

relationships and local politics. She skilfully contrasts Bligh enjoying the friendship of Tu, the paramount chief in the Society Islands, and his wife 'Itia, with the deteriorating relationship with his crew.

This friendship and his repeated visits to the islands meant Bligh's language proficiency increased, as well as his knowledge of island life. Indeed Salmond states that Banks has been called 'the father of Pacific ethnography', yet Bligh's records of Tahitian life 'are more detailed and astute than anything Banks was able to accomplish' (p.169). It is here that Salmond's account of Bligh contrasts with other writers who have focused more on his relationship with the crew and his incredible navigation skills. Bligh was able to fully exploit his *taio* or bond relationship with Tu and 'Itia to obtain answers to in-depth questions about Tahitian culture and life. Bligh had numerous opportunities to observe island rituals and mix with the locals.

The mutiny and all its details are well covered by Salmond. Equally intriguing is the aftermath. The mutineers eventually split into two groups: one, headed by Fletcher Christian, eventually found its way to Pitcairn Island; the other stayed in Tahiti. Salmond does not simply recount the events but continues to imbue them with her knowledge of Pacific Island culture to provide a clearer context. Episodes involving Christian and his group's fate on Pitcairn Island are all here. Equally interesting, though, is the fate of the others who stayed in Tahiti. The wretched treatment they received on the ill-fated *Pandora* is tragically portrayed, as well as their life while living in Tahiti.

Unfortunately, the lives of the mutineers after they set Bligh adrift are so well illustrated from Chapter 13 onwards that by the time the narrative returns to Bligh in Chapter 18 I had almost forgotten it was a biography about him. This lapse seems indicative of Bligh's return to the Pacific. He was not as intrigued by Tahitian culture anymore and after watching a *heiva* or sacred dance rather grumpily commented there was 'not anything new in the performance' (p.380). In the same way, near the end of the book, there is a sense that the best had gone before and the later career of Bligh is not quite as exciting or even interesting as his earlier voyages. The trial of the mutineers, his naval career with Lord Nelson and his brief stint as Governor of New South Wales are well covered. The only bright spot was his successful second breadfruit voyage where he completed what he was meant to do with the *Bounty*, which was to take breadfruit to the West Indies.

There is certainly no shortage of material on Bligh. Yet, Salmond has produced a superb biography of a much-maligned figure and provides so much more than a standard analysis. Bligh is now given a truly Pacific focus that also adds not only to his well-documented navigation skills, but also to his role as an ethnographer and devoted husband. In *Bligh*, one of New Zealand's foremost anthropologists and historians breathes new life into an already well-researched subject.

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*Fairness and Freedom: A History of Two Open Societies, New Zealand and the United States.* By David Hackett Fischer. Oxford University Press, New York. xxv & 629pp. NZ price: \$56. ISBN: 978-0-19-983270-5.

THIS AMBITIOUS BOOK of over 600 pages comparing two open societies, New Zealand and the United States, begins more like a travelogue than a densely argued study of history. Reminiscent of so many other books about the antipodes, *Fairness and Freedom* reminds us that getting to New Zealand from the United States, even in the era of jet travel, necessitates crossing the equivalent of 17 time zones — 'more than to any other nation' (p.ix). The preface continues very much in the fashion so typical of travel guides

complete with unsurprising information about native geography, flora and fauna ('much of New Zealand is mountainous' (p.x)), as well as observations about the warmth of the people ('whenever we traveled, we met the kindness of strangers' (p.xviii)). What guide would be complete without the de rigueur map showing the distance from Wellington to the rest of the civilised world? Most readers of the NZJH can safely skip the preface.

David Hackett Fischer is the prize-winning author of a dozen books of different shapes and sizes. A specialist in the history of revolutionary United States, he has written on colonial settlement, imperial resistance, the American Revolution as well as early national leaders. For my part, as an American historian based in New Zealand, I can recommend each of them as enviable examples of the happy marriage of thorough scholarship and the readability of a page-turning novel. Most remarkable in this respect is Fischer's 1996 *The Great Wave*, an utterly accessible history of inflation. No kidding.

*Fairness and Freedom* deserves a prominent place among Fischer's works, being both well-researched and easy to read. The thesis could not be simpler: Kiwis and Yanks prove remarkably comparable in that they share the same basic values and yet differ in important ways. The differences, easily summarised in the diptych 'fairness and freedom', turn out to be worthy of careful study precisely because of the two nations' larger shared values, values that derive from being English-speaking settler societies, with inhabitants deeply identifying with the natural environment, struggling to live down a fraught colonial past, and elementally committed to maintaining their openness. These profound similarities serve as the frame for understanding the contrasting ideological commitments at the heart of Fischer's study.

Now at the end of his professional career, Fischer betrays no fear. Nowhere do we detect even a whiff of doubt about the enormity of his task. In a single volume the author boldly offers up comprehensive social and political narratives of two disparate nations (including international relations and overseas wars) from their respective foundings to the present day. How present you might ask? The preface alludes to the Canterbury earthquakes, sympathetically — if erroneously — noting that 'the epicenter of the largest earthquake was near the old port of Lyttelton' (p.xiv). What is more, Fischer binds together these threads with the hugely nebulous archetypes he labels fairness and freedom.

*Fairness and Freedom* boasts no numbered chapters. Between some 50 pages of introduction and conclusion there are three broad headings: 'Origins of Open Societies', 'Nation Building as Open Processes' and 'Open Societies in World Affairs'. The sections are not quite parallel, as the second and third largely illustrate the main contention found in the first, namely that the freedom so dear to Americans to this very day emanates from their founding in the Enlightenment. Following on from seventeenth-century settlement, the American eighteenth-century experience of imperial conflict, revolutionary war and formal nation-building produced a uniquely powerful attachment to Enlightenment ideals of liberty and freedom, ideals that found eloquent expression in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and remain enshrined in the Constitution. Children of the Enlightenment and its dedication to liberalism, Americans celebrate freedom as both birthright and *raison d'être*.

Despite being a child of the same imperial parent as the United States, New Zealand and its colonial experience differed fundamentally from that of its distant cousin. Arriving in the nineteenth century, New Zealand settlers understood themselves as part of an empire whose fundamental ideal, Fischer quotes James Morris, emanated from 'the High Victorian concept of Fair Play' (p.68). Kiwis and Yanks 'are second cousins twice removed, because our imperial origins were not the same' (p.69), the later settlement of New Zealand resulting in a diminished desire to fight for freedom, liberty already firmly entrenched in the warp and woof of the British imperial mindset. Put another way, the free English people settling New Zealand having internalised their freedom considered fairness of greater urgency.

Of course, one might see all of this very differently. Yes, Americans were peculiarly attached to liberty and still are. And, yes, this attachment stems from their founding and its origins in imperial conflict with England in the eighteenth century. But the contrast with New Zealand over fairness does not follow so readily. Rather, one might conclude that the distinctions between freedom and fairness rest much more with size and location. Being inhabitants of a small and remote set of islands, Kiwis have never stepped so firmly (and often so clumsily) into world affairs. Accordingly, for decades Kiwis left to their larger cousin the issue of fighting for freedom. Living in the antipodes, they were never in a position to challenge British authority or declare independence. If their liberty was contested by the Crown, they nevertheless found the benefits of empire far outweighed the drawbacks. Their ambition has been to fight around the edges, for fairness, assuming that fundamental questions of freedom were never on the table.

In world affairs, where clearly the United States has played a bigger role, one again can question Fischer's conclusions. Size and location explain far more about the similarities and differences between these 'second cousins twice removed' than ideological commitments. Or if that is not quite right, the ideological commitments that inform their respective foreign policies and actions on the world stage seem less determined by settler experiences from the distant past than by self-understanding of far more recent roles in relation to exercising power. The role of the American colossus — for good or ill — has much to do with its basic understanding that the United States must be a force in the world and that force, when for good, must originate in fundamental ideological commitments. For a capitalist nation based on large-scale immigration and long dependent on international trade and markets (as are all nations today), freedom seems pretty accurate. New Zealand, as a much smaller nation, appropriately has chosen to emphasise fairness over freedom. Size (when combined with sophistication and high levels of education) more than history would seem to dictate that New Zealand would pursue multilateralism and fairness instead of a kind of freedom that all-too-often gets defined unilaterally or solely among the great powers. The point is that fairness rarely contrasts with freedom, even if, as we well know, multilateralism often contrasts with great power politics. Yanks and Kiwis have fought together in virtually every American war of the twentieth century, including Vietnam and Afghanistan, all fought in the name of freedom. The chief disagreements between New Zealand and the United States on the world stage have been over unilateral American acts of dubious propriety by almost any ethical standard. New Zealand did not protest CIA covert operations in the 1970s and 1980s or the American war in Iraq more recently because they were unfair. They objected because they believed them to be immoral and a danger to world peace.

Readers may well query the construction of the history of New Zealand around the notion of fairness (or any other single issue) and that of the United States around that of freedom. Concerning the Americans, Fischer is certainly not the first to have undertaken such a proposition. Eric Foner published *The Story of American Freedom* in the 1990s to much critical acclaim and a few years later turned it into *Give me Liberty!*, the single best-selling textbook ever. Foner's books, it seems to me, do a better job in problematising freedom, even as they serve to bolster Fischer's basic claim that contesting freedom is at the very heart of American political discourse. Fischer's chapters on immigration, women's rights, race relations, the growth of federal power, the response to depression, war and recent afflictions such as terrorism will hardly alter Americans' understanding of themselves.

What about the history of New Zealand? Certainly Fischer's research seems impressive. An able historian and assiduous worker, he has read deeply about Aotearoa. A clue to the scholars upon whom he relies comes on the dedication page. One could surely do worse than depend on Raewyn Dalziel, Jock Phillips, Tom Brooking, Peter Gibbons, Jeanine Graham and Erik Olssen. James Belich is not thanked but cited repeatedly. If one can

forgive not always citing the most recent scholarship and overlook some obvious editorial mistakes (Christchurch is spelled no less than three ways), the narrative seems suited nicely to purpose. Non-New Zealanders who might find even Philippa Mein Smith's *Concise History* insufficiently concise will doubtless learn a lot about New Zealand from Fischer. The focus on individuals (complete with many fitting portraits) makes the story that much more accessible. Closer to home, New Zealanders will likely forgive Fischer his minor mistakes, because his narrative proves exceedingly complimentary to New Zealand and its people. Fischer's sympathy for the Land of the Long White Cloud manifests itself on almost every page, almost to the point of polemic. For example, criticism of land grabbing or racism or exploitation is always contrasted with the more egregious transgressions of the Americans. Hell-bent on being free, Fischer informs us, Americans have never cared about playing fair. Even Kiwi self-criticism Fischer finds ways to make less critical and more appealing. Subsistence to the British Empire in the 1930s and 1940s that some have mocked as cultural cringe, Fischer nobly asserts to have been less about fealty to mother country than Kiwis healthily combining 'loyalty to the British empire with pride in New Zealand's growing sense of nationhood ... Colonial cringe had nothing to do with it' (p.340). Similarly, David McIntyre's use of 'dual dependency' comes up for criticism. 'That phrase is not correct', the American Fischer asserts. 'New Zealand's policy during the war was not to be dependent on any nation but to join the grand coalition as an independent partner, always on its own terms' (p.353).

Precisely who is Fischer's intended audience and what is his message? As mentioned above, clearly *Fairness and Freedom* is not for the New Zealand market. Several parts make this particularly clear. In addition to the travelogue qualities of the preface, the introduction stands out for its one-sidedness. Despite being titled 'Fairness and Freedom', it is not about freedom. It begins with Fischer's personal reminiscence about a 1994 by-election when 'suddenly it dawned on us that Selwyn's many candidates had little to say on the subject of liberty and freedom' (p.4) and goes on to observe that while 'Muldoon and Douglas were far apart ... both men appealed to the large idea of fairness' (p.5). From there Fischer works his way into a summary of fairness as a trope in New Zealand culture as well as a broader philological exploration of the word and its etiology. The brief appendix takes us full circle, offering the reader a schematic analysis of fairness in other disciplines. These clues lead us to both the intended audience and the aim of the book, which is stated after a discussion of reform in the 1930s: 'From a comparison of these two reform movements, a question comes to mind. Might a third way be found? Could it combine liberty and freedom with fairness and justice in an optimal way? In 1940, that was a problem for the future. In the twenty-first century, it is a question for our time' (p.406). To be clear, Fischer believes that New Zealand is not in need of more freedom; nor would they change the world if they did find a third way. Rather, it is free Americans who need to find an alternative; it is they who desperately need an injection of fairness. For too long free to be unfair to each other and their sister nations, Americans could learn a great deal about fairness from Kiwis and, as a result, improve both their political discourse and their society. Educate your American cousins, New Zealanders, and save the world.

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