

# Some thoughts for Pakehas working against Racism

As Pakehas, we have a heritage of bloodshed, plunder, deceit and manipulation but as some of us are finding, we can come to terms with this, recognise what it has meant for non-pakehas and can move beyond it. Here are some of the things we are finding:

1. We can move beyond guilt to undertake realistic action aimed at bringing a society that is just for all. We acknowledge that we and our society are racist but we know that we can not expect a better future unless we commit ourselves to making it so.

There is no time to waste wallowing in guilt, self-incrimination, or abuse from others; there are too many problems for which real solutions must be found. There will be no integrity for Pakehas until there is a just distribution of political and economic power.

2. We don't have to undertake projects to prove ourselves or to get good feelings. All people have worth in themselves. From our own strength we can support the efforts of others to gain justice.

3. We have learnt that it is essential to understand power and how to deal with those who hold power. At present power in New Zealand is held by a very few rich Pakeha men. Most Pakehas are also victims, used by the powerful to maintain an oppressive and racist system into which we are all locked. Our future is not with the men of power, but with those without power who seek to regain the responsibility for their own lives.

4. We must endeavour to initiate change, not just respond to circumstances as they arise. We have to gain the initiative from those who wish to preserve the status quo. We are learning to work in alliances that can effectively challenge the powerful.

5. We must realise the distinction between self-interest and selfishness. Whether we look at New Zealand or the world, the survival and well-being of others is linked to our own. When self-interests are in conflict, negotiation is essential. We don't have to be mates with everyone, but we will not manipulate, nor will we be manipulated.

6. We are in a risky business and we must take risks: when we act for change we can expect retaliation from those who fear change.

7. If the future is to be new we have to be open to new life styles and aware of different ideas about our relationship with the land and its resources, about education, work and leisure.

8. We can value many cultures, groups and people different from ourselves without wanting to be like them or demanding that they be like us. We must be prepared to accept conflict and uncertainty as we defend the right of others to be themselves.

9. Those who are used and victimised by our racist society have insights and experiences which we do not. We must not undertake action without consulting them or try to speak for them - that path simply maintains the status quo of manipulation and control.

10. We have learnt that we cannot be these things on our own. Without support we lose our drive and slip back into old ways. We need support groups in which to plan, to act and to evaluate our actions. Such groups don't just happen. We have to set them up and deliberately work to maintain them. Only if we can learn to know ourselves, to live with others, be sensitive to them and respect them, can we hope for a more humane society in which these things become the norm.