

Across the Street, Across the World: A History of the Red Cross in New Zealand, 1915–2015. By Margaret Tennant. New Zealand Red Cross, Wellington, 2016. 365pp. NZ price: \$83.99. ISBN: 9780473325312.

Now an independent public historian, Margaret Tennant ended her academic career as Professor of History at Massey University with an enviable reputation as New Zealand's leading welfare historian. Her books on charitable aid, social policy and children's health camps are essential reading in this field. This commissioned centennial history of a prominent non-profit humanitarian organization marks her move into public history, but not very far, as the book has more features of an academic work than a popular history. There are informative endnotes, and an index, but the absence of a bibliography is puzzling. The design is rather traditional, with text predominating over illustrations, and the price puts it beyond the reach of a general readership.

Far from being a celebratory once-over, this is a serious analytical history, firmly based on archival evidence and institutional memory. Tennant divides her history of the Red Cross in New Zealand into four main phases or stages. The British Red Cross became well-known in New Zealand during the South African War of 1899–1902. After the outbreak of war in 1914 various local committees were formed in the name of the Red Cross, with no formal links to London. In March 1915 the first New Zealand branch of the British Red Cross was formed in Christchurch.

This first phase of the Red Cross in New Zealand was somewhat disjointed until the Governor-General, Lord Liverpool, in November 1915 insisted that the Red Cross groups associate themselves with the Order of St John, on the model of their wartime collaboration in England. Though there was some grumbling, the New Zealand Branch of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John shared a letterhead and raised funds together during the Great War. This uneasy alliance undoubtedly delayed the separate establishment of a New Zealand Red Cross, and led to a decade of friction and squabbles over surplus funds.

Phase two saw the formal establishment of a New Zealand Red Cross in 1931, separate from its British parent, prompted by the 1931 Napier earthquake. Growth was slow until a generous donation by benefactor Helen Lowry in 1938 enabled the appointment of a director-general. Volunteer Aid Detachments provided training for relief work, while the Junior Red Cross in primary schools fostered loyalty to the Red Cross ideal. Red Cross remained, like St John, proud of its British connection, and its leadership was likewise confined to a wealthy elite.

Another world war brought further impetus to Red Cross branches in New Zealand, but the organization was unable to capitalize fully on the opportunity. The welfare state shut Red Cross out of the 'medical social affairs' that were a major part of Red Cross work in Australia. Instead the New Zealand Red Cross developed a strong emphasis on assistance for prisoners of war, sending food parcels and clothing through the International Committee. Grateful returning POWs formed a loyal and generous support base for Red Cross after the war.

Phase three followed a change of leadership and direction in the 1960s, responding to wider social changes in New Zealand. There was an expansion of the volunteer sector and more active training for disaster relief, with stronger links to the Pacific and South-East Asia. Despite active advertising, membership continued a steady decline. Phase four followed a major restructuring in 1991 into six consolidated regions, with

paid staff and managers, five-year plans, business models and more professional fundraising methods. (Interestingly, St John went through a similar restructuring in the late 1980s.)

The book ends on a positive note, describing the major role played by the New Zealand Red Cross in response to the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. All that training for disaster relief paid huge dividends. Mindful of criticisms of excessive administration costs after other disasters overseas, the New Zealand Red Cross managed millions of government relief funds with exemplary care.

Voluntary organizations have a long and honourable history in New Zealand. They are part of the fabric of New Zealand society, exemplifying many of the values and ideals that are assumed to be part of the New Zealand character. With the withering of the welfare state and increasing reliance by governments on private sector delivery of social policies, their role has never been more important. This book is a valuable contribution to their history, and a salutary reminder that while such organizations may have suffered from personality clashes or weak leadership in the past, they have the capacity to be renewed by the idealists of each new generation.

Tennant is to be congratulated on producing such a clear and comprehensive account of a highly visible New Zealand institution with international links. Her text is remarkably blemish-free and readable. How, then, did nobody spot the solitary howler on p.7 where the National Vice-President writes in his Foreword ‘take route’ for ‘take root’?

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The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000. By Vincent O’Malley. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2016. 688pp. NZ price: \$79.99. ISBN: 9781927277577.

In December 2015 students from Otorohanga College delivered a petition with 12,000 signatures to Parliament which sought a national day of commemoration for all those who fell in the New Zealand Wars. After much hand-wringing, the New Zealand government finally agreed in late 2016. The war for the Waikato is perhaps one of the most well-known, if misunderstood, of New Zealand’s wars of the 1860s–1870s. Vincent O’ Malley argues that the Waikato war was not only one of the most important of New Zealand’s wars, it was The Great War for New Zealand. In no way trying to diminish the great sacrifices made in both world wars, O’Malley attempts to address New Zealanders’ historical amnesia over the New Zealand Wars in general. When the book was first published in October 2016, O’Malley wrote articles in both the New Zealand media and internationally in the UK-based *Guardian* discussing New Zealand’s difficulty with recognizing and acknowledging its own history. He asked presciently: was New Zealand mature enough to own its own history?

Based largely on reports O’Malley produced for the Waitangi Tribunal’s Te Rohe Potae District Inquiry, *The Great War for New Zealand* traverses in fine detail the build-up to the war, the battles, the chaos of instituting confiscation and the many years of petitioning and negotiation which followed. Although the first Māori King, Potatau