

Nazi New Zealand examined in book

By Edward Gay

If the Nazis had won World War Two, would New Zealanders have resisted or put their heads down? Bayswater author John Reynolds' first novel *Uncommon Enemy* explores the conflict between collaboration and resistance.

The Nazi occupation of New Zealand is used as a catalyst to explore the different ways people would have reacted.

"In many European countries they buckled down far more than they'd like to remember," Reynolds says. And what's often forgotten is the Nazis had Norwegian and French regiments, he says.

But Reynolds says New Zealanders, with their independent attitude, would've reacted differently. He says New Zealanders were terrified when the Nazis swept through Europe in six weeks.

The book is well researched, down to the colour of the North Shore buses at the time. There's also an early scene of men jumping for the Devonport ferry as it pulled out of the wharf.

Reynolds also visited Berlin with his wife. "We went to Gestapo Headquarters. They're open underground cells not but I could smell the evil. I had to come back and rewrite part of the book. He says some of the inspiration he drew on to paint his resistance characters came from his travels behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe in the 1960s.

"I remember meeting young Poles in youth hostels. And those that could speak English I remember them trying to convey their feelings: "We no like". They were angry young people. Young people have idealism, and it's the young men who go off to fight."

Reynolds has also written a book called *Writing Your First Novel* that draws on lessons he learnt while writing *Uncommon Enemy*.

He is now planning on writing a film script of the novel.