

Grey's major contribution lies not only in bringing together most of the diverse and generally narrowly-focused individual studies in New Zealand's historical geography, whether they be published or in university dissertations, but in the way in which he has placed New Zealand's development within the wider-world framework. The author details how as a nation we have always been prepared to take techniques and ideas from overseas and amend them to suit our own environmental and economic needs. Of course attitudes change and Grey warns that we should not judge the actions and beliefs of earlier New Zealanders from our present-day viewpoints, for we are all products of our own times and beliefs. I agree, for too often New Zealanders today condemn the wholesale burning of the New Zealand bush in the past by Maori and pakeha alike, but when challenged to say what they would have done, given the circumstances and beliefs of the nineteenth century, they cannot suggest any realistic alternative.

The maps in *Aotearoa and New Zealand: A Historical Geography* are a major disappointment, not because of their cartography, which is of a high standard, but because Grey has foregone a marvellous opportunity of presenting a fresh visual view of the country's past by his failure to provide original work. Practically all the maps are copies of, or derived from, previously published and generally easily available maps.

A 35-page bibliography reveals the wide range of sources which Grey consulted, but also discloses some surprising omissions such as Harry Morton's *The Whales Wake*, and Eric Warr's *From Bush-burn to Butter*, as well as a number of relevant articles by New Zealand geographers and others which were published in some less well-known journals.

Despite my criticisms, this is a major and useful pioneering contribution to our understanding of New Zealand's changing geography.

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Far from the Promised Land? Being Jewish in New Zealand. By Ann Beaglehole and Hal Levine. Pacific Press, Wellington, 1995. 146pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-9583418-4-2.

THERE COULD NOT be a better title than 'Far from the Promised Land' for a book that deals with the experiences of Jews in New Zealand, a country which is not only 'far away' from the mainstream Jewish centres but has only a very small minority of Jews (the census in 1991 counted 3,048 Jews, or 0.1% of the population). The question of survival strategies is not unique to the New Zealand Jewish experience since Jews all over the world face the problem of expressing and passing on their Jewish identity in a modern world. Since it has often been argued that the negative experience of anti-Semitism has an important, even essential, impact on the shaping of Jewish identity, New Zealand seems to present an interesting case study. It has a low level of anti-Semitism yet at the same time it is not a multi-ethnic or multi-cultural society. As the New Zealand-Jewish experience shows, the high degree of tolerance in a mono-cultural or at the most bi-cultural society also had its price: the desire to adapt to this ideal society.

Jews have lived in New Zealand since the early nineteenth century, and immigration waves followed a similar pattern to those in other parts of the 'new world'. However, unlike Australia or the USA, this 'green and pleasant' land is a 'hard country in which to be Jewish'. The small size of the community might be one reason, but size alone does not

explain everything. The authors argue that Jewishness is 'strongly influenced by the nature of contemporary social reality' and that this social reality was such that most Jews in New Zealand tried to 'fit in', and only a small minority held on to strict orthodoxy. Nevertheless the question remains, who created this social reality and why did the Jewish minority respond in a certain way? From the 93 interviews in *Far from the Promised Land?* one could argue that it was less the social reality that defined Jewish behaviour than that Jews whose Jewish identity was not the first priority in their lives migrated to and stayed in New Zealand. Others, who felt the urge to lead a more Jewish life, left the country. A considerable number — 40 of the 93 people interviewed — actually made that choice. The insecurity about their own Jewishness and the fears and anxieties of a minority in whose individual and collective memory persecution had been a reality in the past, seem to be the dominant motives for keeping a low profile. What could have happened had the Jews shown their distinctiveness becomes clear from an example. One informant decided to wear a *kippa* and was surprised by the lack of reaction. One could therefore argue that had the New Zealand Jews shown more willingness to put Jewishness as a first priority, being Jewish in New Zealand might have been easier. The difficulties of a small community, however, become clear when one takes marriage into consideration. After all, finding a suitable Jewish partner is essential for ethnic survival and in New Zealand there were simply not enough Jewish partners available.

What does the book teach us? Since the moment when Jews began to face modernity new strategies of group survival have been created and a variety of responses emerged. This process has not come to an end and there is hope that even 'far from the promised land' Jews will continue to develop their own unique way of expressing their Jewish identity. As New Zealand society itself changes to a more open and multicultural society, various ethnic groups are actively encouraged to re-define and express their ethnic self-awareness. Judaism nowadays is attractive again for children of 'mixed marriages' who very often identify themselves as Jews, and conversion of Maori and Pakeha is not unusual — a sign that Jewish identity is something more complex than the strict orthodox definition recognizes. And if this new trend should fail there is always another solution which New Zealand Jews found for themselves: migrating to centres of Jewish life.

Despite the unquestionable merits of the book it has some drawbacks. Gender issues are hardly addressed. It might be interesting to find out more about the different experiences between Jewish men and Jewish women. Furthermore, the book does not clearly show the differences between growing up in the 1950s or the 1980s and whether a significant change had taken place. The question is being asked, but not answered. The book would have gained through more analysis not only because it would have been easier to read but because readers would not have had to work their way through in order to draw conclusions themselves.

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