

I don't know a lot about the big wide world and I don't pretend to, but from what I see, there is a heck of a lot of room for improvement when it comes to inequality. We can start in our schools, but change has to go deeper than that. We need to acknowledge the stereotypes we hold in society and then go about changing them. And yes, in some cases, this may mean changing situations. Stereotypes, after all, don't come out of nowhere. But if all students, all people, were treated as what they have the potential to be, we'd help them to become more than they, or anyone else, could have ever imagined.³ It's not going to happen overnight, it might not even happen in my lifetime, but with the investment and commitment of schools, the government, the media and everyone else in between, another world is possible. Another world that's better for them and us.

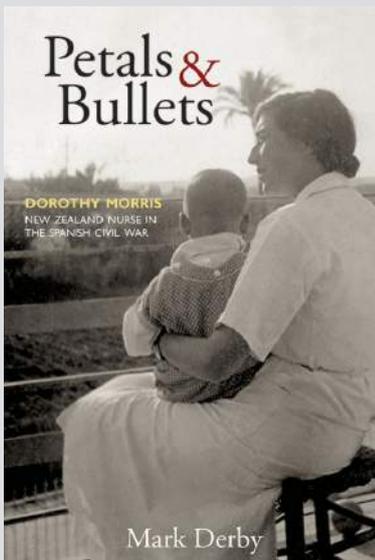
1. Simon Collins, "Auckland Divided: New Zealand tax on rich amongst lowest in the world", *NZ Herald*, 7 February 2012, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10783837.
2. Christina Sterbenz, "Why Norway's Prison System is So Successful", 12 December 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/why-norways-prison-system-is-so-successful-2014-12>.
3. Adapted from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's quote "Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming."

Reviews

Petals and Bullets

By Mark Derby (*Nelson: Pottan and Burton, 2015*)

Reviewed by Barry Pateman



The Canada Blanch series, edited by Paul Preston, has been an invaluable source of new English language material on the Spanish Civil War and, together with the new material appearing from within Spain, has been instrumental in providing us with new insights on the conflict as well as challenging the old assumptions we may well have had. Aimed, one presumes, at the university market the series is sadly hampered by the excessive prices of its books and we should be grateful to Pottan and Burton for reprinting one of them at a price that is reasonable and affordable for the general reader.¹

The book's primary focus is on the experiences of the New Zealand nurse, Dorothy Morris in the Spanish conflict. Using her letters Mark Derby traces her actions and experiences in Spain and carefully expands on what she writes using detailed primary and secondary sources to weave a narrative that is both engaging and engrossing. Morris, herself, is a strong and forthright character with a sensitivity and intelligence that is attractive and appealing. Politically she is very clear as to what is happening in the world. In 1939 she can write that the choice is either "the omelet made at the cost of temporary discomfort... or the starvation of Fascism" and this hatred of Fascism, and what it means, is a constant theme in her letters.² Linked with her disgust with the Non-Interventionist policies of the British and French governments in Spain (essentially they had blood on their hands) her anti-fascism, is central in her makeup during the Spanish conflict. After all, as a nurse, she dealt with its consequences every day.

Mark Derby's elaborations on the letters are essential reading if only because Dorothy, when writing to her parents, adopts a firmly reassuring tone, which does not engage with the horrors around her. There is little sense of the emotional and physical toll her work is taking on her—a toll that results in a near breakdown alleviated only by time away in France. She is also maddeningly laconic. There is a deliberate downplaying of drama both in her letters and in her later memories. Her close friend and fellow nurse Mary Elmes echoes this laconic approach. Arrested by the Nazis for helping Jews escape into Spain, Elmes was held for six months and released without charge. In her later life she described this incident in her own way, "Well, we all experienced inconveniences in those days didn't we?" Derby's prose enables us to fully engage with what these remarkable women did achieve and go through.

The book then is obviously about Dorothy and her time supporting the wounded of the International Brigades and, later helping run a children's hospital in Murcia. She then worked in the Spanish refugee camps in France and, after World War Two, with refugees from all over Europe. It's a fascinating and poignant story and worth reading just for that thread alone. The book is more though. Ever since Jim Fryth's *The Signal Was Spain* considerable research has gone into how medical aid got to Spain and what happened when it arrived.³ *Petals and Bullets* assesses and develops that body of work in a clear and balanced way. In many ways the book is an appreciation of the Quakers and the immense amount of effort and care they put into providing medical support for the Republic as well as a portrayal of how medical services improved their practices and procedures as the nature of war changed and became more sophisticated and brutal. There are detailed descriptions of the varied, developing aspects of patient care and Derby shows us how Spain became a laboratory for medical procedures as well as military techniques.

Above all, though, it's the nurses who stand out in *Petals and Bullets*. Often living in cramped conditions in a culture they sympathise with but don't readily understand Dorothy and her comrades quickly earn our admiration. Whether working themselves to exhaustion, attempting to garner enough supplies for the patients in their care, or moving heaven and earth to allow the children to have a memorable Christmas, they dominate the book. In glaring heat or freezing cold their professionalism is both moving and impressive. Some of them, including Dorothy, would eventually work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration—perhaps the first concerted international effort to deal with the plight of refugees. Some will simply return to their homes or volunteer elsewhere. As well as expanding and developing the reality of Dorothy's letters Derby is careful to add some balance if he senses the text needs it. To Dorothy the men of the International Brigade are heroes. New research, though, has suggested that some of the International columnists she probably knew were not shy of criticising their officers' tactics and resisting what they considered unnecessarily risky missions. Derby shows this and allows us to see complexities in the Volunteers that Dorothy either didn't know or chose not to deal with.

Sometimes when one reads memoirs of the Spanish conflict from its overseas participants, it is often, ironically, the Spanish who are missing from the memoir,

apart from the iconic “Spanish people”. This book presents us with a far more complex portrait. At first Dorothy sees the Spaniards as a problem. They don’t know how to nurse properly or appear unable to follow instructions. As the book progresses Dorothy changes her opinion and sees their strengths as people and celebrates the warmth of their companionship as well as their courage and fortitude in the most desperate of situations.

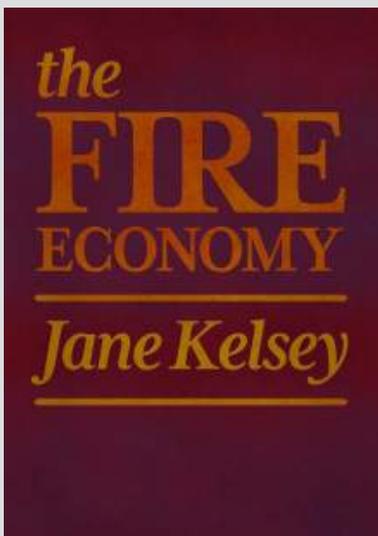
After Spain we sense that Dorothy was drifting, not really settling but still doing important work, and it is not until she became matron of her own institution in Enfield that some type of peace came to her. She mentored her god-daughter and others in New Zealand but we can sense there was something solitary about her, a need for solitude. For those of us lucky enough to interview veterans of the Spanish war, this wasn’t uncommon. Something of them had been left in Spain. Something that could not be brought back or easily explained. A great cause had drawn many of them and afterwards was a withdrawal. As she grew older, and the world changed, it must have all seemed so long ago to Dorothy and yet still so achingly intimate. Her bravery and courage as well as her staunchness should, though, never be forgotten no matter how she may have, herself, downplayed her actions. She reminds us of the enormous potential for good that people can radiate in certain circumstances and we should be glad that her story will be allowed to live on thanks to Mark Derby’s rigorous and sympathetic scholarship. This is a worthy companion to his magisterial *Kiwi Compañeros*.⁴

1. RRP \$39.99

2. Mark Derby, *Petals and Bullets* (Potton and Burton: Nelson, 2015), 6.

3. Jim Fryth, *The Signal Was Spain* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986).

4. Mark Derby, ed., *Kiwi Compañeros: New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War* (Canterbury: University of Canterbury Press, 2009).



The FIRE Economy

By Jane Kelsey (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015)

Reviewed by Ciaran Doolin

Over the course of the last two decades Jane Kelsey has produced a series of authoritative studies charting the development, implementation and embedding of neoliberalism in New Zealand.¹ Aside from their academic rigour, her works have been praised (and scorned) for their critical perspective. For someone with a clear commitment to social justice, Kelsey must find the glacial pace of change immensely frustrating. Indeed, the unifying thread which runs through her work is the unrepentant orthodoxy of New Zealand’s experiment with neoliberalism. What distinguishes this book from her previous works, however, is the international state of flux in which our experiment is now reposed. As Kelsey explains in the preface, the work for the book began in 2009 as the result of a Marsden Fund grant, her intention being to write a sequel to *The New Zealand Experiment* (1995). But the fallout from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and our own troubles with finance and insurance company collapses, property bubbles and burgeoning debt led her to refocus her attention on the structural imbalances of neoliberalism—and the revisionist consensus emerging in the international policy community.