

New Zealand

Until a year ago, if Americans thought about New Zealand at all, they probably thought of it as an old ally, a faraway vacationland something like California, a pair of picturesque islands dominated by sheep and English traditions. Then Prime Minister David Lange hit the headlines. He told Washington to keep the U.S. Navy's nuclear-armed ships out of his country's ports. Surprised, the Reagan administration said that New Zealand's sudden self-assertiveness threatened the 35-year-old ANZUS alliance. Nevertheless, New Zealand's parliament will soon vote on a bill formalizing Mr. Lange's anti-nuclear ban. Our contributors examine New Zealand's changing society and its new dilemmas as a South Pacific nation.

THE ALMOST NEW WORLD

by Peter J. Coleman

When Abel Janszoon Tasman, commanding two small ships flying the flag of the Dutch East India Company, explored the western shores of New Zealand's South Island in 1642, the natives were less than friendly: Maori warriors adorned with blue-spiral tattoos attacked Tasman's cockboat as it landed to obtain fresh water, killing four men. Tasman quit what he called Murderers' Bay in disgust, later describing the South Island as a place with "no treasures or matters of great profit."

In 1796, Capt. James Cook, arriving aboard H.M.S. *Endeavour*, received a similarly hostile reception, but this time it was the Maori, not the sailors, who died in the ensuing skirmish.

The British were in no hurry, despite Cook's voyage, to claim New Zealand (or Nieuw Zeeland, after the Dutch province), much less to settle a faraway land filled with inhospitable natives. So for nearly 75 years, New Zealand served as a way station for American and British whalers and traders. It also became a refuge for convicts fleeing from Britain's recently established penal colonies in Australia. Disturbed by the drunken,

licentious behavior of the denizens of the port of Kororaraka—dubbed “the hellhole of the Pacific”—British authorities dispatched missionaries and officials from Australia’s New South Wales to establish some semblance of order.

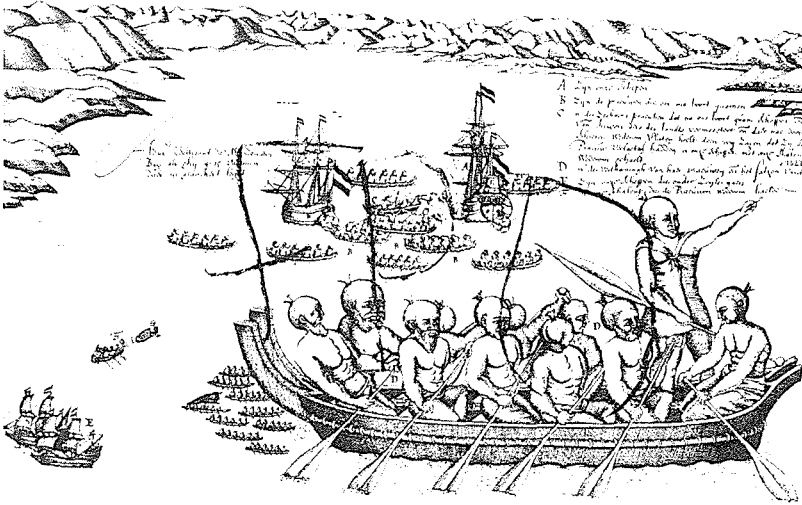
Not until the 1830s did anyone in London give much serious thought to settling New Zealand. One of the first to realize that Abel Tasman had overlooked New Zealand’s greatest “treasure”—land—was an eccentric British visionary named Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Wakefield abhorred Britain’s “degenerate, bigoted” American cousins (“in two words, a people who become rotten before they are ripe”) and wanted a better model for New Zealand. To that end, he helped create the New Zealand Company, which would colonize New Zealand “systematically.” His plan was to transport, for a fee, every element of the English village—the clergy, schoolmasters, lawyers, doctors, “decent yeomen,” and “honest laborers”—minus the dissolute “lower segment,” to the new territory.

The first boatload of New Zealand Company settlers dropped anchor at Port Nicholson (later named Wellington after the victor of Waterloo) in late January 1840.* The newcomers to the North Island found green, lush terrain that seemed well suited to farming; those who sailed south found fertile plains covered with grasses for their flocks. At the same time, the land looked more magnificent than any they had ever seen. The long, slender islands, stretching 950 miles north to south, almost as far as Winnipeg is from New Orleans, boasted “alps as glorious as those of Switzerland,” according to one traveler, “lakes as beautiful as those of England; mountains among the highest and grandest in the world, as grand as those of Norway; and rivers rivaling those of Orinoco and the Amazon.”

But this was “under down under.” Christmas came in midsummer, and the fauna and flora were more surprising than anything the English Pilgrims had encountered two centuries earlier on Cape Cod. Roaring winds swept in from the Tasman Sea, the Pacific, and Antarctica; smoking volcanoes punctuated the North Island, where the emerald-hued rain forest stayed

*Other Company settlements quickly followed at Nelson, New Plymouth, and Wanganui. In 1848 and '50, the Church of England and the Church of Scotland planted separate but similarly organized communities at Christchurch and Dunedin, flourishing cities that even today bear the imprint of England and Scotland in architecture, custom, and accent.

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As seen in this first European rendering (1642) of the Maori, Dutch sailors misunderstood the aborigines' war trumpets, replying with "tunes" that the Maori interpreted as an invitation to battle.

jungle-thick even in winter. Exotic birds abounded, such as the flightless weka and the bewhiskered, nearly blind kiwi that eventually became New Zealand's national symbol. By day, the intense, hard sunlight picked out the smallest details and gave settlers a seemingly perpetual squint. By night, new constellations, such as the Southern Cross, and the flame-red aurora borealis reminded colonists that Mother England was in the Northern Hemisphere, 13,000 miles away.

Despite occasional skirmishes, the first few settlers did little to trouble the Maori. Tribesmen around Auckland and the Bay of Islands enthusiastically adopted modern axes and fish hooks, raised wheat and flax, or worked alongside whites as sailors and harpooners. The Anglican, Wesleyan, and French Marist missionaries left over from the days of Kororareka had some success among the Maori, many of whom eagerly embraced the drama of resurrection and eternal life and the new religion's anthems and hymns. (Visitors are startled even today to hear Bach chorales sung not only in Maori but with a distinctive Polynesian rhythm.) Some Maori even adapted to the rudimentary settler society. Only two weeks after Robert FitzRoy, later the colony's second governor, arrived in Auckland in 1837, his wife reported: "The natives are certainly a most intelligent and interesting race—many well dressed in European clothing have been with

us at different meals and behaved *perfectly*.”

These “civilizing influences” notwithstanding, the Maori remained broadly Polynesian in language, tradition, and custom. Maori canoes reached New Zealand around 800 A.D., probably from the Cook, Marqueses, and Society islands, the heart of Polynesia, several thousand miles to the northeast. Mythological heroes peopled their past and a pantheon of gods dwelt in all animate and inanimate objects, making the land and everything that was on it sacred: A tree for a canoe could not be felled, for example, until Tane, the god of the land, had been placated through prayers and fasting.

Getting On

Their complex, highly ritualized culture baffled British colonists and officials alike. Witnesses were astounded by feasts of thousands of celebrants that lasted as long as a week. The Maori lived “dispers’d in small parties,” as Captain Cook had been the first to note, settling their disputes through warfare and celebrating victory either by eating or enslaving their captives. The settlers may have professed horror over the cannibalistic practice, but the sale of shrunken heads enjoyed a brisk business in the new settlements.

An uneasy coexistence between the *pakeha*, as whites came to be called, and the Maori might have continued, except for one inescapable fact: The settlers wanted New Zealand to become English, not Polynesian. They wanted racial homogeneity, or, as a columnist in the *New Zealand Herald* put it, “people of our own race and kindred . . . the British man; the white man, not the *kanaka* [native].” This meant that who was kept out of the new colony was just as important as who got in. Publicity handbooks in the 1850s and ’60s excluded not only those of “undesirable” color but also the “Too-lates” (the broke), the “De Smythes” (the “fastidiously genteel people of feeble intellect”), the “Grumblers” (“who only wish they were back”), and the “Fast Gents” (the “ne’er-do-wells”).*

Not surprisingly, this informal immigration policy meant that the clerks and shepherds, carpenters and laborers, felt right at home when they arrived. They had not been banished from Britain, like the men in the penal colonies of Australia; nor were they fleeing from persecution, like the Pilgrims. Some hoped to turn New Zealand into a working man’s paradise, a place where, as a shoe polish salesman of Taranaki put it, “the laboring class is as well off . . . as the nobs are at home.” In

*An Immigration Restriction Act codified the informal restrictions in 1899; in 1920, New Zealand kept the “coloureds” out by giving the Minister of Immigration the sole right to permit or deny entry.

Nelson, for example, newly arrived laborers demanded a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work." But most simply wanted, as Sir George Grey, governor and later Prime Minister, put it, "a chance to get on."

During the first decade of organized settlement, "getting on" meant living in the native-style reed huts (even for British officials), clearing the forests with ax and fire, throwing up fences to mark proprietorship, sowing English grasses for cattle and sheep, raising goats and pigs, planting wheat and other grains, and establishing apple orchards. It meant building towns and ports and villages, churches and schools, banks and jails. It also meant shouldering the Maori aside, peacefully if possible, by force if necessary.

With land at a premium, those Maori not co-opted at dinner parties of British officials feared, as one chief said, that their people would "be reduced to the condition of slaves." In one of the most confused episodes in New Zealand's history, the Crown, represented by William Hobson, the colony's first governor, tried to protect the Maori with the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. "Hastily and inexpertly drawn up, ambiguous and contradictory in content" according to one settler-historian, the treaty annexed New Zealand for England and gave the Maori "full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands." But it also gave the Crown the sole right to buy—and hence to sell—New Zealand. Which it did, piece by piece, to the settlers.

Never, Never, Never

During the 1850s and early '60s, the discovery of gold in Otago on the South Island helped turn what had been only a trickle of immigrants into a flood; the number of British and Scottish settlers skyrocketed from 98,000 to 500,000 in 20 years. Taking, buying, or simply squatting on what they could find, the newcomers ignited a "fire in the bracken," as an early historian called the Anglo-Maori wars, that began on the North Island during the early 1860s.

As in the American Indian wars, both sides committed acts of great barbarism. British troops practiced a scorched earth policy, in some areas burning villages, destroying crops, looting, and occasionally shooting prisoners. In one of the more grisly Maori episodes, fanatical warriors called the Hau Haus hung the Reverend Carl S. Volkner outside his Opotiki church, mutilated his body, and drank his blood.

Despite the bitterness that such acts inspired, the wars, oddly enough, did not become race wars: Some British officials and missionaries supported the Maori and vice versa. Both

At least for whites, Maori bravery eventually created what colonial historian M. P. K. Sorrenson called "a warm comradeship between victor and vanquished" that lent the Maori a lasting measure of respect and eased their assimilation into what became modern New Zealand. But the Maoris paid a heavy

Zealand legend. Maori response to a demand for surrender in 1863—"ake, ake, ake," meaning "never, never, never"—has passed into New Zealand legend. sides displayed courage and chivalry. Colonial and British troops earned 15 of the newly created Victoria Crosses. And the Maori response to a demand for surrender in 1863—"ake, ake, ake," meaning "never, never, never"—has passed into New Zealand legend.

"Under down under": Long dependent on faraway Europe and the United States, New Zealand now stresses links with its South Pacific neighbors on foreign policy issues. All distances shown are in nautical miles.



price for resisting the British tide. One Maori survivor said: "They came to teach us to pray to God, and as our eyes were uplifted in prayer they stole our land from under our feet." So great was the white land hunger that by the 1890s, the Maori had lost more than three million acres on the North Island, much of it now New Zealand's finest pastures and orchards. War, land confiscation and sales, and European diseases so devastated the Maori that officials and settlers alike predicted that the "native races" were, as Capt. W. R. Russell put it, "doom[ed] . . . to eventual extinction" (see box, pages 54-55).

The Golden Fleece

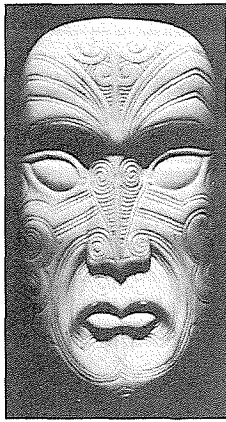
The settlers moving into the newly won areas took to heart Wakefield's advice to "possess yourselves of the soil." Poor farmers scratched out a subsistence living much as American frontiersmen had done, raising a few crops, some sheep, and a few cattle. Pioneering in remote areas imposed heavy costs. The nearest neighbors might live a day away by horseback. Women found themselves not only cooking and washing and sewing for both family members and hired men but also doubling as schoolteachers and farm hands for shearing or "dipping." For their husbands, stocking a run called for strength and courage. One backcountry sheep owner reputedly carried his flock, one by one, on his shoulders along the treacherous coast to reach his Wairarapa property, west of Wellington. Even so, a pioneer woman reflecting on her life during the 1860s in the Aorere Valley remembered: "We greatly enjoyed the easy way of life then the fashion in New Zealand. . . . People thought themselves quite comfortable with bare floors, a sofa or two, a table, a few boxes nicely covered with chintz."

Those same "comfortable" bare floors drove Samuel Butler, the philosopher and novelist, out of New Zealand after five years of sheep farming. Had he remained, he might have joined the few who made fortunes from the "golden fleece."

Wool growing favored the big producer, especially on the plains of Canterbury on the South Island, where vast ranges of tussock grasses supported runs, or stations, that measured in square miles rather than acres and flocks of sheep numbered in the thousands rather than the tens. The big growers eventually became New Zealand's landed aristocrats, who built noble homes filled with fine furniture and paintings and employed gardeners to care for their flower gardens and ornamental shrubs. They sent their sons "home" to English public schools or to their New Zealand equivalents (Christ's, Nelson, and Wanganui colleges) and maintained Victorian-style mansions

THE LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

When the British explorer Capt. James Cook landed at "Young Nick's Head" in 1769 (near the present-day city of Gisborne), perhaps 250,000 Maori lived in what the natives called *Aotearoa*, the Land of the Long White Cloud. By the end of the Anglo-Maori wars a century later, the Maori race was close to extinction. "You brought us your civilization, and you decimated our ranks with strange diseases and modern armaments," mourned a chief of the Arawa tribe. "You supplied us with firearms, and when in the lust of war we had slain almost half of the flower of our race (and a few of yours), you punished us as rebels and confiscated our lands."



The Maori survived, but they never again dominated their homeland. When Te Kooti, the last of the great warriors, finally ended the long battle against the British in 1872, he and most of the remaining Maori fled to the remote "King Country"—home of Tawhiao, the Maori king—at the center of the North Island or to the isolated East Cape. Local *pakeba* (white) writers told tales of a dying people, the "Noble Relic of a Noble Race," that gained much popularity among the British, who meanwhile turned New Zealand into a country that was "more English than England."

Maori fortunes improved somewhat at the turn of the century. Three university-trained activists, Apirana Ngata, a lawyer, Maui Pomare, a doctor, and Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), a distinguished anthropologist, founded the Young Maori Party. Their objective was simple: to save the Maori through integration by encouraging them to become "brown *pakebas*." They were not entirely successful in spreading their message. Even after some Maori began to move during the 1930s to Auckland—today the largest Polynesian city in the world—the majority still had little contact with whites except at work, where they were stereotyped as hewers of wood and drawers of water, or on the rugby field, where they excelled. During the 1950s and '60s, the apparent isolation of the Maori so alarmed government housing authorities that they started "pepper-potting"—sprinkling Maori families throughout government-subsidized suburbs. Most Maori, however, chose to ignore the State's inducements, preferring instead to live in Maori enclaves. Even today, they resist the term *ghetto*, which journalists (and Maori activists, when it suits them) insist on calling their neighborhoods.

Yet despite decades of segregation, differences between Maori and *pakeba* slowly disappeared. Intermarriage dulled racial distinctions, so much so that census takers stopped recording New Zealanders as Maori unless they wished to be identified as such. Many Maori young-

sters growing up during the 1950s and '60s, when Maori was not an acceptable classroom subject, did not learn the Maori language.

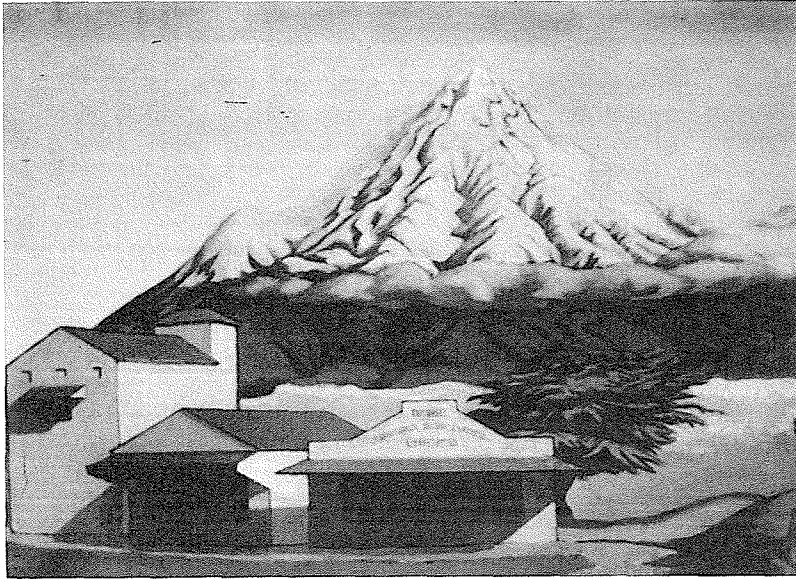
Traditional Maori ways seemed to be waning until Indian and black protest movements in the United States kindled a like-minded Maori political revival. Maori college students and blue-collar workers founded Nga Tamatoa (Brave Young People)—the largest Maori protest group—in 1970; other organizations, such as Te Reo Maori and Te Roopu o te Matakite, soon followed. Armed with Nga Tamatoa's slogan ("There is no Maori problem, what we have is a problem with the *pakehas*"), leaders of the new Maori movement demanded the return of land taken during the days of white settlement, better jobs, Maori study programs in the schools, and greater access to the white-dominated media in New Zealand.

The young activists' demands and tactics—including "sit ins," heckling government leaders, marching on Parliament—perplexed and dismayed most white New Zealanders who pointed proudly to four seats in Parliament reserved for Maori and to Maori motifs on everything from stationery to clothing as proof that Maori enjoyed the same rights as their *pakeha* brothers.

Maori assertiveness, however, has brought about some changes in recent years. A Maori, Kara Puketapu, was appointed head of the Department of Maori Affairs (similar to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs) for the first time in 1978, and university students can now get graduate degrees in Maori studies. Members of the Mana Motuhake (Self-determination) Party, founded in 1980 by Matiu Rata, a former member of Parliament, won one of the Maori seats in both the 1982 and '84 general elections. The Maori Council and the Maori Women's Welfare League, both advisory groups, now provide forums for Maori grievances and regularly convey the opinions of the Maori people to government leaders. Parents in the northern half of the North Island, where most Maori live, have begun over 350 community-run "language nurseries"—kindergartens where only Maori is spoken. Fearing that the ties of kinship essential to the Maori community were weakening, families in Auckland recently created *matua whangai*, a foster parent program for Maori street kids.

Today, thanks to their success in adapting old ways to new ends, the 300,000 Maori in New Zealand are closer than ever before to the goal sought by Young Maori Party leader Ngata during the 1920s: to have "your hand grasping the arts of the *pakeha* for your material well-being and your heart cherishing the treasures of your ancestors."





This 1931 painting of the North Island's Mount Taranaki by Christopher Perkins captures some of the rural scene: the ubiquitous corrugated iron-roofed dairy factory producing milk, butter, and cheese.

in Christchurch so that they could enjoy the "social season." There they attended balls or the theater, duly presented their debutante daughters to the governor, and prayed in Christchurch Cathedral.

Life, at least for the few thousand landed gentry, was the pot of gold at the end of the colonial rainbow. But others resented their good fortune. William Pember Reeves, journalist, poet, Liberal, and later director of the London School of Economics, called them "social pests." Class divisions widened in a nation that American progressives erroneously assumed had "neither millionaires nor tramps." Dock workers and day laborers filled the cities; by 1896, one-quarter of New Zealand's population lived in the four largest cities. A new urban proletariat—swollen by the Australians, Chinese, and Californians who stayed when the gold fields played out—mostly male and scornful of Victorian manners, demanded an eight-hour day and an end to the concentration of power in the hands of the "leading families." Small farmers and herders, "locked out" of legislative life, particularly as it dealt with land and tax policy, turned to liberal politicians such as James E. Fitzgerald, who campaigned for a fairer distribution of income so that New

Zealand could escape "Old World prejudice."

A worldwide depression that engulfed the colony from the late 1870s to the mid-1890s brought growing disenchantment with colonial life, especially among Liberals and their supporters. On the London market, wool prices dropped precipitously, wiping out some of New Zealand's gentry when British banks called in their loans. Bread lines and soup kitchens appeared in all the major towns, tramps roamed the countryside searching for jobs, and the bubonic plague threatened the slums in Auckland and Dunedin. Alarm that Old World problems had taken up residence in the Antipodes led to pleas such as that of a pamphleteer in 1892 "to hasten . . . that 'new era' of human life . . . an era in which the spirit of brotherhood . . . will supplant the spirit of individualism."

State Socialism

Throughout the hard times, conservative governments tried to stay afloat by cutting subsidies and payrolls. When these policies failed, voters in 1890 turned the conservatives out, bringing in a group of Liberals championing a heady if improvised mix of remedies variously drawn from John Stuart Mill, Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Christian and Fabian socialism. Over the next 50 years, a succession of Liberal and then Labour prime ministers (Richard John Seddon, 1893-1906; Joseph G. Ward, 1906-12; Michael J. Savage, 1935-40; and Peter Fraser, 1940-49) and their Cabinet officers pushed through the reforms that inspired American and British observers, and not a few locals, to call New Zealand "the world's most advanced democracy."

Richard John Seddon, born in Lancashire, England, former gold digger and failed pub owner, led the Liberal upheaval. He became what W. H. Oliver, in *The Story of New Zealand*, called the "Seddonian model," the die from which all subsequent New Zealand politicians have been cast. Even though he lacked "refinement and culture," he was "King Dick" to his supporters; as Oliver put it, a man of "energy, good fellowship, the common touch, a crude intelligence untempered by reflection." To detractors, such as the *West Coast Times*, he was a "full grown rat, skin, teeth, whiskers, claws and everything complete." In any event, he played his cards shrewdly, building New Zealand's first modern political organization, using patronage and the pork barrel to keep his supporters in line. "Keep the bastards on a string," he advised, "and they'll keep you in Office."

By the time Seddon took office, Otago gold had financed

STOUT ALLIES

The valor of New Zealand's soldiers has repeatedly won worldwide recognition. During World War II, for example, a 1941 cover of *Life* featured the "insubordinate, hard-fighting independent men" of New Zealand's expeditionary force who "bear a marked resemblance to Texans and have a reputation as soldiers fully as brilliant." A German general who fought them at Cassino in 1944 called the New Zealand infantry "well-trained and formidable in close range fighting . . . in many cases strongpoints had to be wiped out to the last man, as they refused to surrender."

The New Zealanders' casualty rates have often been staggering. Their losses have been suffered far from home, in battle side by side with the troops of New Zealand's larger, more powerful allies, first Britain, then the United States:

ANGLO-BOER WAR: 1899–1902. For the first time, New Zealanders fought overseas. Some 6,500 men (and 8,000 horses) were dispatched to South Africa, a contribution surpassed only by Britain and Rhodesia. A total of 288 New Zealanders died and 166 were wounded.

WORLD WAR I: 1914–18. In October 1914, New Zealand shipped 8,427 men to France, the largest contingent ever to leave the country at one time. In 1915, the 11,600 New Zealanders in the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. After eight months of bloody, inconclusive trench warfare against the Turks, the ANZAC troops withdrew, having suffered 2,721 dead and 4,572 wounded. New Zealand infantry and mounted rifle brigades also served on the western front in France. During the final stages of the Somme offensive in September 1916, some 1,560 New Zealanders were killed and 5,440 were wounded. During the battles for Messines and Passchendaele the next year, the New Zealand Division took heavy casualties.

By the end of the Great War, 100,444 New Zealand troops had served overseas. All told, 16,697 lost their lives and 41,317 were wounded. By one reckoning, the 58 percent casualty rate was second only to Australia's (68 percent) among the Allied nations.

WORLD WAR II: 1939–45. New Zealand joined the United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Canada in declaring war on Hitler's Germany in

the construction of some railways, roads, bridges, and public buildings. Seddon's Liberal reformers expanded these projects and touched virtually every other aspect of colonial life as well. In the cities, they improved sanitation and built workers' housing to replace the growing slums. They kept a campaign promise to "burst up the big estates" through lotteries that gave sections of large holdings to applicants whose names were drawn out of a box, a procedure which prompted a visiting American to remark, "It isn't much like Oklahoma, is it?"

Seddon's Minister of Labour, Pember Reeves, engineered new laws regulating safety conditions in factories and the em-

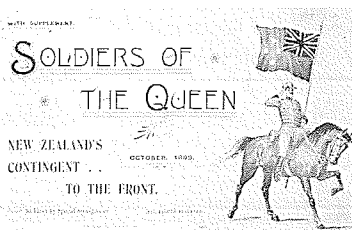
September 1939. The Cabinet authorized the mobilization of a 6,600-volunteer Special Force, which became the nucleus of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF), and appointed Maj. Gen. Bernard Freyberg as commander.

The New Zealand battalions fought in North Africa alongside the Austrians, British, and Free French during the seesaw struggle against Erwin Rommel's famed Afrika Korps, which was climaxed by the British Eighth Army's assault on the German-Italian line at El Alamein in late 1942 and the surrender of the Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943. Over 2,700 New Zealanders died in action in North Africa and 6,000 were wounded. New Zealand soldiers then spent 18 long months in Italy, where nearly 35,000 troops in the 2NZEF joined the fight for Anzio and Florence in 1944.

During the entire conflict, British troops suffered three-quarters of a million casualties (killed, wounded, missing, prisoners); U.S. forces, nearly one million. New Zealand's 28,625 casualties may seem small by comparison, but not if one considers that the population of the home country was barely 1.5 million at the time.

KOREAN WAR: 1950-53. New Zealand sent a special unit, called Kayforce, to serve in the British Commonwealth Division alongside U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula. In all, 3,794 New Zealand soldiers served in Kayforce; 33 died and 79 were wounded. (Of U.S. servicemen in Korea, 54,246 died and 103,284 were wounded.)

VIETNAM WAR: 1965-72. National Party prime minister Sir Keith Holyoake ordered a Royal New Zealand Artillery unit to South Vietnam to fight alongside the Australians (and Americans) against Hanoi's forces in 1965. A total of 3,890 troops (all volunteers) served in the field before newly elected Labour prime minister Norman Kirk ended New Zealand's involvement in December 1972. Losses were 35 dead and 187 wounded. Though New Zealand soldiers participated in the Sinai Multinational Peacekeeping Force in 1982, Vietnam was the last place where New Zealand soldiers died overseas.



ployment of women and children. His plan for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes was considered so advanced that neighboring Australia promptly adopted it. Reeves's labor laws led Albert Métin, a French radical visiting New Zealand in 1899, to coin the phrase "state socialism," which is still used to describe the country's regime.

New Zealand's Parliament is generally credited with being one of the first legislatures to give women the vote (the state of Wyoming beat New Zealand by 24 years), but it happened more by chance than by design: In 1893, under pressure from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a rider enfranchis-

ing women was attached to a bill that the Prime Minister did not expect to pass. It did so, by two votes. The Liberals also began free education for working-class children, old-age pensions for the "respectable poor," and improved public health service programs, a package of social benefits that led the Boston Progressive Frank Parsons to declare New Zealand "the birthplace of the 20th century."

Parsons was as much wrong as right. In the decades ahead, interventionist governments were to become nearly universal in the West. America's New Deal, for example, brought the United States abreast of where New Zealand had been 30 years earlier. But Parsons erred in believing that New Zealanders had created a land of universal brotherhood. For all the appearances of "state socialism," New Zealanders remained stubbornly capitalistic. Their "advanced democracy" was no less vulnerable than others to world economic cycles.

Going Beyond FDR

New Zealand had to export to live. Shortly after the Liberals took office, prices for wool and other nonperishables rose, due in part to European demands for exports during World War I. More importantly, new refrigeration techniques opened markets in Europe and Britain. For the first time, the butter, cheese, beef, lamb, pork, apples, and pears that New Zealand's farmers produced more cheaply than anybody else in the world had international buyers. The export boom in turn financed an expansion of the welfare state. But as farmers everywhere learned—in Argentina, Australia, Canada, and the United States—this "golden age" was fleeting. In 1921 and '22, prices plummeted, credit tightened and then disappeared, and farmers walked away from their land in despair. As in other high-export countries, the economy went from bad to worse following the October 1929 crash of the Wall Street stock market and the onset of depression in Europe and America.

Desperate voters turned again to the liberals—now called the Labour Party—to finish what Seddon and his followers had begun. The 1935 election brought to power a new group of people led by a trade unionist, Labour prime minister Michael ("Micky") Joseph Savage. A "benign, cosy, political uncle," Savage allied himself with such flamboyant figures as "Fighting Bob" Semple of the Miner's Union, "Paddy" Webb, another militant miner, Peter Fraser of the Labourer's Union, and Walter Nash, traveling salesman, devout Anglican, Christian socialist.

Savage responded to the Great Depression with programs very similar to those of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, but he



Conservatives predicted that unions would run amok after compulsory arbitration became law in 1894, but the country remained "strikeless" for over a decade. Even today, New Zealanders frown on labor militants.

went much further than FDR. He took over the marketing of perishable exports and gave the farmer "guaranteed prices" for his produce. Mindful of New Zealand's almost complete dependence on Britain for manufactured goods, he promoted light industry—especially the assembly of automobiles, radios, washing machines, and refrigerators—through tariffs and import quotas. He nationalized domestic airlines and some long-distance bus services. He added state-subsidized housing, a 40-hour work week, and largely free education from kindergarten through university. By the time World War II began in Europe in 1939, Savage's Labour Party had reshaped the economy and created a more egalitarian society.

Yet New Zealand remained in many ways, as Mark Twain said, a "junior England," so close were the ties between the two countries. My own mother, born in a Manchester slum in 1893, immigrated to New Zealand in 1912 yet still spoke as late as the 1970s of "going Home." And my father, born in New Zealand in 1884 to cooks trained in London's Carlton Club, shared her sentiment, though his only visit to England was as an artificer conscripted in 1917 to fight England's war with the Kaiser.

So perhaps it is not surprising that no Western country

sacrificed a higher proportion of its men in battle on behalf of a country thousands of miles away (see box, pages 58–59). But New Zealand's valor did not produce the same kind of national self-assertion that it did in Australia. New Zealanders continued to cling to the Mother Country's skirts and skittishly resisted full autonomy long after Britain offered it in 1931.* Only after World War II came the realization that the United Kingdom had neither the resources nor the will to police the world as it had once done. With great reluctance, New Zealand voters and politicians recognized a new postwar reality. The Pacific was now an American ocean, and only the United States could protect them from what they feared most: a Japanese military resurgence. As university students in the late 1940s, we used to debate whether New Zealand should "hitch its wagon to the American star" by becoming the 49th state, but New Zealand's leaders, rather more wisely, opted for military protection instead. In 1951, Australia and New Zealand petitioned the United States (since, as Prime Minister Peter Fraser put it, New Zealand "could not expect to *compel* a huge country like America to act") to form ANZUS, a mutual defense treaty for the Pacific basin.

New Zealand's reluctance to accept political and economic autonomy contrasted oddly with the country's fledgling attempts to have a voice in the affairs of the world. New Zealand's leaders strongly supported the League of Nations during the 1920s, believing that their endorsement carried special weight abroad because, as an advanced democracy, New Zealand knew how to promote human progress and world order.

Brain Drain

But the truth was that "God's Own Country," as Seddon had been the first to call it, was not heaven on earth, especially on matters of civil liberties. At the Waihi quartz mines in 1912, the government authorities used troops to break a strike; on the West Coast in 1913, the Prime Minister imprisoned striking coal miners for refusing to pay fines; in 1932, mounted police broke up demonstrations by the unemployed; and farmers deputized as "special constables" bashed strikers' heads with their wooden batons on several occasions before World War II.

Conformity was always the rule. During both world wars, the government conscripted men when the volunteer pool dried up. Pacifists and other conscientious objectors were dealt with harshly—given Hobson's Choice either to fight or be treated as

*Great Britain granted dominion status to New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and South Africa in 1907, giving each country the right to establish a national government. The Statute of Westminster in 1931 gave the Dominions full autonomy, but New Zealand refused to adopt it until 1947.

criminals deprived of voting and other political rights. And during the Cold War, New Zealand more or less allowed its foreign policy to be dictated by Washington. Anti-communist fears brought about conscription for the first time in peacetime and led the Labour government to dissolve one left-wing trade union and threaten others with a similar fate.

These and other changes crowded in on New Zealand in the decades after 1945, producing both insecurity and a feeling of intellectual and artistic inferiority vis-à-vis Britain and Europe. The 1950s and '60s were a time of prosperity in New Zealand and, in many matters, a sense of moderation prevailed. But despite the country's reputation as a cornucopia of food and fiber, despite its contributions to global peace, and despite the creation of a society much of the world could envy, the anonymous critic who said that New Zealand consisted of "60 million sheep and two-and-half million Philistines" struck a nerve among the country's scholars and artists.

Perhaps the intellectual exodus began with Samuel Butler's return to England in 1864; it was certainly established by Ernest Rutherford's departure for the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University in 1895. (Rutherford later developed the model for the atom, thereby heralding the atomic age.) Others followed—artists, poets, novelists, painters, politicians, scholars, administrators, engineers—few of whom received any recognition from a society where "ditchers were more esteemed than poets," as New Zealand's first historian, A. S. Thomson, commented in 1859. Only after European critics had praised their achievements did such figures as Frances Hodgkins, the distinguished painter, Katherine Mansfield, the world-renowned writer, David Low, the great political cartoonist ("Colonel Blimp"), Inia te Wiata, the Maori bass baritone, or even Ngaio Marsh, whose mystery stories have intrigued millions, gain acclaim from their own countrymen.

The truth is that it is difficult for any country, especially a young one, to inspire distinctive voices and visions if it does not see itself as distinct, as a nation. But during the comfortable 1950s and '60s, only a few artists and intellectuals fretted about "the brain drain." In fact, no one else seemed to be worrying about much of anything at all.

