

God and Government: The New Zealand Experience. Edited by Rex Ahdar and John Stenhouse. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2000. 146 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877133-80-9.

THE STATUS of 'the Church' in relation to the government of New Zealand has received little attention in general published histories. This collection is an important contribution to the examination of and debate on the broader issue of the role of religion in both New Zealand history and contemporary society. Originally presented at an international interdisciplinary conference on 'Church and State in New Zealand', the six papers published here reflect the different disciplines of law, political studies, history, religious studies and education. There is some overlap and the overall diet is more of a smorgasbord than a carefully planned menu.

In a wide-ranging contribution, Rex Ahdar examines theoretical questions surrounding the idea of the 'Christian State' in New Zealand. While there was an early de facto establishment of the Church, in law the state was non-religious, or as Sir Robert Stout, the Chief Justice and advocate of free thought declared: 'neutral to all phases of religious experience'. Examples of civil religion have been eroded by the growing pluralism and secularization of New Zealand since the 1960s, although vestigial Christian liturgical examples are often still present on state occasions.

In the light of this increasing pluralism, Peter Donovan, drawing on British experience, looks at questions surrounding religious toleration. Whereas the Christian churches once claimed a monopoly on the word 'religion' and the privileges coming from their traditional relationship within New Zealand society, the growth of non-Christian faiths now challenges the churches' approach in areas such as chaplaincies and religious education.

The long-running but ill-fated Bible-in-schools campaign, which arose as a consequence of the secular clause in the 1877 Education Act, resulted in Catholic, Protestant and secularist protagonists nailing their colours to the mast and polarizing opinion. Patrick Lynch, in writing about religious education as 'a right and growing societal imperative', argues that New Zealand 'is no longer threatened by religious differences'. He is in favour of contemporary educational diversity and the importance of debating values-based education. The question remains, however, as to whether New Zealand has sufficient maturity to prescribe the teaching about religions in primary and secondary schools in order to promote better cultural and inter-religious understanding.

The word 'Christian' has gained a very selective meaning in much recent media debate because of the activities of 'Christian' political parties. Jonathan Boston sets this New Zealand phenomenon against the wider European 'Christian' political background. Given the division into two 'Christian' parties in New Zealand, Boston predicts that there is little likelihood of either party achieving the present 5% threshold or securing a party seat.

Two explicitly historical essays come from John Stenhouse and Peter Lineham. Stenhouse offers a vigorous response to revisionist historians' examination of the role of religion and politics in the wars of the 1860s, indicating the way in which Anglican humanitarians, led by Bishop Selwyn and Octavius Hadfield, in their support of Maori rights provoked hostile Pakeha opposition. This opposition ranged from the radical atheist, Charles Southwell, to self-interested politicians such as J.C. Richmond, businessmen like Josiah Firth and secularist advocates like Alfred Dommett. The vacillations of the humanitarians in 1863 are understood in terms of their inability to accept a competing sovereignty resulting from Kingitanga. Stenhouse argues that continuing humanitarian concerns were seen in the denunciations of land confiscation by Anglicans such as Selwyn, T.S. Grace, Sir William Martin and J.E. Fitzgerald. The weakening of the humanitarian influence, however, helped ensure the victory of the land-grabbers and to paraphrase a biblical verse, the sins of the fathers continue to visit their children to the third and fourth generation, as the ongoing work of the Waitangi Tribunal attests.

REVIEWS

Peter Lineham paints with a broad brush indicating that the word 'church' is not a monochrome term. At some points the essay is impressionistic and additional documentation would have strengthened it. He gives examples of the way in which both churches and the state have shared mutual concerns, such as the delivery of social welfare, and on other occasions have been on opposite sides, such as the Bible-in-schools debate. He describes churches as operating most successfully 'as interest or pressure groups' encompassing within themselves considerable diversity. When their prophetic concerns have been voiced on issues such as the Vietnam war and the 1981 Springbok tour they have sometimes ruffled the feathers of both governments and some of their own members. The voice of the Church is increasingly fragmented and weak as a result of secularization and the post-Christendom age in which they operate.

The Hikoi of Hope, led by Anglicans in 1998 as a protest against growing inequalities in New Zealand, is a reminder that the relationship between 'God and government' and issues to do with religion and the state have continuing importance for New Zealand society. This volume is a timely reminder that historians need to be careful that their own secular lenses do not filter out these dimensions from the way that they see the past and the present.

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Kia Kaha: New Zealand in the Second World War. Edited by John Crawford. Oxford University Press, Auckland, 2000, 330 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-19555-8438-4.

THERE HAS BEEN surprisingly little scholarly attention paid to New Zealand's involvement in the Second World War. There is a mountain of official histories of the war, dating from the early 1950s and capped in 1986 by Nancy Taylor's encyclopedic double volumes on the home front. Nor have the memoir, diary and letter writers been slow to come forward. The first, first-person accounts of the war pre-date even the end of the war itself, with the pile rapidly growing in the 1980s and 1990s as the wartime generation reached retirement age. But, while academic historians have waxed lyrical about New Zealand nationhood forged in the Anglo-Boer war and hammered into shape on the battlefields of the First World War, the history of the Second World War awaits sustained critical examination. John Crawford and his fellow participants in the 'Kia Kaha: Forever Strong' conference at the Alexander Turnbull Library in May 1995 have collected their work together in the hope of stimulating further research in this area.

A wide range of topics is canvassed in *Kia Kaha*. Ian McGibbon kicks off with a solid analysis of the New Zealand government's diplomatic strategies in the late 1930s. He contextualizes the Labour government's decision to 'range itself beside Britain', and disputes the tendency of contemporary scholars such as James Belich to see it as a symptom of a fundamental lack of independence vis-à-vis Britain. Ian Wards' discussion of the conflict between political and military considerations in the decision to commit British, and by extension New Zealand, troops to Greece in early 1941 is also worth reading. There are thoughtful accounts of US and Australian strategies in the Pacific, essays about individual branches of the armed services and individual commanders, and a group of papers about aspects of 'home front' history.

The editor's introduction notes the failure of New Zealand's historians of World War II to grapple with the so-called 'new military history', that is military history in a social history mode. The narrative bent of traditional models of military and diplomatic history is clearly evident in the structure of many of these essays, as is a preference for top-