

## MITZI NAIRN, New Perspectives on Race

Racism is my area of concern. New Perspectives on Race is an organisation which exists to run education and awareness courses for Pakeha individuals and groups. So I am going to go a long way round to get back to health care.

In the first two lectures in this series, and I'm willing to predict in most of the later ones, plenty of data about Maori and other Polynesians' health and the delivery of health care to those peoples, is provided.

My main task is to provide a perspective on that information, a kind of prism through which to look at it to focus on what it is telling us Pakeha about ourselves and our systems.

In any examination of racism, however brief, that we Pakehas undertake, my experience tells me that there are three pots bubbling away, and we have to lift the lids on all three of them to make sense of the situation in which we find ourselves. They are the personal element, the institutional aspect and the historical dimension.

First, some definitions. In this country at present a number of words related to questions of race are being used somewhat loosely and interchangeably. It helps to clarify our thinking if we attach specific meanings which don't overlap too much to some of those terms. I'll define other words as I go along, but first I want to distinguish between race relations and racism.

Race relations is about attitudes, intentions, and the state of play between races in terms of how we are getting along together, and how cross-cultural understanding can be improved.

Racism is about results and outcomes; what our policies and practices actually do.

Racism exists when one group views its cultural values, lifestyles, and socioeconomic self-interest as superior to or having priority over those of other groups, and then (covertly or overtly) implements those assumptions through societal norms and institutions.

In New Zealand PAKEHA IS THE NORM.

Racism is primarily expressed through institutions and through culture.

Institutions are fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken. (Examples are courts, police, churches, schools, government, business, unions).

Institutional racism is the perpetuation by organisations, institutions or agencies of policies and practices which operate to the advantage of the powerful group and to the disadvantage of particular racial/cultural groups.

This is Pakeha control over the economic, educational and political agencies which affect all groups. It is revealed by the way the policies and practices perpetuated by those organisations operate to the disadvantage of people of other races. Whether covert or overt, whether institutional or personal, racism is a destructive sickness. Any nation which permits race to affect the distribution of the benefits from its social policies is racist.

In New Zealand, the fact that Pakeha is the norm makes it a racist society. Pakeha values and assumptions underlie all procedures and practices. Institutions follow Pakeha models and ideas, and operate according to rules made by Pakehas. Members of the dominant group hold the power and receive a disproportionate share of the resources. This system is self-perpetuating, and as long as it continues all Pakehas can be described as racist regardless of their personal attitudes.

Our institutional and cultural processes are so arranged as to benefit whites automatically, just because they are white. It is important for Pakehas to recognise that they receive most of these racist benefits automatically, unconsciously and unintentionally. What counts is what actually happens: outcomes, not intentions. Behaviour is more significant than attitude.

Culture is basically the whole way of life of a people, the way they go about such things as communicating with each other, making decisions, the way they think about things, what they consider important, and the way they structure their families and their whole society.

**ETHNOCENTRISM** A tendency to view other cultures with disfavour and a resulting sense of inherent superiority.

**CULTURAL RACISM** When whites use power to perpetuate their cultural heritage and impose it upon others, while at the same time destroying the culture of ethnic minorities.

**POWER PLUS ETHNOCENTRISM = CULTURAL RACISM**

So, as we can see, there is a personal dimension to racism. This can take several forms. Prejudice, or, in an extreme form, bigotry. Prejudice has been defined as

*an unfavourable opinion or feeling formed beforehand, or with little or no knowledge, thought or reason.*

It leads to acting on the basis of negative stereotypes of other racial groups. It leads to acts of discrimination in personal life, and, of course, people with such attitudes are great perpetrators of institutional racism, because they approve of the institutional outcomes.

I think it is true that prejudice and bigotry are repugnant to many Pakeha people although I think we sometimes kid ourselves about how unprejudiced we are. After all, we have been socialised in a racist society, which has its origins at a time when notions of white superiority were widespread, and I am sure that some of that has rubbed off on me. I'd certainly want to recognise my desire not to be prejudiced, and my hope that I do not behave in prejudiced ways: but it can be dangerous to confound the wish with the reality.

Just as the distinction between individual and institutional racism serves to shift attention from individuals to institutional structures, so the distinction between attitudinal and behavioural racism helps to get beyond the question of motive to examination of the actual effects of behaviour. Too often the question of racism reduces to asking whether whites harbour malicious intent towards blacks, whether we have hate in our hearts. Discussions of racism often reduce to declarations by whites that they have nothing against blacks, that some of their best friends are Maori, that they have never intentionally put anybody down. Then, feeling innocent of malice against blacks, most whites conclude that they are not part of the problem of racism. If white racism is the problem, it must be those bigots.

The irony is that the most basic ways in which blacks are kept at relative disadvantage to whites involve no such malicious intent. If tomorrow every Pakeha was to wake with all racial feeling wiped from heart and mind, racism would continue almost unchanged in New Zealand. All that is needed is for market forces to function freely, government departments to maintain their policies, landlords to pursue their right to maximise profit. All that is needed for job opportunities for Maori and other Polynesians to be inferior to Pakehas is for employers to look at "qualifications" and to hire those who seem most competent and experienced for the job, and to use machines when they are more economical than manual labour. All that is needed to maintain schools that ensure the collapse of Maori children is for Pakeha teachers to favour those students who most conform to their concept of 'good student', and for Pakeha school boards and educators to use methods and texts that reflect the reality of their world.

Nobody ever needs to sit down and plot an attack on Maori communities; the process continues its devastation independent of conscious racial motivation. In the previous century, conscious attacks were made on the Maori language.\* But these days, the number of situations where it is spoken as a matter of course are fewer and briefer; the presence of Pakehas who must be communicated with in the only language they know is a pressure; the presence of young Maori who have had no opportunity to learn their own language introduces a dilemma of whether to exclude them from the occasion by conducting proceedings in Maori, or lapse into English and waste a rare chance to maintain the language - that choice between your language and your children is a bitter choice indeed. That is just one example of the way that the effect on the Maori community is the same as if the situation was part of a carefully destructive plan. The effect is what counts, not the intent.

This focus on behavioural racism permits us to look beyond the most visible racist motives, and examine the hidden effects of even the most common aspects of Pakeha behaviour.

So, other forms of the personal dimension of racism can be ignorance, indifference, acceptance of situations which are not really acceptable on closer examination - our ability to have lived with the figures on Maori health for so long would be an example.

Another example, which brings me to the third pot, is our general ignorance about our history, the distorted and fragmented version which our education and socialisation delivers to us, and the extreme durability of our myths in the face of scholarly refutation. For example, the accounts which were given of the Maori as a "dying race" around the turn of the century. Writers like Walter Buller (1901) represented what might be called the "official view". New Zealand race relations were in Buller's estimation an example to the whole world. If the Maori were a dying race,,, this was held to be something beyond the control of government and administration. (Ward, p 308) In the myth arising from this official view, the Maori people were dying off because they were susceptible to disease, and chose to live in ways which spread ailments and epidemics. Furthermore, they were psychologically unable to adjust to the results of selling their land, and were apathetic and depressed. Sound familiar?

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\* 1862 Henry Taylor, Auckland Inspector of Native Schools, in a report to Parliament noted 'some impediments to progress' in 'carrying on the work of civilisation among the aboriginal Native race, through the medium of schools'.

*The Native language itself is also another obstacle in the way of civilisation, so long as it exists there is a barrier to the free and unrestrained intercourse which ought to exist between the two races, it shuts out the less civilised portion of the population from the benefits which intercourse with the more enlightened would confer.*

AND

1888 But Pope's concessions to Maori language and culture were minimal anyway. His goal remained complete assimilation of the Maori: in his annual report in 1888 he wrote:

*'The work of teaching the Maoris to speak, write and understand English is in importance second only to that of making them acquainted with European customs and ways of thinking, and so fitting them for becoming orderly and law-abiding citizens. Indeed, it might be maintained that the first-named of these operations*

is the more important, seeing that the knowledge of English ways can hardly be obtained by Natives unacquainted with the language. To teach the Natives English is therefore the raison d'etre of Native schools. If they do this work well their existence is justified; if not, there can be little advantage in maintaining a separate order of schools for this purpose. The task is one of extreme difficulty for many reasons; the Maori language is so fundamentally different from the English that, to say nothing of hereditary aptitudes, the Maori, from the time that he begins to speak and think has his vocal organs and thinking faculties moulded in such a way that he could hardly be rendered more unfitted for speaking English and using it as an instrument of thought if his vernacular had been specially devised for that very purpose. ...

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As long ago as 1956 (26 years ago) M P K Sorrenson, in a paper "Land Purchase methods and their effects on Maori population 1865-1901" (JPS) demonstrated thoroughly that the decline in Maori population arose almost entirely from the effects of Pakeha procedures and administration. The operation of the Land Court spread disease, and poverty was produced by impoverishing processes. Maori people were deprived of their economic base - land - and this was not replaced by effective participation in the settler-controlled economy.

I'll come back to this later, but the main point I want to make here is the persistence of the Buller version (I get it played back to me frequently on courses) and the slight impact of the Sorrenson version on this useful myth. Because that's what a lot of our popular history is, useful myth, particularly useful in terms of the way which we traditionally used to account for the unpalatable statistics which are forced on our attention from time to time - we blame the victims.<sup>4A</sup>

In health circles, this game is very easy to play. We account for infant mortality by maternal carelessness, for life expectancy differences by Maori people's preference for wrong diet, and so forth.

But the figures certainly don't surprise those on the international level engaged in observation of indigenous people under pressure within their own country. Patterns of poverty and stress emerge when people are oppressed - it is an observable characteristic through out the world. (Stuart Kingma, Director WCC Christian Medical Commission).

The first distinction that needs to be drawn is between prejudice and bigotry on the one hand, and racism on the other. We are used to the former concepts and often now merely substitute the word racism, without changing our concept of the problem. Yet prejudice, the belief that whites are superior to people of colour, is altogether different from racism, the complex of white actions that ensure white superiority through the exercise of white privilege. If prejudice is the desire among whites that their degrading stereotypes about blacks be true, racism refers to the political, social, economic, status, and psychological systems they created to make the stereotypes come true.

In this sense, almost every white prejudicial belief about blacks has its counterpart in white racist behaviour. Take an example the belief that blacks are stupid, that they are intellectually inferior to whites, that they are lazy and do not take up their equal opportunities. Whites send black children to culturally alien schools, with inferior facilities and inappropriately trained teachers. Whites devise racially and culturally biased tests of ability and intelligence and administer them to blacks. Not surprisingly, once blacks have been processed through a degrading educational environment and measured by white IQ tests, they are "shown" to be inferior. Through racists behaviour and institutions biased against blacks, the original white stereotype is confirmed, and can be used as justification for further behaviour detrimental to blacks. The cycle is continuous.

The same follows from the white belief that blacks are lazy. Through real discrimination, and a job a market whose needs are defined by white standards, blacks can often find no available jobs. After repeated discouragement, they often drop out of the job market entirely. As school leavers, they may be unable to enter the job market. When this behaviour is analyzed according to the white ethic that anyone who doesn't work is lazy, the original stereotype becomes proven fact.

The effect of this reinforcing cycle between prejudice and racism is to make the victims into criminals, and to excuse those structures that are really responsible. We don't blame the school system for the poor performance of black children, we blame the kids for being unable to learn. We call them 'problem children' or 'underachievers' and punish them by ensuring increasing disadvantage to match their 'uncooperative natures'. We don't blame town planners, landlords and employers for run-down housing, overcrowding and unemployment, we blame those who have no choice but to take what they can get, for tolerating those conditions.

Similarly, we blame the black power movement, and Maori activists, for the injustices they point out, and for the white hostility they uncover. We blame street kids and protestors for hard-line policing. It is characteristic of Pakeha thought that the system (the New Zealand way of life) takes credit for its successes (Kiri Te Kanawa, Sid Going, Howard Morrison, Witi Ihimaera) while blame for its failures is displaced to individuals.

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When the 'failures' so vastly outnumber the 'successes' it seems clear that this thinking is precisely backwards. The real problem of racism does not lie with individuals, but with the 'system', the ways in which individual behaviour is socially structured. What matters are the patterns that reinforce and confirm racial prejudices, rather than the prejudices themselves. This especially since patterns of racist behaviour are often quite independent of the stereotypes they come to strengthen

Those who have to buy the oldest cars and can afford least maintenance - bald tyres and iffy brakes.

I want to take a brief historical trip now, because one of the reasons we find blaming the victims such an attractive solution is that we feel helpless in the face of the situation we are in. We are the inheritors of an unjust situation, and it feels unfair that we should be asked to take responsibility for it. We seem to have arrived at this by accident, by well-intentioned blunders perhaps. But in fact, we have arrived here as a result of decisions which were made and policies which were implemented or rejected. In my experience, many people find it empowering to realise that if we got into this situation by means of decisions, we can take steps and decisions to move out of it. If we accept the accident theory, we are trapped in a kind of passive fatalism, as we wait for a lucky accident to rescue us.

### COLONISATION

In his Instructions to Captain Hobson, 14 August 1839, the Secretary of State for War and Colonies, Lord Normanby, refers to the Maori as "a numerous and inoffensive people, whose title to the soil and to the Sovereignty of New Zealand is indisputable, and has been solemnly recognised by the British Government."

But in practice, colonisation was a process which overrode that indisputable title, and denied that recognised Sovereignty. Colonisation depends on ethnocentric, monocultural arrogance - it takes a special sort of arrogance to believe that the rest of the world is there for Europe to exploit.

The Europeans who set out to carve up the "new" world ("new" to them, but not to its indigenous peoples) were buoyed up by total confidence in their own supremacy. They believed that the rest of the world was rightfully theirs to divide up, and that the people who lived there, who were not white, Christian and "civilised", were nonentities.

The Europeans believed that the new countries existed, and were providentially "discovered", to provide solutions to problems at home. Discharged soldiers and other unemployed could be absorbed into armies for conquest and border maintenance, or sent as settlers. The clamorous landless could be sent away, relieving unwelcome pressure for the reform of land tenure. Food and raw materials - timber and minerals - could be imported to feed, clothe and employ people at home.

*"It is contended that, in an unreclaimed country, in which there are none but erratic natives, incapable of occupying the whole, they cannot be allowed exclusively to appropriate to themselves more land than they have occasion for, or more than they are able to settle and cultivate. It is urged that their unsettled habitation in those immense regions cannot be accounted a true and legal possession; and that the people of Europe, too closely pent up at home, are lawfully entitled to take possession of the waste, and settle it in colonies."*

Vattel, cited by Richmond, Parliamentary Debates 1982

### EMPIRE

Britain was an experienced colonial power, with a sophisticated colonial apparatus to carry out well-developed policies. London was the centre, and professional military and administrative personnel were moved around the Empire.

For example, Governor George Grey worked for the Colonial Office first in the West Indies; then in South Australia, where he wrote a report on aborigines which greatly enhanced his status with the Colonial Office. Therefore he was their logical choice for New Zealand - he was "good with natives". After his first term in New Zealand he was transferred to Cape Province, South Africa. When Governor Gore-Brown disastrously mismanaged Waitara, Grey was recalled to New Zealand.

Eyre is another example, who also illustrates the old-boy-network aspects of imperial administration. He was a junior staff member in the West Indies with Grey, who got on with him very well and specially asked for him to be transferred to New Zealand as Lieutenant Governor of New Munster. Eyre later went to Australia as a state governor.

As a military example, take General Cameron, who was transferred to New Zealand to lead the army into the Waikato land war. He came direct from India, where he had been involved in the suppression of the "Indian Mutiny", and the pacification of notable Indian trouble spots.

In the administration of Empire, it was standard procedure to undermine the basis of social order, land tenure, language and communication. The whole colonisation process was based on notions of white supremacy, to which virtually all the settlers subscribed.

#### THE NEW ZEALAND SETTLERS

The Settlers can roughly be divided into two sorts, bigots and paternalists. Bigots had a simple agenda; co-operate or perish, preferably perish. Paternalists had a more fluffy agenda, but the simple underlying message was: integrate. Both groups shared white supremacist, Eurocentric assumptions:

##### European people

Christian  
civilised  
advanced  
complex

##### Maori people

heathen  
savages  
primitive  
simple

Bigots believed that these inferior beings should, like other animals, be controlled for the benefit of Europeans. Here's an example of a bigot speaking, A S Atkinson 1863: "I find one lies in wait to shoot Maoris without any approach to an angry feeling - it is a sort of scientific duty."

Paternalists believed that they were the grown-ups and the natives were the children, who could be raised up and civilised, given Christianity and education.

The belief in the superiority of themselves, their culture and their institutions led the settlers easily to the conclusion that they would be the ones to shape the institutional society that all were to participate in. Their ideas of land ownership, family life, education, justice, government and so forth would become the practice here. The idea that Maori people should share in such decisions was unacceptable: there was no recognition that they had anything to offer or the skills to take their share in government and the development of institutions. Pakehas decided, and Maori people had the limited choice of response: to accept or to react. Maori efforts to reject decisions were put down by force, so reaction rather than rejection was the only alternative to acceptance. This Maori experience of choicelessness remained constant, whether the Pakehas in control were those imbued with paternalistic responsibility or those working from a basis of simple, overt racist greed.

#### THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

The Treaty was part of the colonial process. No doubt there were mixed motives and intentions, but it demonstrably bought time till the population balance changed (2,000 Pakeha, 200,000 Maori at the time of the Treaty) and until militarisation was achieved - bringing in an army and raising a militia.

Whatever the intentions, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: the tree is known by its fruits: and racism is identified in outcomes. Hobson represented the paternalists. The Colonial Office prior to the Treaty was dominated by people like Lord Normanby and Lord John Russell. This is a note by Russell, interpolated in the 1839 Directions to Hobson.

*"...you will look rather to the permanent welfare of the tribes now to be connected with us, than their supposed claim to the maintenance of their own laws and customs. The Queen's sovereignty must be vindicated and the benefits of a rule extending its protection to the whole community must be made known by the practical exercise of its authority."*

The essence of paternalism is that the grown-ups know best and make decisions affecting the children, regardless of what the children think they want. Yet it is very clear that it was precisely the claim to the "maintenance of their own laws and customs" which convinced many of the chiefs to sign.

Now a look at Hobson's performance after the Treaty was signed is in order. The Letters Patent, which defined his role as Governor, required him to set up two councils: an Executive Council, with whom he would discuss decisions and policies on the ongoing running of the Colony and a Legislative Council, to discuss ordinances, laws and regulations. For both of these councils, Hobson had absolute discretionary power, to appoint whoever he chose. He appointed no Maori people at all. This is a clear indication of where he stood on the issue of power sharing.

It may be argued that at that early stage the colony was a small, separate institution, which Hobson was to govern without reference to the rest of the country, which remained in Maori hands. This is not borne out by the May 21 1840 proclamation of New Zealand as a possession of the British Crown, nor by subsequent events in which the Crown, nominally both chief protector and sole alienator of Maori land rights, consistently performed the latter task at the expense of the former.

We come to 1852, when a constitution gave the settlers "responsible government" and the Provincial Councils and General Assembly were set up. Franchise and eligibility to stand for election were based on property, particularly land ownership. Most Maori people were excluded because only individualised title to land was recognised. If there had been any intention to include, to share power, it would simply have been a matter of finding a legal formula for representation based on land held in common - not a particularly difficult legal task.

## CULTURE AND LAND

Under settler rule, attacks on Maori culture, and the drive for individual land title, the principal means towards land alienation, were unremitting. For the Maori, communal land tenure still provided security for the individual and a firm basis for the strongly conservationist character of Maori land use. Maori people had rapidly grasped the advantages of European technology and were quick to adopt new farming methods and crops, adapting them to their communal economic system and producing impressive results. Wheat and corn were grown, mills built to convert them to flour there were 18 mills in the Waikato area alone by 1853. Ships were bought or built to convey the produce both within New Zealand and to Australia. In 1858 fifty-three Maori-owned vessels of fourteen tons and upward were registered in Auckland.

The Settlers, in contrast, came from a society in which land was wealth, prestige and influence. Those who had title to land could do with it as they wished, and it succeeded to their heirs. Many came to this country in the expectation of acquiring land, to "make their fortune". With that background and in that mood, they were unprepared to accept that the apparently unoccupied acres which constituted important sources of food and timber for the Maori were as "owned" as any English estate. Nor were they prepared to give any recognition to Maori communal title, differing as it did so greatly from their notions of propriety. As far as they were concerned, land held in Maori title was land wasted.

"The colonists do desire and very earnestly, to get possession for colonising purposes, of those large tracts of fertile land which lie waste and unimproved in the hands of the natives, over which they even prohibit our making roads or running a steamer on the rivers by which they are watered". Sir William Fox, 1866.

There was heavy pressure on McLean's Land Purchase Department to buy land. Easy and fertile land already under cultivation, such as the Waikato, looked very desirable to the greedy eyes of farmers and speculators alike. But the purchase of Maori land held under communal title was a slow and complicated affair, specially as Maori owners became increasingly reluctant to sell. Many attempts were made to declare uncultivated Maori land to be waste, and therefore Crown property already, and the tone of the discussion was overtly racist. For example, vast tracts of the South Island were "purchased", while the "native reserves" were calculated on the basis of so many acres per native, in the language of farm stocking rates. It was inconceivable that Maori owners could legitimately possess large tracts, and only cultivation was suggested as the basis for ownership - yet where, apart from the later big stations of the East Coast, were larger areas of land passed to single Pakeha ownership, notably uncultivated, than in the South Island?

Attempts were made to survey Maori land wholesale and convert it from communal to the much more readily saleable individual title of possession. These were vetoed by British Governments. But if the lands could not be purchased, they would be gained some other way.

Clearly, Maori culture, attitudes to land and resources, economic processes, was a barrier to European progress. Maori education and language was antagonistic to change. So, as Dr Bruce Biggs put it, in the end total war was declared on the Maori language.

Hand-in-hand with the attack via language and civilisation went the remorseless quest for land. Powerful men like Whittaker (sometime Premier, and Attorney General in the Domett Ministry, solicitor for the Bank of New Zealand, and partner in the firm of Whittaker and Russell, the largest land agency in the Colony) and Thomas Russell (land agency speculator, part owner of the Bank of New Zealand and Minister of War in the Domett Government) were looking for an excuse to dispossess stubborn Maori owners who refused to sell.

## LAND WARS

In the end, a pretext was found, and General Cameron's forces, 10,000 British regulars and 5,000 Colonials (mainly recruited from the goldfields with promises of 50 acres of land) crossed the Mangatawhiri river in July 1863. Almost immediately, Parliament was called together for the passing of a series of Acts: notably the Suppression of Rebellion Act and the New Zealand Land Settlement Act. This provided that the Governor, on the advice of his Ministers, might "establish at pleasure settlements upon any land belonging to natives within any district within which such land was situated that was in the possession of a tribe, section or considerable number of natives who the governor was satisfied had engaged in rebellion." This law simply provided that all communal owners would be punished for the actions of disaffected individuals. The intention was to confiscate the land of all Maori people in arms, and the logical process was to engage as many as possible in armed resistance. As the army advanced, burning crops and homes, it created "rebels". During the Waikato war, two offers of surrender were refused by Cameron, instructed by the Government. The provocative invasions continued to Tauranga, Taranaki and Maniapoto hinterlands.

The resulting confiscations, which fell within the compass of the law, were extensive. Almost three million acres were taken initially, in Waikato, Taranaki and Bay of Plenty. In 1865, further legislation established the Maori Land Court. Its first work was to examine the confiscated land, to return any which belonged to "loyal" Maoris! About half the land was returned, but whereas it had been communally owned when it was taken, it was returned in the form of individual titles. This was exactly what the Settlers had wanted. Henceforth, in the Land Court, they had a mechanism for the alienation of Maori land through individuation of title.

## TENTHS

Something else which has become invisible in our history - the question of tenths and other reserves. In all the NZCo and several government purchases, the Maori ceded land on the specific agreement that a tenth of the urban, a tenth of the suburban and a tenth of the rural land in each purchase was to be set aside for the purpose of funding education, health and welfare for the tribe in question.

Even in Nelson and Westland, where some of those reserve obligations were partly honoured, there is still much to be settled. But it was not until 1974 that Ngaitahu claims in Canterbury were met, and although in 1980 the Ngaitahu and Ngati Mamoe claims in Otago were for the third time recognised as just and legitimate, no settlement has been made. What of Wellington and Taranaki?

In fact, Maori workers have always been expected to pay tax on their incomes, so many have paid twice for whatever they have received in health care, education and welfare. The statistics indicate that they have not only paid double, they have received less.

## AND SO TO HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

Maori health statistics show very clearly that it is dangerous for Maori people to live in a racist society. Life under racism is stressful, and many Maori die of stress-related conditions. Life under racism is impoverished, and many Maori die as a result of poverty. Life under racism is a state of powerlessness, and many Maori die as a result of powerlessness. The Koha programme on Health made the point very clearly, that to be deprived of land, language and power is a massive health hazard to Maori people.

More often than not, whites who discuss or begin work on racism then attack only the most visible and shocking manifestations of the problem, leaving the most relevant aspects unrecognised and untouched. For it is in the nature of racism in New Zealand, as with other most basic social phenomena, that the visible, exceptional, newsworthy events are all but insignificant in the face of the subtle, continuing, everyday patterns that pass without notice. We must clear away the most dramatic manifestations of racism so that we can see beyond to the more basic dynamics.

Te Paea by Michael King. I want to quote a couple of passages from this book to sketch in the historical state of health care delivery and link our discussion to the historical point.

*Health, too, in Waikato was particularly bad. In most Maori communities there, life was a miserable recurrence of typhoid epidemics interspersed with bouts of influenza, measles and whooping cough. This was partly a result of social conditions, partly the refusal to set up supervisory councils and appoint sanitary inspectors under the Maori Councils Act. There were few doctors in Waikato who would attend Maori patients, no hospitals to admit them and no preventative health measures. (Only four doctors in Waikato received payment from the Native Affairs Department in 1906 for seeing Maori patients; the nearest hospitals were in Auckland and Hamilton but they rarely took Maoris and did not want to. Judge H F Edgar of the Native Department, wrote in 1906: "The hospitals, notably Auckland, are very unsympathetic regarding the administration of Maoris for treatment, their principal argument being that the Maoris pay but little towards the upkeep of the hospital (through rates)."*<sup>27</sup>)

*Disease, therefore, especially typhoid and tuberculosis, was believed to take a heavier toll in Waikato than in other districts, and one that was not even recorded (Maori deaths were not then notifiable as were European ones). The Auckland District Health Officer was concerned about this state of affairs, but only because of its implications for Pakeha communities. (P 33)*

*The largest smallpox epidemic recorded in New Zealand was first detected in Whangarei in May 1913. It had been carried to the country by a Mormon missionary from Arizona whose chosen vocation was to win Maori converts. His illness was more contagious than his faith. Most of those who contracted the disease from him were Maori, and constant movements to his and Maori Land Court sittings over the next month ensured that the outbreak spread over the Auckland province before it was identified and checked by vaccination.*

*According to the Auckland District Health Officer there were 1777 Maori cases and 111 European ones; there were also fifty-five Maori deaths.<sup>†</sup> But he went on to say that the departmental record "by no means gives a complete return of the cases since the greater part of the outbreak was among Maoris, and in consequence only about a quarter of the cases were seen by my medical men and reported."<sup>19</sup> The outbreak lasted just over a year, the last cases being notified in April 1914. (p 76)*

TURANGAWAEWAE: PREPARATIONS

Feelings of elation in Waikato at the conclusion of the war were shortlived. As had happened so often in the past, the white man's peace proved more devastating.

An epidemic of influenza that affected 720 million people worldwide and took over 20 million lives reached New Zealand in July 1913.

The first wave, although widespread, produced few fatalities. The second, from late October to December, was virulent and killed over 6700 people (more than a third of the New Zealand casualties in the war). A Royal Commission investigating the outbreak concluded there was "a strong presumption" that the later strain had been introduced by the arrival at Auckland on 12 October of the *SS Niagara*, the same ship that had taken Te Rata to London. On board were Prime Minister William Massey and Finance Minister Joseph Ward.<sup>1</sup> As a result of their presence the ship was not subjected to quarantine regulations then in force for infected vessels.\*

The stronger strain spread rapidly through military camps and Armistice celebrations. The experience of earlier epidemics<sup>†</sup> was confirmed when Polynesians displayed far less immunity to the disease than Europeans. In consequence their population was reduced dramatically. In addition to physical vulnerability, Maori settlements also exhibited the very features that authorities warned were most likely to spread the infection: "overcrowding", "thronging", "poor ventilation", "inadequate water supplies and sanitary facilities", "alcoholic excess" and "fright". The greater Polynesian disposition for respiratory ailments and heart disease intensified the vulnerability since most influenza deaths resulted from an aggravation of such conditions.<sup>2</sup> Maori communities also had few of supplies recommended for use preventatively and to alleviate distress after the onset of symptoms ("liquid soda chlorinate gargles, face masks, prophylactic vaccination and good nourishing food"). The consequence of all these factors was a devastating Maori death toll and death rate never accurately determined.

Buck, noting that the estimate of Maori deaths was well below that which actually occurred, call the epidemic "the severest setback the race has received since the fighting days of Hongi Hika. Influenza in three months caused more casualties to the Maoris than the campaigns in Gallipoli, France and Belgium".<sup>3</sup>

For official purposes the number of Maori deaths registered was estimated at 1150 or a rate of 226 per 10,000 of population - over four and a half times greater than that of Europeans. This was bad enough. But the actual total must have been far higher since Maori deaths were still not notified.<sup>4</sup> Many Maori communities never saw a medical officer during the outbreak and were not asked for an estimate of fatalities.<sup>5</sup> Some of them were almost annihilated (a Pakeha visitor to the Atiawa settlement at the headwaters of the Waitara River in Taranaki counted 140 people there before the epidemic and less than fifty afterwards).<sup>4</sup> The full extent of official negligence in Maori health was concealed. Of 111 witnesses who gave evidence to the subsequent Royal Commission, for example, not one was Maori.

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\* The Niagara contamination theory was the most comforting explanation for the outbreak in New Zealand. A more disquieting view was that which produced evidence of a simultaneous eruption of the severe strain in all parts of the globe, including ships that had been at sea continuously for three weeks. Indeed, some of the more virulent cases appear to have been developing in New Zealand before the Niagara docked. Nor was it to be the destiny of the Niagara to sail off into historic obscurity: she was mined by the Germans off the New Zealand coast on 19 June 1940, and sank with a cargo of gold bullion worth more than £2½ million.

† In 1826, 1838, 1844, 1853, 1887 and 1890 to 1894

We all know the figures. The statistics that tell us that the Health system is one of the racist institutions of a racist society. So what am I suggesting you watch out for?

Watch for blaming the victim. Listen in these talks and discussions; listen to your colleagues, at meetings; catch yourself being drawn towards this way of accounting for a situation. Instead teach yourself to look for institutional causes.

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Watch out for cultural absolutes, instead of relativity. I mean assumptions, attitudes and conventions which don't necessarily hold true across cultures. Ways of thinking about the body, about what health is, about how information is best transferred. As an example: in our culture it isn't generally acceptable for "respectable" women to reveal their bodies to strange men. But we have a set of conventions that make it OK when the woman is a patient and the man is a doctor. Some of it comes from the models and images we use for the process - your body is a car that has broken down, and the doctor is the mechanic.....or whatever. But who really understands all the subtle complexities of socialisation which adjusts our minds to accept that in particular circumstances it is OK to set aside our usual rules? It doesn't even work all that well for us: how can we demand that people from other cultures operate in the same way when their conditioning is quite different. They may well have their own mechanisms and models for this sort of situation.

Look at priorities and allocation of resources.

As an example, take the provision or non-provision of interpreters and the lack of training or encouragement for health personnel to make use of interpreters. They can be vital in delivering health care, but the Auckland Hospital Board has a tatty policy of - if the wardmaid isn't Tongan, see if somebody's uncle's in the building!

Now when you consider resources and priorities, an interpreting service is expensive if you're comparing it with ballpoints and sticking plaster, but cheap if you compare it with the technology of medicine, isn't it?