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Remembering the Past, Thinking of the  
Present: Historic Commemorations in New  
Zealand and Northern Ireland, 1940–1990

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the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy, the University of  
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## Abstract

This thesis analyses and compares two historic commemorations in Northern Ireland with two in New Zealand, in the period from 1940 to 1990. These commemorations are the Twelfth of July and Remembrance Sunday in Northern Ireland, and Waitangi Day and Anzac Day in New Zealand.

Examination of these commemorations has revealed several patterns. In the commemorations studied in this thesis, levels of public adherence generally depended on the extent to which the values that the commemoration symbolised were seen as threatened or highly needed. The commemorations which reaffirmed compelling values tended to enjoy higher levels of public support than those expressing values which were seen as either unnecessary or unthreatened. In both countries, historic commemorations were capable of uniting communities behind core values. However, in cases where there was no general agreement on what those values were or what they meant, commemorations frequently became sites of division and conflict. All four commemorations were regularly used by organisers and participants to express views on contemporary political and social issues and, on several occasions in both countries, different groups battled for the control of particular commemorations. In both countries, increased levels of social conflict often led to the increased use of the past as a rhetorical device.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this study is that these historic commemorations derived more of their meaning from their contemporary context than from the historical events which they commemorated. In particular, how the public viewed and understood the values symbolised and reaffirmed by the commemorations strongly affected their levels of support. People were most likely to observe the commemorations when they were seen as symbolising values which were widely adhered to and seen as threatened or urgently needed. The historic commemorations examined in this thesis were often strongly affected by contemporary events which were seen as relating, positively or negatively, to the values which the commemorations embodied.



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## List of abbreviations

**Organisations, titles etc**

AIA	Anglo-Irish Agreement
CESA	Catholic Ex-Servicemen's Association
CGM	County Grand Master
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EEC	European Economic Community
IOO	Independent Orange Order
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LOL	Loyal Orange Lodge
MWWL	Maori Women's Welfare League
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
NZUSA	New Zealand University Students' Association
PD	People's Democracy
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
PYM	Progressive Youth Movement
RSA	Returned Services Association, originally Returned Soldiers' Association, later Returned and Services' Association
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
TD	Teachta Dala (Member of Parliament)
TVNZ	Television New Zealand
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UDR	Ulster Defence Regiment
UFF	Ulster Freedom Fighters
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UUUC	United Ulster Unionist Committee
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WAC	Waitangi Action Committee

**Publications**

AH	<i>Te Ao Hou</i>
BT	<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>
BN	<i>Belfast News Letter</i>
DST	<i>Dominion Sunday Times</i>
EG	<i>Education Gazette</i>
EP	<i>Evening Post</i>
IN	<i>Irish News</i>
KM	<i>Te Kaunihera Maori</i>
LN	<i>Loyalist News</i>
MOOHR	<i>Maori Organisation on Human Rights</i>
NA	<i>Northern Advocate</i> [New Zealand]
NBR	<i>National Business Review</i>
NIPD	<i>Northern Ireland Parliamentary Debates</i>
NISPD	<i>Northern Ireland Senate Parliamentary Debates</i>
NZCN	<i>New Zealand Centennial News</i>
NZH	<i>New Zealand Herald</i>

NZJH	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
NZL	<i>New Zealand Listener</i>
NZMR	<i>New Zealand Monthly Review</i>
NZPD	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
NZWW	<i>New Zealand Woman's Weekly</i>
ODT	<i>Otago Daily Times</i>
OS	<i>Orange Standard</i>
PT	<i>Protestant Telegraph</i>
TC	<i>Tyrone Constitution</i>
TT	<i>Treaty Times</i>
UKNIWM	United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials
WACN	<i>Waitangi Action Committee Newsletter</i>