



A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

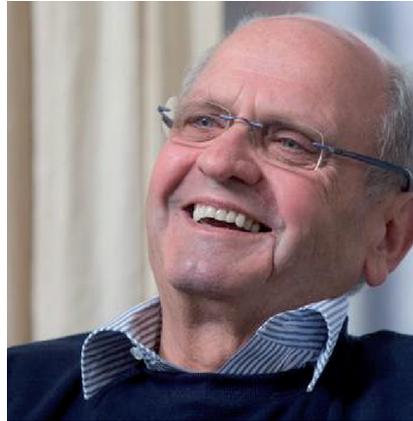
'Fish & chips' and having a 'cuppa' are ubiquitous Kiwi traditions that are emblematic of the political career of the recently deceased Mike Moore, New Zealand's 34th Prime Minister, which saw him evolve from traditional Labour Party protectionist to leader of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

A late-night meal of fish & chips shared by Moore at Parliament with his fellow Labour Party honchos David Lange, Roger Douglas and Michael Bassett was famously photographed in 1983 while the four hatched a plan to revolutionise New Zealand's moribund economy which was, according to Lange, being run by Robert Muldoon "like a Polish shipyard".

The "fish and chip brigade" as the group were christened were the nucleus of the 4th Labour Government elected in 1984 and they went on to lead New Zealand helter-skelter into a brave new world of neoliberal economics and free trade (Lange as Prime Minister with Douglas and Moore as Finance and Trade Ministers respectively and Bassett running Health, Local Government & Internal Affairs).

Reforms, dubbed "Rogernomics" after finance minister Douglas, saw drastic restructuring & deregulation, tight monetary policy, a floating exchange rate and fiscal deficit reductions, but after the 1987 stock market crash caused galloping unemployment, Lange put the brakes on more reforms in 1988 when he announced it was "Time for a cuppa" and cancelled the introduction of a flat tax that was Rogernomics' *pièce de résistance*.

That cuppa put the kiss of death on Lange's leadership as the government exploded in acrimony and within a year he resigned as prime minister and was replaced by his deputy Geoffrey Palmer.



Labour's popularity plummeted under Palmer's premiership and 59 days before the 1990 election, Moore replaced him as prime minister with the Sisyphean task of saving the government which he came within a whisker of doing.

Of particular interest is how Moore, during his tenure as Trade Minister, laid the foundation for what has been, according to Statistics NZ, a six fold increase in New Zealand's export trade with Latin America and the Caribbean since the 1980's (from NZ\$300m to 2018's NZ\$1.8b; two-way trade in 2018 was NZ\$3.14b). It was in South America that the stellar trajectory of Moore's international free trade advocacy first took flight.

Moore's conversion from protectionist to free trade proponent was consummated in earnest at the 1986 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) multilateral trade negotiations in Uruguay's Atlantic resort city of Punta del Este.

During the GATT meetings, Moore firmed in his view that rules-based free trade could, far more effectively than international aid, lift nations out of poverty and he took a leading role in launching the 'Uruguay Round Negotiations', which led to the establishment of the WTO in 1995.

Moore had an extraordinary life if viewed by numbers; disabled by polio he wore a steel leg-brace as

a child, left school at 14, elected to Parliament at 23, survived a usually deadly cancer at 30 and became Prime Minister at 40.

No less impressive are the 6 years Moore served as New Zealand Ambassador to the United States (working principally on CPTTP, which sadly came to naught with Donald Trump's election), the 12 books he authored covering politics to trade, his 5 honorary doctorates, New Zealand's highest honour - the Order of New Zealand, which is limited to 20 living persons, the 3 times he is rumoured to have declined a knighthood and 9 honours from foreign governments including the Order of Australia and the Medal of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, that nation's highest national honour.

Richard Prebble, a fellow Labour minister, told Radio NZ after Moore died that while some of Moore's ideas seemed 'off the wall' to New Zealand's conservative establishment at the time, they notably resulted in the Lotteries Commission & 'Lotto', the multi-billion America's Cup and export education industries, inbound duty-free sales at international airports, New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (whose predecessor Tradecom Moore founded in 1986) and adding value to commodity exports (think 'lamb burgers'!).

Prebble said; "Mike was our most energetic trade minister ever who inspired businesses to get into exporting. He would take an RNZAF plane and fill it with business leaders and head overseas on vigorous trade visits and established a model that has been copied by every trade minister since. Many business leaders say Mike's personal intervention enabled them to begin exporting to markets that had been closed".

As Trade Minister (1984-90) Moore led missions to Australia, Japan,

China, South-East Asia, the Middle East, Western and Central Europe, Russia, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Turkey and the first ever New Zealand trade mission to South America.

Apart from the investment by wealthy Canterbury pastoralists in Argentine and Uruguayan farms in the 1880's (the River Plate Company) and the intermittent supply of live sheep and cattle to the region, New Zealand's trade with South America was practically non-existent until its first Latin American embassy opened in Santiago de Chile in 1973 and the second in Mexico in 1983.

The Chile embassy opened shortly before General Augusto Pinochet's infamous coup d'état, which slowed the development of the bilateral relationship (which has now grown to be one of New Zealand's best) as many New Zealanders protested against the dictatorship and supported an unofficial boycott of Chilean goods.

New Zealand's relations with Chile thawed somewhat after neoliberal economic reforms opened Chile's markets to the world, which inspired Moore to lead the ground-breaking trade mission of 58 business executives and officials to Chile in 1986 (also to Brazil and Peru).

Moore blazed a trail into Latin America followed in later years by missions headed by Prime Ministers Jim Bolger, Jenny Shipley, Helen Clark and John Key, MFAT Ministers Don McKinnon, Philip Burdon and Phil Goff and Speakers' tours by Jonathon Hunt, Lockwood Smith and David Carter.

The 1986 trade mission was also memorable because one of the RNZAF's notoriously unreliable Boeing 727s (purchased second-



hand from United Airlines in 1981), broke down during a refuelling stop and stranded the mission for two days on Easter Island, where the lack of accommodation saw Moore, senior officials and captains of industry sleeping on floors until spare parts arrived.

Moore left Parliament in 1999 to become the 3rd Director General of the WTO, an international leadership role not matched in seniority or prestige by any other New Zealander in history.

The Jenny Shipley-led National Government funded Moore's successful campaign for the WTO director general job (despite having christened him 'Mad Mike' for his innovative ideas and signature stream-of-consciousness monologues) as a fitting quid pro quo for how Moore single-handedly persuaded the Labour movement to support National's brainchild, the Closer Economic Relations Agreement (CER) with Australia.

At the WTO Moore was the driving force behind the 'Doha Development Round' which, among other developing nations, bought China into the WTO's rules-based system.

Although Moore transcended his blue-collar roots and successfully scaled lofty heights in politics and diplomacy, he never let success go to his head, put on airs and graces, or lost his innate ability to connect with the man in the street.

A good example of not taking himself too seriously was when Moore, in yet another famous photograph, was

immortalised in his Geneva hotel bathroom washing his socks and undies in a hand-basin to save on laundry expenses after he ran short on funds during the WTO director general election, although tellingly the photo elicited much tut-tutting and cries of "quelle horreur" in the gilded halls of Geneva's diplomatic establishment.

The Latin American New Zealand Business Council (LANZBC) honoured Moore's key role in developing trade with Latin America by appointing him as its Patron in 2012.

Moore's standing as one of New Zealand's most illustrious sons was underscored in how, on its first sitting day in 2020, Parliament unanimously recorded its appreciation for his service to New Zealand and the international community and then adjourned in his honour.

While flags across the nation flew at half-mast, a bi-partisan panoply of New Zealand and Australian dignitaries celebrated Moore's life at his alma mata, Dilworth School in Auckland on 15 February.

The funeral got underway with the Jimmy Barnes' song 'Working Class Man' (chosen by Moore to open proceedings) and after many poignant tributes including from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who said he was a "statesman, progressive, constant learner, ideas man, working-class hero, the quintessential battler", closed with a resounding haka from the Dilworth boys who lined the school driveway as Moore's cortege drew away.

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