

researched collections for Gallipoli images they have been much less plentiful than those from the Western Front. Claims are made on insufficient evidence because, quite frankly, the research has not been done. The bibliography lists seven collections from the Alexander Turnbull Library. Examining TAPUHI I discovered 210 listings including at least 48 substantial collections and albums. There is no evidence that any albums from Christchurch have been explored and only two from the Hocken. This is simply an inadequate basis to make large assertions about the nature of wartime photographs. Further, if you do examine these albums the story that emerges of the meaning of the war is rather different from Callister's. It is true that there are occasional images of graves, even of medics carrying the wounded. But there are far more photographs of soldiers on tourist trips to the pyramids or Westminster Abbey, images of them visiting relatives in Britain, many images from camp or on board ship, images of people playing cards. There are quite a number of albums from other places not mentioned, such as the Middle East and Samoa; and there are quite a number in hospitals, often shot by nurses. These are the more typical 'faces of war'. There is also at least one outstanding example of the use of photographs in memorializing — the Stratford hall of soldier's portraits — which would seem pertinent to Callister's interests but is never mentioned.

At times when she does use the evidence there are sloppy errors — she quotes captions as 'Death's Valley' and 'Man's leg', but the illustrated album does not have apostrophes. We are told that there was not an official photographer 'until late in 1917', but this turns out to be March 1917. We are told that Edward Ruddock died on 7 May 1915 but the image of the grave on that page and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission give the date as 11 May. Sergeant Norton is said to have written 'Merry Xmas' on his parcel to his wife, but the photo shows the words clearly to be 'A Merry Xmas'. Obviously for Callister the evidence is not of the essence because her interest is rather more in the enlightening comments she can make about the photographs. She rushes far too quickly into surmise and commentary.

This book is a good read, and the discussions about the use of photographs as the currency of mourning are insightful and valuable. But the coverage of the subject is so patchy that one simply cannot trust the larger judgements. When a historian gets round to preparing a well-researched and definitive study of photography and New Zealand's Great War *The Face of War* will be a helpful stimulus and fund of ideas. But this is not that book.

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*Nordy: Arnold Nordmeyer: A Political Biography.* By Mary Logan. Steele Roberts, Wellington, 2008. 486pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN 978-1-877448-33-1.

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE WATER AT KUROW. Two inhabitants of the manse in this small North Otago town have gone on to long and distinguished careers: Lloyd Geering, and his senior by some years, Arnold Nordmeyer. This is a welcome biography of one of the most capable ministers of finance in the past century.

Nordmeyer was a Christian socialist all his life. His departure from the pulpit for Parliament was entirely consistent with his lifelong religious commitment. He was almost certainly the most influential backbencher of the 1935–1938 Parliament and was impatient for rapid implementation of his party's manifesto and dreams. Until the war broke out, impatient backbenchers coalesced around John A. Lee, who ended by alienating most of them. Here Mary Logan gives a nuanced brief discussion of the antecedents of social security, but by devoting excessive space to Lee and his views she does not give

sufficient consideration to the very significant constraints under which ministers were operating. There is, however, a very good discussion of the role of select committees and of the evidence they gathered to support reformist legislation. What is also made clear is the absolute obstruction of the government's health policy by the doctors and the Tory press. Nordmeyer's earlier affiliation with Lee meant a problematic relationship with Peter Fraser, although Fraser did entrust him with increasingly important portfolios. As Minister of Health from 1941 Nordmeyer finally oversaw the introduction of a national health system. There is useful detail both on the implementation of the policy and its implications, and on the expansion of health services which Nordmeyer oversaw.

Increasingly, too, Nordmeyer was the understudy at Finance for the peripatetic Walter Nash, and was given the second economic portfolio of Industries and Commerce in 1947, which included responsibility for economic stabilization. These chapters survey the general history of the government, putting Nordmeyer's work in a broad context and highlighting his views on major issues. Nordmeyer emerges as a consistently thoughtful, rational and logical politician, a politician of intellect and principle rather than emotion. As such he could not be controlled by Fintan Patrick Walsh, whom Logan argues convincingly was motivated solely by the desire for power; it was the party's tragedy that Fraser's appreciation of Nordmeyer's qualifications for leadership came too late. Although Nordmeyer inherited Fraser's constituency, Nash had sewn up the leadership which he was to occupy relatively ineffectually for over a decade. In Parliament and on the platform Nordmeyer usually outclassed both Nash and Holland.

Nordmeyer is of course forever associated with the 1958 Black Budget. Logan refutes suggestions that Treasury had advised stronger measures than it had expected to have accepted; what was done was believed by officials and Nordmeyer to be necessary. She also convincingly shows that claims by Nordmeyer's colleagues that they were taken by surprise were often disingenuous, and she has some useful criticisms of Keith Sinclair's strictures. So far as medium-term problems were concerned, Nordmeyer, like Holyoake before and after him, had to deal with the rapid weakening of the British market for New Zealand pastoral exports; again, his prescience has been insufficiently appreciated by later writers. For the 30 months after the delivery of the Black Budget, the National Party and their friends in the newspapers kept up simplistic and irresponsible criticism of the government's fiscal caution. Labour's 1960 defeat was narrower, but Nordmeyer's leadership prospects were squeezed between Nash's refusal to retire and the overweening ambition of Norman Kirk. In his retirement, Nordmeyer remained actively engaged in promoting New Zealand's economic development.

This biography has two significant weaknesses. In some places the digressions are too lengthy, and it is evident that the manuscript had been put aside for some years before being prepared for publication; the most noticeable omission from the bibliography is the Bassett and King biography of Fraser. These weaknesses are outweighed by its merits as a study of someone who was — to use a later buzzword — a conviction politician, and a remarkably honest and capable one, and of the history of the Labour Party, of New Zealand politics and of social policy.

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