

NEW ZEALAND AND KOREA IN THE PACIFIC: THE GROWTH OF A PARTNERSHIP

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World War II marks the principle and in some respects the only real transition in New Zealand's sense of its place in the world in the twentieth century. Whereas during and after World War I the focus of its foreign policies was Britain and Europe, by the end of World War II New Zealanders began to see their future, alongside Australia, in relation to the United States of America and Asia. We might call it a shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But it was also a cultural transition, from the ANZAC spirit to the ANZUS treaty. The spirit of ANZAC entailed a sense of belonging to proud, effective, but dutiful members of an international order centred on the British Empire and West European civilisation. The Treaty of ANZUS left Britain out: it was a pragmatic, realistic response to a changing international order, but also a matter of weakening cultural ties to Britain, strengthening sense of independence, and burgeoning awareness of the large Asian neighbourhood to the north.

This article serves as an introduction to the themes of the conference and an overview of the development of the New Zealand-Korean Peninsula relationship, with some personal reflections and original research by the author added to the mix.

Small Beginnings

On 28 May 1894 a highly educated and talented young Korean man named Yun Ch'ihō, then a political exile in Shanghai and two years later one of the leading lights of the nationalist Independence Club back in Seoul, wrote in his diary this: "Somehow or other I have a desire bordering on a passion to see Newzealand (*sic*)."¹ Whence came this powerful urge to visit this country? At the time, one would have thought Yun had more than enough serious issues to occupy his mind. Just two months earlier, Kim Okkyun, leader of the abortive Kapshin Coup in December 1884 and then also in exile in Shanghai, was assassinated by an agent of the Korean royal consort Min clan. Subsequently Yun, a close associate of Kim Okkyun, learned of plots to take his life, too. And on 22 May, news reached him of the outbreak of the Tonghak rebellion and its advance towards Seoul.

Why, then, this sudden, strong interest in New Zealand? Unfortunately, Yun leaves us hanging. Not a word more on New Zealand makes an appearance in his diary. We can only speculate. He was a radical reformer, bent on introducing at least the rudiments of democracy into Korean political and public life, and he was a keen observer of foreign

affairs: had he heard of New Zealand's world first in granting universal adult suffrage? We most likely shall never know. But I believe this late-19th century diary entry marks the first expression of interest in New Zealand among Koreans.

It was left to General Park Chung-Hee on assuming the reigns of the South Korean presidency in 1962 to seal a relationship with New Zealand at one level by opening diplomatic relations following a visit to New Zealand. By this stage, the ROK had full diplomatic relations with thirteen countries: Republic of China, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, West Germany, Philippines, Turkey, Thailand, South Vietnam, the UK and the USA. Full relations had also been agreed upon with Malaya and Australia, the latter as early as 1953, but neither had yet completed the exchange of representatives.

Moves to broaden the ROK's diplomatic relations had actually started under Chang Myŏn's government (1960-61), in a relaxation of what the New Zealand Foreign Ministry called former President Rhee Syngman's "intransigent attitude towards relations with countries which did not share his strong anti-communist views."¹ Shortly before the coup d'état by General Park Chung Hee (Pak Chŏnghŭi) in May 1960, Chang began moves to establish diplomatic relations with all the sixteen Korean War allies not yet included, of which one was New Zealand, and all countries "professing neutralism". General Park, however, was definitely not supportive of Chang Myŏn's more flexible attitude towards North Korea or countries taking any neutral stance towards it, and for its part New Zealand was "not anxious to show excessive enthusiasm for the military regime which has overthrown a democratic government," and only considered closer contacts could be justified should they "be of benefit to a country where extreme poverty is so great."² It was resolved in the meantime neither to condemn the military regime nor give it any formal recognition.³

President Park's visit to New Zealand in 1962 changed the mood among New Zealand's government ministers and high officials in MFAT, who had already wondered whether the military regime might in fact be staffed by officials who were less corrupt and more efficient than those employed under the Rhee and Chang governments.⁴ It was not until late in May 1971, however, that the two countries finally opened diplomatic offices in each other's capitals, though each still headed by a *chargé d'affaires*. The ROK Foreign Minister, Ch'oe Kyuha (later interim President following Park's assassination in October 1979), had initiated this development two years earlier on the grounds that the funds expended on flying the ROK Ambassador to Australia from Canberra to Wellington every five weeks and of accommodating him there would better

1 "New Zealand Representation in Korea," 6 July 1961, p 2: Prime Minister's Department Doc. 324/8/3 *Archives of New Zealand*, Wellington (ANZ).

2 *ibid*, loc.cit.

3 *ibid*, p 3.

4 High Commissioner for New Zealand, Canberra, to Minister of External Affairs, Wellington, No. 391, 25 June 1962: Ministry of External Affairs Doc. 236/4/2 ANZ.

be spent on setting up a permanent embassy in Wellington.⁵ The background to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, however, was rather more complex than this might suggest, and the details of the process and an informed analysis of the two side's positions is provided in Ian McGibbon's article, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between New Zealand and the Republic of Korea."

The ANZAC Spirit

ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, a term first applied to Australian and New Zealand troops in April 1915, when they were sent to Gallipoli to spearhead the disastrous, British-led campaign against Turkey during the First World War. Some 10,000 New Zealand and 20,000 Australian men fought and died together. A visit to the Gallipoli Peninsula, scene of this terrible battle of eight months' duration, has been described by one New Zealander as an "emotional ambush."⁶ It is indeed a haunted battlefield: at ANZAC Cove are buried 3000 New Zealanders and 7,500 Australians. More than twice as many more were wounded. In this single campaign, New Zealand lost more able-bodied adult males in proportion to its population of less than two million than Belgium suffered during the whole of World War I.

The Gallipoli campaign has bequeathed the nations of Australia and New Zealand an ambiguous tradition. It is commemorated in both countries with a national holiday on 25 April, known as ANZAC Day, commencing with a "dawn parade" of returned servicemen, politicians and public figures. It is considered their finest hour, a time when they stood tall, refused to bend, and showed the sterling stuff of which they were made. In New Zealand, there grew up almost a cult of ANZAC, which consisted of an emphasis on "dominionism," which meant that as citizens of a dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations, New Zealanders were "Better Britons," fired by patriotism for the empire. Nationalism signified a convergence of New Zealand and British interests and values.⁷ New Zealand gained a reputation as the staunchest supporter of the empire, and its people were imbued with an almost mystical devotion to the empire. There was almost no hesitation among the men to volunteer, and "no troops in the history of the world ever travelled further to fight a war."⁸ The Prime Minister at the time, William Massey, was a British Israelite, convinced that British subjects were God's chosen people.⁹ In Australia, there also arose a legend of Gallipoli, of the

5 Ministry of External Affairs Docs 236/4/2, 14 August 1969; 27/2/3, 28 May 1971; 27/2/1, 21 June 1971 *ANZ*.

6 Shadbolt, Maurice, *Voices of Gallipoli*, Auckland, Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, p 8.

7 Belich, James, *Paradise Reforged: A History of New Zealanders*, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 2001, pp 116ff.

8 Shadbolt, 1988, p. 101.

9 Belich, 2001, p. 118.

heroism of the “troops from the south,” which inspired much poetry and myth. The grim statistics that reflected the carnage of the campaign actually hardened both official and popular resolve to support the war effort to the end.¹⁰

But the experience of Gallipoli and of the whole of the First World War had another side to it. If Gallipoli was their finest hour, it was also the troops’ cruellest hour. The campaign is now acknowledged without dissent to have been one of the greatest failures of high command in the history of warfare. The high command was British. In the only meagre success of the eight-month campaign, 800 New Zealand soldiers were ordered to launch an assault on Chunuk Bair – and only 70 of them survived. Many of them had been killed from the rear by “friendly fire” from the British troops who were supposed to be backing them up.¹¹ But the worst was to come. In 1917, the year of the infamous Battle of the Western Front, a frightful number of New Zealand soldiers were killed. By the end of the war, New Zealand had lost 19,000 troops, the highest number per capita of any nation.

Hence many of the soldiers who survived Gallipoli and the rest of the war harboured extremely negative opinions of the British command and a fierce pride as people who were not British. Among the Australians especially, whose population included far more people of Irish descent than did New Zealanders, an anti-British nationalism was not far below the surface and was sufficient to defeat a national referendum on the introduction of military conscription, despite the government’s strong support for it.¹² In New Zealand, the anti-British sentiments of returned servicemen and of many of the bereaved families were suppressed. Official censorship of discordant voices, and self-censorship by the media, continued even into the late 1980s.

All in all, the Australian and New Zealand view of the international order following the First World War retained much the same focus on Britain and Europe that had applied before the war. When in 1931 the British government passed the Statute of Westminster, whereby the dominions, including Canada, Australia and New Zealand, were granted complete autonomy in their foreign as well as domestic policies and their parliaments were put on an equal footing with the British parliament, neither the Australian nor New Zealand governments bothered to ratify it. New Zealand’s refusal to ratify the Statute stemmed from its continuing sense of belonging to the British world. One Member of Parliament stated that “he would rather be a ‘British subject’ than a ‘national of the British Commonwealth.’”¹³ Both countries did ratify the Statute later, Australia in 1942 and New Zealand in 1947, but by that stage their views of their place in the world had undergone the beginnings of a transition.

10 Macintyre, Stuart, *The Oxford History of Australia*, Vol. 4, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1986, pp 151ff.

11 Shadbolt, 1988, p. 9.

12 Macintyre, 1986, pp 171ff.

13 King, Michael, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland, Penguin Books, 2003, p 366.

World War Two

The Australian declaration of war on 3 September 1939 “was known to involve the fate of the nation, as part of the fate of the Empire.”¹⁴ The national consensus was that this declaration was a necessary moral judgment on Hitler’s aims, and was supported by even those Labor Party members who had opposed Australia’s involvement in the First World War and had suffered imprisonment for their opposition. By the end of 1941, following Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbour, it was recognised that Australia was fighting the war not only for the empire but also for Australia’s own survival. When in February 1942 the Japanese air force bombed the northern city of Darwin, killing 240 people, Australia’s leaders desired a greater say in the operations of the war and began to smart under Winston Churchill’s refusal to consult them on important decisions affecting their own participation in the war. Yet the position Australia found itself in was the “penalty for twenty years of neglect of international relations, twenty years of substantial acquiescence in British foreign policy decisions.”¹⁵

This neglect was no longer allowable. Japan’s entry into the war on the side of the Axis powers decisively broke Australia’s sense of territorial insulation from the theatre of war. In quick succession, Japan took a dozen countries in the Pacific, including British Malaysia, Singapore and Burma, and Dutch Indonesia, the main source of petroleum for Australia and New Zealand. The question now was, World War Where? Was it the Mediterranean theatre, or the air wars over Europe, or the South Pacific?¹⁶ John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, strongly believed it was now in the Pacific that Australia’s war effort must be concentrated and accordingly he lobbied his British counterparts for the reassignment of Australian divisions in the Mediterranean to the Pacific. Relations between Curtin and Churchill soured seriously, and in the end Australia independently withdrew the divisions from Europe and they fought alongside American forces in the Pacific. The argument also had a negative affect on relations between Australia and New Zealand, when the latter took a different line on the location of its troops.¹⁷

New Zealand entered the war in 1939 with much the same alacrity and sense of defending the empire as it had in 1914. By 1943, over half the adult male population was participating in the war effort, and its contribution was, proportionately, greater than that of Australia, Canada and the USA. Initially, Japanese war operations following Pearl Harbour did not lead New Zealanders to believe that Japan was planning any invasion. Even so, the government considered the possibility of a Japanese strike against Fiji as a stepping-stone to New Zealand, and sent considerable reinforcements to Fiji in January 1942. Matters turned more serious after the US sustained heavy losses in Guadalcanal in August 1942 and warned New Zealand to prepare for its defence against a Japanese

14 Millar, T. B., *Australia in Peace and War* (2nd edition), Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1991, p 95.

15 Millar, 1991, p. 113.

16 Belich, 2001, pp 280ff.

17 Millar, 1991, pp. 110ff.

attack.¹⁸ Nevertheless, New Zealand's Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, turned out far more compliant with the wishes of Churchill than his Australian counterpart, and declined John Curtin's request to withdraw troops from the Mediterranean in order to show a united stand by Australia and New Zealand and protect their interests in their own region. Instead, he allowed New Zealand divisions to be engaged in the Italian campaign.

There were a number of reasons for New Zealand's refusal to take Australia's lead in concentrating on the Pacific theatre of war. The usual reason given is the continued sense of a common identity with Britain shared by Fraser and most New Zealanders at the time. But this must not be overstated, for there arose a very serious division in the government over Fraser's decision. In the end it might have been strategic reasons that decided the matter. For Fraser did actually suggest removing troops to the Pacific and only withdrew his proposal when US President F. D. Roosevelt backed Churchill's argument that the US forces in the Pacific were sufficient and that the experience and acumen of New Zealand troops in the North African and European campaigns were greatly valued and needed. But yet another factor was the curious power that the New Zealand forces on the ground had over military decisions. New Zealand troops developed a very strong collective identity during the Second World War, an identity far stronger than that of the British troops. The Second New Zealand Division, which was the main division of ground troops in the war and which trained and fought together for five years, "came to exist in a space between the British high command and the New Zealand government. It sometimes used each to increase its autonomy from the other.... The extreme example of this sense of autonomy was the collusion of the division's leadership with the British high command in dissuading the New Zealand government from withdrawing the division to fight the Japanese in the Pacific."¹⁹

The ANZUS Treaty

Up to the Second World War, despite a shared ANZAC tradition, the Australian and New Zealand governments were more in contact with London than with each other on matters of foreign policy and trade. For the most part, the relationship between the two countries rested not on defence and trade but on cultural affinities. But the signing of the ANZUS Treaty in 1951 marked the degree to which both countries had changed and now saw commonality in terms of security in a changed international environment. But the move to chart an independent and Pacific-centered course came earlier and more strongly from the Australian side.

In January 1944, Australia and New Zealand signed the ANZAC Pact (referred to in New Zealand usually as the Canberra Pact). The Australian Prime Minister John Curtin, and his Foreign Minister Herbert Evatt, were eager proponents of provisions that ensured vital participation by Australia and New Zealand in decisions on armistice agreements and in shaping the new post-war international order. In particular, Australia

18 Belich, 2001, p. 283.

19 Belich, 2001, pp 279 & 287.

and New Zealand were to have full responsibility for the Southwest and South Pacific, as a regional defence zone. New Zealand was not so enthusiastic, but agreed in principle. On this basis, both countries undertook a great deal of research on the possible roles smaller nations around the globe could play to ensure the development of a new and safer international order. As a consequence, they were very well prepared for the United Nations Conference in San Francisco of 23 April to 26 June 1945, to which they contributed far beyond their size and relative global importance.

Herbert Evatt in particular pressed his ideas on economic and social justice, opposed the voting process that the Great Powers had decided upon for themselves at the Yalta Conference of February 1945, and with great energy demonstrated that the British dominions “were not political dependencies or adjuncts of the United Kingdom.”²⁰ Canada and New Zealand took their own initiatives, but generally backed Evatt’s agenda. Australia was elected to the fourteen-state Executive Committee and to the Coordination Committee, which was entrusted with the composition of the final draft of the UN Charter. Evatt became a key figure in setting the procedural rules of the UN, and ensured that the Permanent Members of the Security Council were made more accountable than they themselves wished to be. One of his major accomplishments was the elevation of the status of the Economic and Social Council to that of one of the principal organs of the UN.²¹ Evatt managed to enlarge the scope and powers of the General Assembly and in 1948 was appointed President of the UN General Assembly, where he presided over the composition and passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In September 1945, Australia became one of the signatories of the Japanese surrender, and an Australian and a New Zealand judge were included among the nine judges that presided over the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo. In March 1946, Evatt stated the change in perspective on Australia and New Zealand’s interests: “Australia is directly affected by events in Europe. But our stake in the Pacific is paramount.”²² This was generally accepted throughout Australia. What it meant in concrete security terms was a deliberate, calculated alignment, not with Britain, but with the USA. Only the USA, it was decided, could secure Australia against a major hostile power. This conviction, the lesson of World War II, “has determined the bases of Australia’s foreign and defence policies in all the succeeding years.”²³

The turn from Britain to the USA in New Zealand was a little less pronounced than in Australia at the government level, where the mood and foreign policy remained attuned to Britain as the Home Country up to 1949 at least. Identification with Britain was also strong among the people, who voluntarily sent an average of 800,000 food parcels, that is, two parcels per family per year, to the United Kingdom from 1946 to 1949. (It

20 Millar, 1991, p. 117.

21 Millar, 1991, p. 119.

22 Millar, 1991, p. 127.

23 Millar, 1991, p. 122.

should be noted, however, that the Australian government donated 35 million pounds sterling to Britain after the war, with the support of the entire populace.) Nevertheless, World War II had brought considerable change domestically and internationally, and a shattered world could not simply return to the system that used to be in place. In 1947, New Zealand ratified the Statute of Westminster and the following year enacted a law giving New Zealanders separate citizenship from Britain. And between 1945 and 1949, its Prime Ministers Fraser and Nash played an active part in the formation of the United Nations Organisation.

The move from the hot war of 1939-1945 to the new Cold War thereafter pushed both Australia and New Zealand to the ideological right. (But for some very determined work by Evatt, the Communist Party would have been outlawed in Australia.) So when the Korean War broke out in 1950, both countries immediately sent troops to join the US-led UN forces against North Korea. During this war, in 1951, the ANZUS Treaty was signed, bringing Australia, New Zealand and the USA together in a long-term security alliance. Britain, by now, was not considered so relevant to the needs of Australia and New Zealand in the post-WWII era.

But it was not only the sense of their needs but also of their place in the world that had changed. For the move from the Atlantic to the Pacific entailed a move from Europe to Asia. For the first time, Asians were seen as neighbours and not as “Asiatics,” and in foreign affairs and trade, the geographic location of Australia and New Zealand in the region of Asia took precedence over their cultural connections with Europe. The Cold War meant tension between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China and with the Russian Far East and North Korea. The participation by Australia and, to a much lesser extent, by New Zealand in the Vietnam War was a function of the ANZUS Treaty and a demonstration of their worth as allies. To the Australian and New Zealand political and defence leaders, ANZUS was and remains a kind of insurance policy, and joining the Vietnam War and allowing US army bases on Australian soil are the premium of the insurance policy.

As it happens, ANZUS is still an insurance policy that neither Australia nor New Zealand has ever had to call upon. Nevertheless, the continuation of the Cold-War mentality on the Korean Peninsula, far more so in the northern half, with its periodic outbreaks of military action and the present spectre of nuclear weapons development in the DPRK, has given the security side of New Zealand-ROK relationship considerable importance. In this respect, both countries continue to rely upon security arrangements with the United States of America. They also need to study closely the policies of the People’s Republic of China towards the DPRK, its position on peninsular issues generally and its potential influence on the outcome of the ROK-DPRK standoff.

Although traditionally and currently a strong ally of the ROK, New Zealand is unthreatening enough to the DPRK to engage in some positive ventures in the north and to provide a neutral ground on which improved understanding can be sought, if only for the time being at unofficial levels. The articles by Danielle Chubb, Andrei Lankov and Thomas Gold in the previous issue of the *NZJAS* furnish the kind of expertise and insights on the domestic dynamics of the North Korean state and on recent developments

in the international context—the view from China and Australia in particular—that are needed for New Zealand to engage in any effective way in the region at any level. Paul Bellamy’s article in this current issue provides an overview and analysis of the search in New Zealand for the means to do so.

Living with Asia

The move from the spirit of ANZAC to ANZUS was, as Danielle Chubb points out in her article, for Australia basically a matter of choosing between history and geography: Australia and New Zealand needed a United States alliance for protection against Asia.²⁴ This realignment certainly affected cultural developments and affinities, to the extent of a significant increase in cultural and historical literacy about the United States. Yet within a couple of decades following the Korean War, the military incursion in Vietnam notwithstanding, the idea of *protection from* Asia began to be replaced with the idea of *living with* Asia. This sense of living with Asia has increasingly opened New Zealand not only to Asian markets but also to its cultures, and has correspondingly weakened, if only gradually, its identification with European cultures. This change has affected the content of education in schools and universities. Whereas formerly the more promising students were saddled with the study of Latin, and history courses were centred on the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth, and Europe, by the late 1960s such students could opt for Japanese, Chinese and other Asian languages, and the history of Asia became included in the curricula of high-schools and universities. Indeed, as of 2013, students at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch can major in Chinese and Japanese but can no longer do so in German and French.

Korean language, history and cultural studies have taken longer to find a foothold, but this development also is part of the working out of geographical choices in the wake of the Second World War, the subsequent superpower-imposed Cold War and later new trading opportunities. The question how deep a partnership between New Zealand and South Korea has grown on the level of political relations and human cultural knowledge and understanding as a result of these changes was a core theme of the conference.

President Park was a keen observer of the wider world and not long after installing an embassy in New Zealand he began reaching out to Central and South American states, out of which grew his official sponsorship of Korean emigration to those countries. General Park’s interest was both strategic and economic. Emigration to Central and South America was intended both to mitigate the anticipated social dislocation and discontent attending his medium-to-heavy industrialisation programme and to diversify the production supply-line for the nation. In the case of New Zealand, the focus was on diversifying the primary industrial expertise of a nation whose agriculture almost entirely consisted of production of rice and other cereals. Although New Zealand was

24 Danielle Chubb, “Acting Alone to Act Together: Diversifying Approaches to North Korea,” in *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 15, Number 1, June 2013, pp. 43-59.

a somewhat reluctant partner on the political front in the wake of General Park Chung Hee's military takeover, human contacts nevertheless began to develop reasonably quickly from the late 1960s, through three main avenues.

The first avenue for human contacts was the United Nations' Colombo Plan initiative. The Colombo Plan reflected a more general turn towards a Pacific and Asian focus after the Second World War, and New Zealand was a very active participant and a designer of its education programmes. President Park positively welcomed the venture, given its congruence with his intent to diversify South Korea's agriculture. The ROK Ministry of Science and Technology was responsible for selecting Colombo Plan trainees for New Zealand. In 1969, the New Zealand Government offered thirteen training awards to Koreans for the study of animal husbandry and forestry. Thereafter groups of Korean trainees in dairy farming travelled to New Zealand as part of a training package linked to the P'yōngt'aek Demonstration Dairy Farm.²⁵ Colombo Plan students continued to come till at least the late 1970s.

The second avenue was the Korea-New Zealand Demonstration Dairy Farm, known in Korea as the *Han-Nyu mokjang*, that was established in P'yōngt'aek, some 90 minutes south of central Seoul by train. Already in 1967, a New Zealand sheep farmer by the name of Jeffrey Lee joined the Isidore Development Scheme on Cheju Island as a volunteer, helping set up a high-country pig and sheep farm, a factory in Hallim City to produce animal feed and a weaving factory to process wool from the farm. Then in 1969, the ROK and New Zealand governments agreed on the joint-venture demonstration dairy farm to be run on land in P'yōngt'aek.²⁶ In late December, Mr Colin Kingsbury and his wife Lyn arrived in P'yōngt'aek, followed in January 1970 by a shipment of 100 heifers and three bulls. At the same time, officials from Korea's Agricultural and Fishery Development Corporation visited New Zealand to inspect farms and establish a joint venture in meat processing for the Korean market and for Korea's anticipated foreign meat markets.²⁷

In 1971, then Foreign Minister Ch'oe Kyuha commended New Zealand on the quality of the Demonstration Dairy Farm, and facilitated the appointment of New Zealanders to the two key positions of dairy husbandry specialist and dairy technology specialist at the new Isidore Development Scheme's dairy farm on Cheju Island.²⁸ In 1974, the Kingsbury couple moved on to Taegwallyōng in the mountains of Kangwōn Province to set up a high-country beef farm, utilising terrain not suited to rice and other

25 NZ Ambassador to Japan, W. H. Wade, to Minister Min Choong Sik of ROK Embassy in Tokyo, 1 December 1969: Ministry of External Affairs Doc 236/4/2 ANZ NZ Chargé d'Affaires in Seoul, R. F. Nottage, to Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Wellington, 3 June 1971: Ministry of External Affairs Doc 27/2/3 – 8/1/1 ANZ.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.*

28 NZ Chargé d'Affaires in Seoul, R. F. Nottage, to Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Wellington, 3 June 1971: Ministry of External Affairs Doc 27/2/3 – 8/1/1 ANZ.

crops. They were replaced in P'yōngt'aek by another New Zealand farming couple, the Townshends from Thames Valley.

The third avenue of contact was the Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO). This also was related to the United Nations, through its Freedom From Hunger Campaign. In 1968, CORSO donated NZ\$750,000 to Korea, or 35% of its total annual budget, which amounted to more than any other country. Most of this was in the form of milk biscuits and powder, medical work, the UNICEF Applied Nutrition Project, and support of orphanages. CORSO also supported the Isidore Development Scheme on Cheju Island, sponsoring the farmer Jeffrey Lee's work, providing a shipment of 500 sheep and donating \$50,000 for the construction of a dormitory for 96 trainees on the farm.²⁹

Colin and Lyn Kingsbury of the Korea-New Zealand Demonstration Dairy Farm adopted a Korean daughter and in 1976 returned to New Zealand, where Colin became manager of the large Mt Hutt farm station in Central Canterbury. He became an enthusiastic advocate for Korea, promoting its culture and people. In later years he returned to countries in the Asian region to share his farming skills.

The Colombo Plan students encountered something quite unexpected and certainly contrary to the situation on the peninsula: the fact that in New Zealand farming enjoyed a high status and farmers were honoured and influential, some of its members becoming members of parliament and even Prime Minister. The trainees returned to Korea to take leading positions, especially in pastoral farming developments. One of these, Park Young Im (Pak Yōngim), who studied in New Zealand in the mid-1960s, became a leader of the Korean National Agricultural Corporations Federation and founded KONZA–Korean-NZ Association, to which he attracted other former Colombo Plan students, Korean and resident New Zealand businessmen and others who had an interest in New Zealand.³⁰

In addition to these forms of contact on the human level, there were one or two odd New Zealand folk, such as the author, who went and lived in South Korea for a year or more on student or youth exchanges and returned with a desire to increase awareness of Korea and nurture an informed appreciation of a North Pacific neighbour among their fellow citizens.

In this regard, by the late 1980s a beginning was made to provide systematic learning about Korea with the introduction of Korean language, literature and history courses at the University of Auckland, coinciding with the rapid rise in the number of Korean residents in the country and in Auckland in particular. This notable increase in migration of Koreans to New Zealand from the early 1990s and the meanings of the experience for the Koreans involved are the subject matter of the articles by Butcher and Wieland, Kim Hyeun, Song Changzoo and Koo Bon-Giu. Among New Zealanders, the increasing Korean presence as residents has been the main force of change in

29 NZ Ambassador to Japan, W. H. Wade, to Minister Min Choong Sik of ROK Embassy in Tokyo, 1 December 1969: Ministry of External Affairs Doc 236/4/2 ANZ.

30 *Ibid.*

the growth of awareness of their culture, religious fervour, educational commitment, sporting achievements and enterprising spirit.

Yet however much this Korean migration to New Zealand, closing in on 40,000 residents in 2013, has increased the level of human contact inside New Zealand, it is not easy to judge whether any significant advance has been made on two-way human cultural contacts between the two countries since the 1970s. Culturally, the contact is mostly a one-way process, of New Zealanders encountering and actively learning about Korea. In spite of the tens of thousands of Korean residents in New Zealand and their links with their homeland, there is but meagre knowledge and understanding of the antipodes by Koreans in Korea. And despite the growing visibility, status and currency of Maori and Pacific Islander cultures in New Zealand, the country remains a generic “Western” nation rather than a Pacific country in the eyes of Koreans on the peninsula. Partly, this stems from the miniscule number of New Zealanders living or working in South Korea, about whom we know very little. We are therefore fortunate to be able to include in this issue the article by Francis Collins dealing with a comparison of experiences of New Zealanders in Seoul and Koreans in Auckland.

For all that, the overall finding of the conference was that South Korea and New Zealand are certainly no longer strangers to each other, a lone entry in an individual’s diary, but now enjoy a mutually respectful and friendly relationship. If the stories told in these pages have much to do with the meaning of that relationship for New Zealand, this reflects the highly significant political, economic and strategic importance of the Korean peninsula and, to a lesser degree, the fact that the conference was held in New Zealand. The conference itself underlined the importance to relations between the two countries of positive, substantive social and cultural knowledge and contact. Security and trade, as it develops, necessitates more contact at political and economic levels, and the more they develop the more critical become good mutual, human and cultural understanding. The growth in friendship between New Zealand and Korea from a starting point of mutual ignorance hardly five decades ago is a very fine achievement. We look forward to an ever broadening and deepening relationship on both sides.

Biographical note

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