

TRUE TO IRELAND

*Éire's 'conscientious objectors'
in New Zealand in World War II*



PETER BURKE



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Peter Burke

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#IrishNZ #NZWWII

#conscientiousobjection

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In the 1930s a number of Irishmen came to New Zealand to seek a better life, with many carrying bitter memories of the atrocities committed by the Black and Tans and the British during WWI and the early 1920s. With the onset of WWII came the threat of conscription into the armed forces. As citizens of a neutral country, many Irishmen refused to betray their homeland to fight for New Zealand and, by default, Britain. They formed the Éire National Association (ENA) to represent them in their battle against conscription, which not only opened discussions with the New Zealand government under Peter Fraser but also with the Irish prime minister, Éamon de Valera, thus pioneering direct diplomatic relations between the two countries. Peter Burke's father was one of the group of immigrant Irishmen, and he documents the ENA's struggles with officials and politicians and how 155 Irishmen, including his father, faced deportation back to Ireland in the middle of WWII.



Peter Burke was born in Wellington and is an old boy of St Patrick's College. He has worked for more than 50 years as a journalist in television, radio, print and public relations. He travelled widely overseas covering political and trade talks in Europe, Asia, North America and the Pacific, eventually

specialising in agricultural journalism. Peter is a life member of the NZ Guild of Agricultural Journalists and the Science Communicators Association of New Zealand. He's a keen (rather than good) golfer, loves Celtic and classical music and lives on a small farm south of Levin. Regarding Ireland as his second home, Peter frequently spends time in the Emerald Isle, and his visits have led him to develop a love of Irish and family history.