

Some readers may also wish for more analysis. For example Grant states that of 1200 objectors whose appeals were denied, 400 subsequently joined the army. What does this suggest about the integrity of their beliefs? Or what is the significance of the 2156 votes received by an imprisoned pacifist in the 1941 Wellington City Council elections? Were all voters aware of his pacifism and imprisonment? Grant rarely asks such questions, especially if he cannot answer them. Also worrying is the paucity of references. Much important and original information is not sourced. Grant's interpretation of Fraser's motivation is advanced confidently but almost completely without reference to documentary evidence. These weaknesses, I suspect, derive not from any limitations of the author but rather from the constraints of writing, simultaneously, for a specialist, popular and academic market. In this case, the specialist market — the old conchies themselves — is most likely to be satisfied, which is only proper. The launching of the book was virtually an 'old conchies' reunion.

One worthwhile and well-substantiated argument does run through the book. New Zealand's treatment of dissent during World War Two was notably less tolerant than that of Britain, Canada, the U.S.A., or Australia. Britain, says Grant, took 'exceptional' care to protect minority interests. Specially appointed appeal boards granted almost two-thirds of appeals (compared with 19% in New Zealand). Few anti-war agitators were imprisoned. Posters, books and speeches that were banned in New Zealand were all legal in Britain. New Zealand, by contrast, was 'compliant, homogeneous', 'egalitarian, insular and suspicious'. For this by now conventional assessment of our past, Grant has provided some fascinating and convincing new evidence.

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*The Story of New Zealand.* By Judith Bassett, Keith Sinclair and Marcia Stenson. Reed Methuen Ltd, Auckland, 1985. 216 pp. N.Z. price: \$19.95.

THIS IS a very good book indeed, and fills a long-felt need for a readable and attractive general history of New Zealand. It is well printed, with a good print size in a single column of manageable width, and the pages are visually pleasing. The photographs are excellent, often unfamiliar, and have helpful explanations. Line drawings and extracts of songs and poems accompany and humanize the text. Brief paragraphs in the margins explain words like 'speculator' and 'annex'. In 19 chapters, none longer than 15 pages, the authors relate what happened from GONDWANALAND to WITI IHIMAERA. The chapters themselves are a clever and successful blend of theme and chronology, with headings like 'The Early Governors and the Maoris', 'Earning a Living' and 'Wars and the Fear of War since 1945'.

A smooth and consistent style, good layout and short sentences make for relatively easy reading. Unfortunately, the 'relatively' is crucial. It is far easier to read than most history books, including many purposely written for secondary school students, but selections still tested out at reading ages from 15 to well above (using the FRY IIB Readability Test). Thus *The Story* marks a major improvement, and is certainly nowhere incomprehensible, but many children will still find it less enjoyable than they should.

The authors claim that 'This is not a textbook'. Certainly there are no set questions, no exercises and no make-work activities, but their claim is too modest. In the hands of a skilled teacher it will make a fine textbook: it is clear, comprehensible and continuous, and more likely to lead students to enjoy history than many self-professed texts. I hope all schools will use it, for it is excellent value.

*The Story* does not assume any prior knowledge by the reader, and is therefore highly suitable for any person reading about our history for the first time. Major events are described fully, often through eyewitness accounts, which add a pleasing sense of realism. The account of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi is superb, to give one of many possible examples. Traditional but erroneous myths, such as the romanticized young boy Bugler Allan, are not perpetuated, but colourful and harmless anecdotes are included. There is evidence, too, of re-evaluation of historic figures, as with the more sympathetic treatment of the unfortunate Governor FitzRoy.

My chief concern is that the history narrated in *The Story* is too often sanitized — purged of all nastiness. The authors, commendably, do not 'write down' to their readers but ironically this virtue underlines the greater weakness. *The Story* claims to be a complete history, but omits or glosses over ugly incidents and attitudes. Thus the Wairau incident is mentioned, and with it the deaths of 22 Europeans, but not the fact that 13 of them were tomahawked after surrendering. It is said Governor Grey did his best to carry out the promises of the Treaty of Waitangi, but no mention is made of his purchase of 30 million acres, nearly half New Zealand. There is no mention of the atrocities committed by government forces in the pacification of the Ureweras, nor of the vicious anti-Chinese legislation around 1900, nor of the brutal treatment of pacifists in the First World War. This selectivity intensifies in later periods. There is no mention of the legal discrimination against the Maori people this century, from rehabilitation after 1918 to welfare benefits like the family allowance. A sanitized account of the past will not help the reader to understand present issues more clearly.

In their introduction, the authors state: 'The history of a country is a story of people and the changes in their lives'. Compare this with a conversation on the teaching of history in English schools recounted by M.B. Booth in his *History Betrayed* (1969, p.113):

girl 'Well, history is concerned with facts and dates, isn't it?'

Booth 'It's not concerned with ideas?'

girl 'No, not much.'

*The Story* would reinforce the girl's impression. It contains little explanation or discussion of ideas. In the early parts some ideas are referred to, or cleverly alluded to, but too often there is little mention of the conflict of ideas, or of the inconsistencies between principles and practice. Especially towards the end this becomes marked. There is, for instance, no mention of the effective cut-backs in the Welfare State in the 1970s and 1980s, no mention of the forcing apart of the traditional high floor and low ceiling of New Zealand society.

The authors are sufficiently aware of children's society to mention pop concerts and videos but there is no mention at all of street kids, gangs, or glue-sniffing. I do not suggest that a book, especially one for children, should go about muck-raking, but I wish the authors had at least acknowledged that some unfairness, hypocrisy and injustice still exist.

The resources are delightful, but it is a shame there could not be some (just a very few) resources in the form of tables and statistics. Those would allow readers to test

the authors' generalizations and to develop their own, and give teachers opportunities to show that history is not all reading and photographs. Finally, any book that wishes to encourage readers to learn more could surely dare to provide suggestions for further reading, both fiction and non-fiction.

Thus *The Story of New Zealand* is an excellent book. It is very well researched, well presented, and well written. It can be read for pleasure, or used as a text, or as supplementary reading in schools. Its two faults are that its reading level is too high for younger children, and its content is too 'nice' and unchallenging for older children and adults. For all that, it deserves to be read widely by young people from nine to 90.

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*The Working Class and Welfare: Reflections on the Political Development of the Welfare State in Australia and New Zealand, 1890-1980.* By Francis G. Castles. Allen & Unwin Port Nicholson Press, Wellington, 1985. xiv, 128 pp. Australian price: \$13.95 paperback.

THIS IS an excellent book for beginning students of 'the Welfare State', wherever they may be found. But it does not begin auspiciously. It is born out of the author's identity as a Professor of Politics, and much time initially is taken up with debating over the usual abstract hypotheses concerning the welfare state. These prove to be a set of intellectual rivals each too narrowly framed to hope to capture the richness of social reality. But if Francis Castles's point here is that he is going to try to *overcome* the insufficiency of existing hypotheses concerning the comparative evolution of the Australasian, as of any welfare states, it must be said that in the end he succeeds marvellously.

For as the work progresses to discussing the history of the New Zealand and Australian versions of the phenomenon at hand, it becomes first of all a thoughtful lesson upon the intricacies involved in comparing specific welfare states at all. Each nation's history is so dynamic, the profiles of legislation involved in each so complex, and each set of legislation so dependent on the employment level and on the economic and even cultural context within the nation in question for its impact, that at times it seems as if meaningful comparison of welfare philosophies and levels across nations is almost impossible. This is a lesson all hypothesizers need to learn.

Out of all this realism Castles nonetheless brings a neat core of meaning. His comparison of New Zealand and Australia with European welfare states 'suggests that it may not be unreasonable to regard the Australasian centres' early social policy reforms in the form of minimum wage regulation through the arbitration system as a kind of functional alternative to the [European and parliamentary] strategy of extending citizenship rights by means of universal coverage of the social security system, as in the [classic] institutional model of the welfare state' (pp.84-85). In sum, the Australasian working class of necessity has tended to create its own, rather different, version of the welfare state, because it has been relatively unassisted (save by New Zealand's first Labour government) by a sustained social democratic power and vision in parliament. Their entire union-led emphasis on wage and job maintenance, in preference to wider social benefits, was inevitable in the absence of a strong social