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THE NEW YEAR OPENS

To a perplexed world came a New Year. In London, 5,000 revellers greeted 1948 at the Chelsea Arts Ball.

Scots pipers herald the new year's first hour.

From the roof thousands of balloons shower down as the peak of the night's celebrations is reached.

Everybody seemed to be there - Spanish ladies, cossacks, cowboys, noblemen and spivs - all to welcome 1948. Theme of the ball was baroque, but there were few signs of even a mild orgy this year.

Twenty five bars open from 10 till 5, sold 10,000 bottles of beer at 2 shillings a time. With spirits at 5 bob a nip, supplies never ran out. But the merrymakers - who paid three guineas and upward for their tickets, thought it all well worth while.

The new look seems to have come to the Arts Ball, too. For the first time ever, the accent was on more clothes rather than less.

To the music of three bands, the 5,000 danced on and on. A few dozen policemen - in fancy Cossack costumes - saw to it that things didn't get out of hand.

Dancing went on till nearly 5 o'clock. The New Year, whatever it held in store for Britain, at least had had a joyous birth.

New Year's Eve 1947 saw Britain deep in snow. This year, it was New York's turn. Sweeping in from the Atlantic without warning, a blinding blizzard catches the city unprepared.

Starting early in the morning, the storm whips up to a fall of three inches an hour by mid-afternoon. Thousands of New Yorkers are snowbound in the fiercest blizzard for 60 years. Traffic skids to a halt on frozen roads.

Sixteen hours brought 25 inches of snow. Fifteen thousand men and two thousand pieces of equipment dig the city out of a storm even New Yorkers won't forget for a long time.

The old year's closing days brought tragedy to New Zealand. All Christchurch mourns the death of 41 citizens, burned alive in a city store fire. Thirteen large ferries carry wreaths sent from all over the Dominion and overseas.

At Ruru Lawn Cemetery, the bereaved await the last chapter of a grim story as the burial takes place.

The Prime Minister, the Governor General and Cabinet chiefs are among the mourners. It was a sobering start to 1948 in New Zealand.

The first days of the New Year saw opera singer Margaret Truman back at Washington's White House after her nation-wide concert tour. In her father's office - the President's 26 year old daughter talked to the press about her tour which netted nearly £100,000.

SOUND

Twenty months after the trial of the Japanese warlords opened, (ironically enough, in Tokyo's War Ministry) there was still no sign of the final stages. 25 political and military leaders - including four ex-Prime Ministers - stand accused of crimes against peace and humanity. Outside the court rooms the prisoners camouflage their real feelings with a phoney philosophical veneer.

Central figure is General Hideki Tojo - Prime Minister at the outbreak of war, here with ex-Navy Sato. Recently Tojo relieved himself of the opinion that war was no crime but rather "a point of view."

When arrested by American troops, Tojo made an unsuccessful suicide attempt. Today - after 30 months of American style rations - Tojo, ex-Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and his fellow prisoners have all gained in weight - some of them more than a stone. Also standing trial are Okonori Kaya Tojo's Finance Minister, and bearded Jiro Minami, former War Minister. General MacArthur wants to sign Japan's peace treaty this year. Before that, the world has an account to settle.