

O'Neill was the Scottish-born son of Irish migrants, and his involvement in charity began in the Glasgow slums, graphically described by Utick. Utick has been an energetic researcher of the conditions from which charitable enterprises sprang not only in Glasgow, but in France (where the St Vincent de Paul society originated), in Sydney and, to a lesser extent, in New Zealand. A strength of the book is its attempt to delineate the theological as well as the social underpinnings of charity among Catholic laity, and to understand the nature of the bachelor O'Neill's religious zeal and personal commitment to the relief of poverty in all three countries where he lived. Most histories of Catholic social services in Australia and New Zealand emphasize the religious orders which dominated Catholic charitable endeavours, and where welfare history more generally has acknowledged voluntarism, women's role in philanthropy has been the more usual focus. Utick gives insights into a society where women were the secondary element and where male lay endeavour was to the fore, using O'Neill as an example of a charitable entrepreneur who organized and inspired others. Even where he was not responsible for the initial presence of the St Vincent de Paul Society, O'Neill played a major part in establishing it as an organized force with branches and links to the Paris-based organization.

Utick was not able to construct this biography from a wealth of personal papers, so O'Neill is seen mostly through the eyes of others, or via his public statements and a limited number of letters to others, mostly written in an official capacity. There is, consequently, something of a 'life and times' feel to the book, probably unavoidable when an understanding of a subject has to be built up laboriously from context. Utick is nonetheless able to emphasize the on-going importance of family to this unmarried engineer, politician and promoter of charity — he was one of 11 children, and his father and a number of siblings followed him to New Zealand. O'Neill was inseparable from his older brother John, who went with him to Sydney and shared the poverty of his final years. He was heartbroken by the death of his sister, Maria Gordon O'Neill, in 1883, to the extent that he took her middle name, referring to himself from this time on as Charles Gordon (rather than 'Bryson') O'Neill. Family, religiosity and community service were inextricable themes in O'Neill's life. But the charitable entrepreneur was a poor businessman; he died an obscure pauper in Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital in 1900. This book is part of a process of recovery, containing unexpected gems of insight for historians of religion, of welfare, and of colonial technology and politics.

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Mr Ambassador: Memoirs of Sir Carl Berendsen. Edited by Hugh Templeton. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2009. 336pp. NZ price: \$40.00. ISBN 978-0-86473-584-3.

A HEAD OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT who can tell his Prime Minister sternly that 'I do not believe that anything that is morally wrong can ever be politically right' is clearly an interesting character. Even more so one who could later rebuke Peter Fraser, that great man of principle, for running away from his principles and elicit from that Prime Minister two lengthy messages earnestly (and correctly) denying the charge. This bold mandarin was Carl Berendsen, head of the Prime Minister's Department for nine years to 1943, and afterwards first High Commissioner to Australia, then Ambassador to the United States and our first Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He retired in 1952 and in his later years dictated these memoirs, now carefully edited and published for the first time by Hugh Templeton. This is timely because Berendsen and the Fraser he served were the founders of their country's foreign policy and have left a permanent stamp on New Zealand's view of itself and of the world.

Berendsen was in fact born and spent his first years in Australia. Perhaps as a result he combined a little detachment about the 'magnificent self-satisfaction of New Zealand' with a lasting gratitude to this country for giving him his chance in life. Growing up in a poor family in the last years of the nineteenth century was not easy, and he gives an absorbing account of a world where every shilling had to be measured, a world of down-at-heel boarding houses in Wellington, of a failing poultry farm in Southland, of the transient jobs found by a father who was hardly ever there and the brave mother who managed to keep family life going and her son at school. In Matura he rode his pony several miles to school each day, where he flourished and became dux, to his own surprise. In the end he found himself travelling first-class to join Richard Seddon's civil service, of whose social grandeurs and considerable eccentricities he gives an entertaining account.

He moved through the Education and Labour Departments, in the process getting himself an LLM degree at Victoria and going off with an ill-trained unit to take Samoa from the Germans. This 'brash, explosive, crude and noisy young man' (as he describes himself) might have settled into a respected obscurity but for the chance in 1926 which saw him appointed to the new position of Imperial Affairs Officer. Over the next 10 years almost single-handedly, for no-one else was much interested, he read the papers, attended two Imperial Conferences, studied the League of Nations and formed an early distrust of empty declarations and 'pieces of paper' as ways of managing international affairs. All this came together as the rise of the European dictators coincided with the election of the first Labour Government in 1935.

A common concern with collective security and the League of Nations meant that he and Michael Joseph Savage worked in comfortable partnership on foreign affairs. With Berendsen drafting for him, Savage mounted a strong attack on appeasement at the 1937 Imperial Conference; at New Zealand's first international conference in 1939 Berendsen's demolition of the hopes of 'fortress Singapore' left his British and Australian hearers awed. He admired Savage, but it was with the more tough-minded Fraser that he achieved his greatest work. Fraser's work habits gave him an ulcer, but their views on the conduct of the war and the shaping of the world after it were so close that it is not always easy to determine whose ideas were foremost in the stream of confident, well-phrased cables that issued from Wellington. The most famous, though, is clearly Berendsen's. When Japan entered the war a lengthy cable to Churchill proclaimed a new stance: 'We feel that we must have an eye, an ear and a voice wherever decisions affecting New Zealand are to be made.'

The Fraser-Berendsen partnership reached its creative heights at the San Francisco conference to draft the United Nations Charter. Berendsen was sceptical of the new international concern with colonialism, on which Fraser was to make a considerable contribution, but both were determined to make peace institutional and to make small countries safe from the intimidation and attacks of the pre-war dictators. Berendsen saw the weakness of the League of Nations as a moral failure, a failure of courage by its members. Here was a chance, perhaps the last one, to get it right, and Prime Minister and Ambassador dashed around the committee rooms at San Francisco inveighing against the great power veto and marshalling support against it. It could not succeed (though it came close) and both were left despondent about the future, but together they left a lasting mark on the Charter and created New Zealand's international reputation.

Thereafter for seven years Berendsen continued to be New Zealand's voice in Washington and New York. His force of character and great oratorical gifts made him something of an international figure. Like Churchill, he came more and more to play himself. Tom Larkin, who worked for him in these years, gives an affectionate but clear-eyed account which captures the man in his increasingly irascible phase, as does Professor Ann Trotter in a reprinted article on 'Personality in Foreign Policy'.

Berendsen was above all a moralist. He saw things famously as black or white and

had a strong sense of the evil latent in the world. He saw as clearly as anyone — and more clearly than anyone else in New Zealand — the threat from the dictators and their aggressions in the thirties. On communism and Stalin his distaste was also earlier and stronger than that of many New Zealanders, but the perspective of history has supported him, if not always the ways in which he expressed it. But not every diplomatic issue was a test of the world's resolve to face down evil and as he grew older his judgment was less sure.

His memoirs are a flow of entertaining reminiscence, like listening to an experienced diplomat after dinner. Though Hugh Templeton has managed a difficult task with grace, Berendsen's achievements are sometimes overshadowed by his own accounts of who he met, the speeches he made and the compliments he received. That Carl Berendsen was an energetic, opinionated and influential diplomat comes out well; that he was also a great man will have to await a full biography.

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New Zealand and the European Union. Edited by Matthew Gibbons. Pearson Education New Zealand, Auckland, 2008. 163pp. NZ price: \$53.00. ISBN 978-0-7339-9383-1.

NEW ZEALANDERS HAVE DIFFICULTIES with the notion of Europe, despite the vast majority being of some European descent and the culture primarily deriving from Europe, albeit with Pacific and, latterly, Asian modifications. It is partly the problem of a fish coming to terms with water, but it is also because the locus of New Zealand's Europe is the British Isles which is perhaps the least European part of Europe. So rather than see the European Union as a cultural, economic, political and social idea — a grand conception to resolve a millennium and more of warfare and cultural conflict — New Zealanders tend to see it as an economic entity only, rather as the British do.

As it happens, a crucial element of the mechanism for the resolution of aeons of conflict has been economic integration. The first institution in the development of the European Union was the European Coal and Steel Community, which aimed to so integrate France and Germany's industries that they could never go to war again — a view consistent with the notion that markets resolve certain sorts of conflicts and trading partners do not (or cannot) make war on each other. Then there was the European Economic Community; many New Zealanders continued to use the term long after it became obsolete over a quarter of a century ago. It would be difficult to justify the EU's anthem — Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* — in terms of a customs union.

It is perhaps, then, not surprising that the ambitious title *New Zealand and the European Union* should belong to a book largely about New Zealand's economic relations with the EU. Five of the six contributions are on that topic and only one — the fifth chapter — is on 'people to people and political links'. That chapter is superficial and disappointing, drifting into a discussion on the marketing of tourism but neglecting many cultural aspects. It does not even mention that more New Zealanders can speak European languages (other than English) than can speak Maori.

After an introduction by Matthew Gibbons, Carol Neill provides a detailed statistical account of New Zealand's pastoral exports to the EU-15 (the membership before the enlargements since 2005), followed by Gibbons's overall review of the pattern of merchandise trade in the second chapter. Chapters three and four, also by Gibbons, cover expert opinions and exporting to the new EU countries. To one's amusement, Gibbons finds that the forecasts of 'experts' reported in the earlier Frank Holmes and Clive Pearson *Meeting the European Challenge*, proved to be not very successful. (The