deny that the text is beautifully illustrated, elegantly written and aesthetically pleasing to handle? But these strengths cannot compensate for the explanatory deficiencies evident in the book's interpretation. *The Immigrants* reminds us how little we really know about the personal identities of nineteenth-century migrants and the kinds of associative networks to which they belonged. To understand their plural experiences historians will need to devote more attention to surviving documentation and better recognize the value of a sustained dialogue between theory and evidence.

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1 See Erik Olssen, *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham 1880s-1920s*, Auckland, 1995, p.235.

2 M.N. Galt, 'Who Came to New Zealand? New Light on the Origins of British Settlers, 1840-1889', *New Zealand Population Review*, 21, 1 & 2 (1995), pp.50-71.

3 Tony Simpson, 'The Ivy Covered Cutting Edge: History in the Universities', *NZHA Newsletter*, no.3 (June 1994), pp.10-15. The key question, in my view, is not about the identity or institutional affiliation of the historian, but whether her particular historical explanation is sufficiently persuasive.

*The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*. Edited by Robin Cohen. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995. 570 pp. Australian price: \$200.00. ISBN 0-521-44405-5.

THE LAST TWO DECADES have witnessed a remarkable proliferation in writing on migration. As a result, even historians conversant with a wide range of scholarship confront a vast literature on the history and sociology of migration, most of it too far outside the ambit of their own work to be familiar with, and too extensive to be comfortably surveyed. For those seeking to expand their awareness of recent trends and developments across the broad field of migration studies, the *Cambridge Survey of World Migration* is a welcome arrival. The collection, which contains 95 contributions from historians, sociologists, geographers and political scientists, is a remarkable achievement, notable for both its global and temporal scopes. Its editor, Robin Cohen, justifiably claims that the book 'provides the most representative and wide-ranging coverage of migration ever attempted in a single volume'.

Cohen clearly faced a mammoth task in managing an enterprise of this scale. The dangers of fragmentation, incoherence, and contributions of widely varying quality were great. Yet, for the most part, this volume avoids all of these pitfalls. One key to the success of the *Survey* is the book's structure. The diverse contributions are organized into 15 sections, each intelligently introduced by the editor. Topics covered include European colonization and settlement, Asian indentured and colonial migration, repatriates and colonial auxiliaries, and asylum seekers in contemporary Europe. Other sections explore past and present migration trends in Africa, Latin and Central America, the Middle East, and Asia and Oceania. The other key to its success is the quality of the contributions. The *Survey* has attracted pieces from scholars of very high standing, and the standard is remarkably consistent for a work of this magnitude. The section on nineteenth-century European migration to North America, for example, includes contributions from Jon