

the time? Or, to put it another way, what was conceived as possible at the time? Owens's biography of Taylor, with its detailed exposition of Taylor's political advocacy, will be of significant use to public historians in this respect.

Students of mission history, on the other hand, may be disappointed. The day-to-day doings of a missionary, especially the gruelling travel which so damaged Taylor's health and equanimity, are portrayed with gusto. The fundamental issues facing the mission, however, are not considered in depth. Maori Christianity — even missionary Christianity — is not really a focus for the book. At times, the reader is left wanting more interpretation and explanation. Nineteenth-century diseases and medicines, for example, are usually reported as if self-explanatory.

Overall, *The Mediator* is a sound and entertaining account of a missionary family's experiences in New Zealand, and of their contributions to race relations, religious and 'pioneer' histories. It is detailed, humane and accessible to both scholars and the public. Owens has made an important contribution to New Zealand history with this biography. We would be well served if more such modern missionary biographies of similar scope and quality could be produced.

GRANT PHILLIPSON

Waitangi Tribunal

Gilbert Mair: Te Kooti's Nemesis. By Ron Crosby. Reed Books, Auckland, 2004. 352 pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN 0-7900-0969-2.

AS ITS SUBTITLE SUGGESTS, this book began life as amateur military history. It is replete with battlefield deeds of derring-do and considerable misunderstanding of even the institutional (let alone the social, political and ideological) context of colonial warfare. There is scant understanding, for example, of the nature of the Armed Constabulary, despite its centrality to the book. However, to detail the many errors and inadequacies would be to assess *Gilbert Mair: Te Kooti's Nemesis* as if it were posing as 'professional history', which it does not do.

Viewing the book within its own terms, as 'popular history' written by a non-professional, provides an opportunity to begin considering how far the methods and outputs of the various types of 'professional historians' might be influencing non-professional writers (and readers). The author has carried out some background reading, consulted archival sources such as diaries, and taken advice from historians involved in the Treaty of Waitangi claims resolution processes. This combination has enabled him to cover some issues well — the reasons for the war, or how hard colonial life could be even for influential Pakeha. More generally, Crosby's writing reveals an increasing biculturalism in New Zealand society. He employs naturally, for example, many Maori words.

Crosby, unlike many predecessors in the amateur military history genre, appreciates that there are problematic aspects to the life of his dashing hero. This perhaps reflects both historiographical and cultural developments in New Zealand over the last two decades. Some of the ethnocentrism of conventional military histories remains: 'excited' Maori commit 'barbarities', take 'grisly trophies' and commit 'cruel killings' and 'sickening torture'. But Crosby has imbued enough revisionist history to produce a more complex and tempered picture of the conflict: Te Kooti and Titokowaru are seen as 'very able Maori leaders' rather than bloodthirsty savages, the former's exiling is seen as exceedingly 'unjust', and no punches are pulled on the scorched-earth ruthlessness of the Crown in the Urewera.

Crosby is also a 'modern' writer in that he attempts to understand the meaning of the

lives of prominent settlers like Mair, who in their later years gained notions of protecting or recording aspects of 'the Maori world of old' which they had formerly been instrumental in destroying. Unfortunately, the enigma of such people and their times is not addressed in an integrated fashion, with Crosby veering between 'old' and more recent perspectives. Countless brave deeds against barbarous killers, and numerous accounts of assisting Maori in the 'civilising processes', fill the pages — unlinked with Crosby's worried musings on the apparent contradictions in the lives of settlers, soldiers and bureaucrats. He has not fully worked through how they could both 'love' Maori and love to exterminate their way of life; how they could work assiduously to strip even kupapa tribes of their land. Still, while the author has insufficient knowledge or conceptual tools to resolve such apparent contradictions, at least he raises them, and in so doing attempts to understand both Maori perspectives and those of the Mair milieu.

This no doubt reflects historiographical and social trends since the 1980s. But perhaps Crosby's failure to provide an integrated approach to the perceived enigma of colonials such as Mair arises partly, also, from some of the 'professional' (by whatever definition) work being unhelpful in explaining their mindsets. This might well apply, in particular, where he displays considerable historical naiveté. He ends the book, for example, by asking for a Crown apology for launching an onslaught on Tuhoe 'independence' — implying, against the grain of history, that the state would be willing to concede that upholding a promise to honour rangatiratanga could equal a commitment to tribal independence. This is but one of a number of anachronisms based on assumptions that the Crown could, would or should have interpreted the Treaty of Waitangi the way tribes did. One might speculate a time-lag problem here, and that future 'amateur historians' who base their works partly on those of 'professional historians' will catch up with an emerging propensity to subject 'Treaty-driven' history to the same scrutiny as other forms. One might hope for increasing methodological sophistication and consistency, too. In this case, while Crosby has cast a welcomingly critical eye over some archival documents (appreciating the need to interrogate their motives and assumptions and questioning the veracity of contemporary reports) he has also given credence to Mair's comments to Cowan decades later.

Non-professionals can learn both positive and negative things from *Gilbert Mair*: that even this relatively sophisticated amateur history, for example, could have been improved through greater attention to historical methodology and analysis. Had that been the case here, Crosby should have been able to address things which remain puzzling to him — both Te Kooti's non-pardon in 1868 and his later pardon, for example — and to properly understand matters which have eluded him — such as those relating to land alienation. Another lesson is that inconsistent authorial perspectives draw attention to the issues that remain unresolved texts. In discussing atrocities by Crown forces, for example, Crosby veers between seeing an execution as a 'possible illegality' arising from an 'extraordinary' trial, and assessing it for what it was — an extrajudicial killing, hence a murder. His intermittent tendency to sanitize state activities contrasts with a reluctance, however much a degree of 'political correctness' has crept into his text, to judge anti-state forces with the same degree of 'understanding'.

Despite its faults, this book is a welcome resource for many reasons — not least its refusal to accept that the latter stages of the wars were a handful of unimportant skirmishes but rather, in the eyes of all parties, serious, deadly and disruptive; and in its efforts to analyze kupapa and their experiences both during and after the wars. Its maps and reconstructions of events are exemplary. All in all, Crosby's efforts to understand Mair and Maori are to be commended, and embody both positive benchmarks and useful lessons for both amateur and professional historians.

RICHARD S. HILL