

Exercises in Diplomacy. The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan. By Sir Percy Spender. Sydney University Press, 1969. 303 pp. Australian price: \$7.

'GOOD WORK PERCY. Come and have a brandy.' These were the words with which Mr (later Sir Robert) Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, greeted the text of the draft security treaty brought to him for perusal by his Minister of External Affairs, after four days of negotiation with Mr John Foster Dulles in Canberra in February 1951. Spender adds honestly, 'Perhaps we had two.'

By the standards of a precise professional historian, Spender's book has many defects. It is rambling in its construction and prolix and occasionally tangled in its language. These characteristics, combined with frequent repetition, suggest that the narrative was dictated in many sessions from the record of old notes and files. But these are petty grumbles weighed against the worth of the book. Here is a fascinating story of the origins of the ANZUS Treaty and of the Colombo Plan from the man who must be regarded as their principal author. It is a work of political reminiscence of which Australia has all too few and New Zealand, alas, virtually none.

Memoirs, no doubt, should always be treated with some degree of caution and one may hope that before too long, assuming that something like the British thirty-year rule for the opening of archives is followed by Canberra and Wellington, scholars will be able to delve into the official records for themselves. But until they do Spender's book must be regarded as a primary source. It may well be that there are elements of exaggeration in his account of his own role and certainly he would not himself claim to be a dispassionate observer (his many prejudices about politics and people shine through every page) but the essential drift of his story is convincing. I have not read Menzies's memoirs but Spender's book leaves me curious about the relationship between the two men. I suspect that while superficially affable, it was basically one of rivalry. Otherwise it seems surprising that Spender should have accepted the ambassadorship to Washington at the early stage of his ministerial career which he did, for it ended his political life and led ultimately to the comparative exile of the International Court.

The heart of this book is the negotiation of the ANZUS Treaty. Although both Australia and New Zealand were anxious to secure some form of reassurance from the United States in the years immediately following the Second World War, the initiative which eventually led to the treaty was clearly taken by Australia. Spender is particularly interesting on the relationship of the project to the proposed Japanese Peace Treaty. The two became intertwined but it is too crude to say that ANZUS was simply the price the Americans paid for Australian and New Zealand signatures of the 'soft' peace treaty. Spender used the peace treaty, however, in a tactically opportunist sense to press the Americans for a security treaty as well. Australia and New Zealand had some bargaining power here, for their refusal to sign the treaty would have been embarrassing for the Americans, faced as they were not only with Soviet opposition to their proposed course but that of India also. But there was a large element of bluff in the Australian position too since Spender privately believed that in the last resort Australia (and New Zealand) would have had no option but to accept the peace treaty.

The Americans were for long reluctant to conclude formal security arrangements in the sense which Spender wanted but they came around quickly enough in early 1951 and one may suspect that the Korean War, then raging, and the political reflections to which it led them were a principal element in their change of view. In fact it may be questioned, as Spender concedes, whether the United States was not more ready to agree to a security treaty by the time of the Canberra negotiations than Dulles was prepared, for tactical purposes, to admit during the discussions.

One aspect of the initial American reluctance affected the British equally if not more acutely — neither wished to enter a treaty relationship limited only to three or four white powers. This it was thought would suggest to all the other states of Asia and the Pacific with which the principal negotiating parties had ties of various kinds that they belonged to some lesser category. Spender's response to this was that few if any of these other states would be likely to be seriously interested.

Spender's observations on the British attitude to ANZUS are perhaps the most interesting in the book. He is at pains to establish that Britain was not deliberately excluded, certainly not by Australia, but that, on the contrary, the Attlee Government was simply not interested in the type of arrangement he was pursuing. That Government was, in his view, almost obsessed with the importance and the attitude of India, which in turn was not disposed to enter into any security alliance. According to Spender, the British view was that if an enlarged arrangement involving Asian states, especially India, could not be reached no more confined arrangement should be sought: 'The objections raised by the UK seemed to me to boil down to the propositions: (a) an "offshore" arrangement was undesirable; (b) any defensive pact which did not include the nations of Southeast Asia was inadvisable; (c) it was unlikely these nations would join any such pact; and (d) unless they were, [sic] no pact should be entered into' (p. 92). There are one or two discrepancies in Spender's account of the British position, notably in his several references to the British discussions with Dulles in Tokyo in January 1951 immediately prior to the Canberra negotiations (see, for example, p. 85 and pp. 88-9) but it is doubtful whether these are of especial importance.

The British watched Spender's efforts with the apparent expectation, reasonable enough in the circumstances, that nothing would come of them. When to their surprise a security agreement was reached without them, they had to swallow the fact and took some time to do so. Had the Conservatives under Churchill then been in office, however, British acquiescence in the agreement, and the relative diplomatic passivity which preceded it, might alike have been different. As it was, the British miscalculated.

A few years later Dulles revived and pursued the concept of a wider arrangement, with the British then tagging along rather unenthusiastically behind. The result was the Manila Treaty of 1954 which established SEATO. On paper, SEATO was in many respects a logical exercise and it was seen as an extension of ANZUS but its creaking history has since served to show the disparate nature of the interests which it attempted to harness together.

New Zealand, it is clear, was very much a junior partner in the ANZUS negotiations. New Zealand shared Australian security apprehensions in the early post-war years but, in 1950, the government's interests were still

fastened securely on Commonwealth defence commitments in the Middle East. This may have been due in part to historical traditions and in part to the personal attitude of Sir Frederick Doidge, then Minister of External Affairs, a former senior journalist with the London *Daily Express* who was very much an 'Empire' man. Moreover, such foreign policy notions as the Prime Minister, Mr (later Sir Sidney) Holland, then had would probably have inclined him in the same direction. According to Spender, New Zealand supported his efforts but would have been content to accept from the Americans something less than a formal security treaty — perhaps a presidential declaration, as the Americans at one time suggested. One thinks now of the Rusk-Thanas Communiqué of 1962, designed to give additional reassurance to Thailand, as the sort of pronouncement which might have been made. Spender, however, would have none of anything so ephemeral.

New Zealand's uneasiness at the absence of Britain from the proposed treaty was exacerbated by American anxiety to include the Philippines in it. Spender would have lived with this to get the treaty and it was probably New Zealand's opposition which led the United States to desist and subsequently to negotiate a separate treaty with the Philippines. The result was the tri-partite ANZUS agreement which, whatever its stresses and strains, has proved to be founded upon a solid basis of history, sentiment and affinity of interest.

The Colombo Plan, while of great importance, was much less complicated in negotiation. Spender obviously saw economic development in Asia as being both desirable in itself and of importance also for Australia's future security. In this sense, the objective of building up a regional aid programme to speed development was logically linked with Spender's hope to negotiate a security treaty with the United States.

The proposal which Spender made at Colombo at the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference in January 1950 contained the basic elements of what was later officially named the 'Colombo Plan': a programme of capital and technical aid organised essentially on a bi-lateral basis, donor to recipient, with the recipient countries drawing up development plans individually to meet their own needs and all members attempting to pool their experience in annual reports and consultations.

At Colombo, Ceylon also made a proposal in this field but its conception was very different. It looked towards preferential arrangements within Commonwealth trade and, in its concern with the stability of world market prices for primary commodities and the possibilities of preferential tariffs being granted by developed Commonwealth countries for the products of the underdeveloped members, anticipated the concerns which have now been taken up on a broader canvas in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and also in GATT. In 1950, however, Spender was concerned more with aid than trade, where the problems of securing agreement are much more complicated. He produced a practical proposal and pushed it through despite the lack of enthusiasm displayed towards it by such major potential donors as Britain.

New Zealand also shared this caution and Doidge initially stressed that it could contemplate giving only technical assistance. This attitude became markedly more generous within two or three years, but in 1950 a new government elected in part on a platform of economy and allegations of

governmental extravagance must have been stunned to have found itself pushed by the zeal and impetuosity of Spender into what looked likely to be an expensive international undertaking.

It is no comfort to a New Zealander of almost any persuasion to see how negative the New Zealand attitude to either aid or security issues was at this time. That was not true in earlier years nor was it to be true later. But in 1950-51, Australia made all the running and for this Spender himself seems to have been substantially responsible.

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The Catholic Church in Australia. A Short History, 1788-1967. By Patrick O'Farrell. Nelson, Sydney, 1968. x, 294 pp. Plates, maps, bibliography, index. Australian price: \$1.75 (paper).

WRITING the Catholic history of Australia is becoming an appreciable academic industry. Although much still remains to be done the scholarly tradition established by Cardinal Moran, Dom Birt and Eris O'Brien has been richly developed by the works on various facets of the topic that have appeared over the past dozen years. The appearance of Professor O'Farrell's contribution — which also includes two large volumes of documents — is, therefore, most timely. As a general and up-to-date survey of a large subject it meets a real need, while in being extensively based on archival sources it enjoys a freshness and monographic solidity rarely found in 'short history'.

It is also topical. Appearing at a time when dissent from authoritarianism is widespread within the church and when the exponents of established authority are embarrassed by demands to adapt to social pressures, it sets present discontents in a perspective that prompts the useful reflection 'was it ever otherwise?' O'Farrell has no doubt of the church's basic supernatural orientation. But he recognises that it is nonetheless irremovably involved in the affairs of men. Thus, while suggesting that its growth in Australia may represent 'one of the greater feats of modern Catholicism' (page x), he is undeterred from presenting its story mainly as a series of undisguised and occasionally sordid conflicts. Within Australian Catholicism the outstanding issue was the many-faceted Irish-English one of the nineteenth century which set laity against clergy and divided the clergy themselves. It was aptly symbolised by the refusal of the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Patrick Moran, to pay for the return to Australia of the remains of his English Benedictine predecessor, Roger Vaughan, who died in 1883 while on a visit to England to recruit nuns.

It is, however, in regard to the Church's relations with its environment that O'Farrell stresses the conflict theme most strongly — perhaps too strongly. Beginning with its introduction as the proscribed faith of Irish convicts Australian Catholicism has undoubtedly had to contend with much bigotry from both Protestants and secularists and from those loyalists who resented its adherents' support of Irish Home Rule. Yet, while O'Farrell (in noting the existence of Catholic bigotry also, and in emphasising Catholic efforts to make the grade socially and economically in Australia) recognises that there are other sides to the question of hostility and alienation, it may be doubted whether he makes enough of them. For example, his discussion of the Catholic repudiation of state secular education consists largely of a