

NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME ON RACISM

PREPARED BY MITZI NAIRN

as background for the review of the Programme.

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ORIGINS OF PROGRAMME: HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

1960s

HUNN REPORT
MAORI WOMEN'S WELFARE LEAGUE
DECOLONISATION AS BRITISH EMPIRE BECOMES COMMONWEALTH
VIETNAM WAR
STUDENT UNREST
OPENING UP OF CHINA - MAOIST THOUGHT, REVOLUTION
FRENCH STUDENT/WORKER REVOLUTIONARY UPRISING
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN USA
ANGELA DAVIS, STOKELEY CARMICHAEL, BLACK POWER, BLACK PANTHERS
BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION, BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL
NGA TAMATOA
POLYNESIAN PANTHER PARTY
MAORI ORGANISATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
NZ RACE RELATIONS COUNCIL
WCC FOUNDS PROGRAMME TO COMBAT RACISM
WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION CONSCIENTISATION PROGRAMME

1960, Ralph Hanan was minister of Maori Affairs. A report came out, which takes its name from the permanent head of the Department, Jack Hunn. The Hunn Report presented data on how Maori people were faring in all aspects of society - housing, education, employment etc. - all the things we'd now call social indicators.

And it made a high impact statement: our policy of assimilation has not worked.

It showed that in every area of life, health and well-being, on all measures, both positive and negative, there were huge discrepancies between what was happening for Maori people as a group and what was happening for the rest of society, which at that stage was mainly Pakeha. It was of course possible to point to a few individual Maori high fliers, especially in sports and entertainment.

So I want to look at how those facts were interpreted in the next 30 years. To do this will shed light on the development of the anti-racism movement, of which the Programme on Racism is a significant part.

1960-----1970-----1980-----1990

The Hunn Report said that because assimilation hadn't worked, integration was the answer.

Maori people must try hard and catch up.
Pakeha people of goodwill must help them more.
Together we would solve the Maori problem.

So the 1960s were a time of trying hard and helping: homework centres, the Maori Education Foundation, raffle tickets and so forth. Helpful Pakeha became secretaries and treasurers of marae committees. The New Zealand Race Relations Council brought together concerned groups and individuals and agonised over "the Maori problem".

And towards the end of the 1960s three things happened.

Firstly all the statistics were revisited and monitored, and after almost a decade of effort, on virtually every measure, Maori people were slightly worse off, falling further behind, than in 1960!

Secondly, early change agent groups began to emerge:

Nga Tamatoa, PPP, MOOHR, and some sectors of the Race Relations Council: TUs, students, church people, including the Student Christian Movement, and the Nelson local sub-committee of the Race Relations Council.

Thirdly, these groups began to look for another explanation for the situation. Perhaps there was something structural, in the system. Perhaps we were looking at victims and blaming them for what had happened to them, instead of looking for real agency. Maybe it wasn't a Maori problem, but a Pakeha problem.

During this decade ideas were circulating rapidly internationally, and many events and trends influenced each other. I listed some of them at the beginning of this paper. Some people placed too much emphasis on external sources, as if New Zealand people, particularly Maori people, were not capable of producing their own independent critique of their context. It would be fair to say that the interchange of analysis of comparable data speeded up the process and gave it impetus because it offered new vocabulary which enabled sharper focus. The US civil rights movement, decolonisation (Paolo Friere, Franz Fanon) and conscientisation all provided ideas which helped us to account for reality as we were now perceiving it.

I was talking about this the other day and somebody asked me "Are you saying that racism began in 1960?" No, of course racism didn't start in 1960. What started in 1960 was a serious and sustained challenge to previous perceptions of reality and ways of concealing and accounting for racial injustice. Without going into the history of racial thinking in New Zealand, after almost a century of assimilationist policies, the 1950s were characterised by a mythic perception that "New Zealand has the best race relations in the world".

Hence the "blame the victims" response to the data of the Hunn Report. Maori people had not taken advantage of all their opportunities, and were held responsible both for their situation and for its remedies. Pakeha people, and, after a century of

assimilationist policies, particularly in education, many Maori people too, found it very difficult and threatening to consider any other interpretation of reality.

1970s

CCA URM

ASIAN STUDENT UPRISINGS

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION - GNANASUNDERAM

PROGRAMME TO COMBAT RACISM - VISITS

- TEAM TO USA

- TRAINING TEAM TO NZ

NELSON ACTION COMMITTEE

PACT

ACORD

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION - PAOLO FREIRE VISIT

TE ROOPU MATAKITE O AOTEAROA - LAND MARCH

LAND OCCUPATION(S) - BASTION POINT, RAGLAN, AWHITU

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS, PHILIPPE FANCHETTE

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON RACE

TE ROOPU TOMOKIA

FAIR

The word racism came tentatively into use, to apply to something which had previously been hidden and denied, truth for which we had had no language. Language is the key component of understanding. Terms like "Blame the Victims", "Institutional Racism", "a pluralistic society", "the white male club" came into play as groups began to try out a new analysis. The watershed publication was "Maori Participation in Pakeha Justice", where the Nelson Action Group of the Race Relations Council applied the theory of racism in research in the courts.

Other action groups soon followed, and began to set up education coalitions like New Perspectives on Race. I shall discuss later how policies of divergence into specific work for oppressor and oppressed groups developed. (see Developing anti-racism praxis)

A feature of the economic boom years of the 1960s and early 1970s was that Pacific Islands immigration far exceeding quotas began to be encouraged by employers, and officialdom turned a blind eye to workers on visitors' permits and those who overstayed their permits. By the mid-seventies, a tightening up economy meant dawn raids and emphasis on overstayers. As the first round of restructuring hit the industrial sector, competition for unskilled jobs and cheap housing intensified.

1980s

PCR consultations
WAITANGI ACTION COMMITTEE
CHURCHES ACTION COMMITTEE
Programme on Racism 1982 Our Own Backyard
TE RUNANGA WHAKAWNANAUNGA IN NGA HAHI FORMATION
KIA MOHIO KIA MARAMA
PROJECT WAITANGI
LABOUR GOVERNMENT, CORPORATISATION, PRIVATISATION REFER Kelsey
MAORI ECONOMIC RESISTANCE

A general and a-historical analysis of racism in New Zealand showed, and shows, that it affects both Maori and non-Maori Polynesians. Such an analysis has the effect of reducing Maori to one minority group among several in their own land. The development of analysis in the late seventies and early eighties was a result of deeper learning about the historical context. Maori as tangata whenua, with prior rights, came into focus as attention was paid to the Treaty of Waitangi, and the history of colonisation in this land was uncovered by people with different assumptions from those who had written, forgotten or suppressed that history.

The Hunn Report said that New Zealand's policy of assimilation had not worked. A more thorough historical probing of our institutions reveals how embedded racism is, and how it was built in. Most of our major institutions were substantially formed, and their controlling legislation laid down, between 1865 and 1910, a period when settler hostility to Maori was most overt, and when the Maori population was numerically in decline. Amalgamation and assimilation assumed that the Maori would mostly die out, and that while a few genetic traces might remain, culturally and politically nothing would be left but a few museum artefacts. The Hunn Report itself recommended integration, and held Maori people responsible for saving anything of value from the wreckage of their culture.

Most of what is still here and in good shape is here as a result of Maori struggles. They have had some Pakeha allies in those struggles, but their allies in one area are often unintentionally a liability in another area. For example, strategies to preserve the Maori language by use are undermined when English must be used to communicate with supporters in a joint action.

It is fairly galling when the fruits of hard struggle are taken over and misrepresented, as when a public servant tells visitors that Te Kohanga Reo is part of the preschool education which New Zealand has to offer.

The Programme on Racism was set up in 1982 by the NCC. This was

not sudden, but was the result of several years of deliberation and a number of influential events like consultations, and reflections from groups like the Church and Society Commission through its secretary, Gnanasunderam. It was a response by the churches acting together, to explore how God's quest for justice in creation and the living out of the Gospel should be pursued here.

Ironically, the unrest during the 1981 Springbok rugby tour, which was somewhat tangential to the issue of domestic racism, was a clincher, because it alarmed a number of waverers into the belief that "something" should be done. An eligible "something" was already on the agenda!

The Programme on Racism came into being into an existing network of anti-racism work and education. Although it had special tasks in relation to the church and to theological development, it did not have to start from scratch even in these areas, because of the participation and influence of Christians in the whole network. It was welcomed into the network, and has always operated as a respected part of it.

EMERGING ANTI-RACISM PRAXIS

During the 1970s, those who began to develop anti-racism praxis, Maori, Pakeha and other Polynesian groups, were all responding to the same data. Much of that data was put together by research or experientially through action, some of it was uncovered by a new reading of existing data from new analytic hypotheses: mainly, that racism probably was operating.

It soon became clear that, while we were responding to the same data, those who belonged to or with the dominant/oppressor group and those who belonged to the oppressed group(s) had different needs and different responses were appropriate.

Pakeha who were close to groups like Nga Tamatoa were increasingly challenged to "work with your own people", to take responsibility for Pakeha actions, institutions, history and raising Pakeha consciousness: to become change agents in our own world.

Maori, non-Maori Polynesian groups, and pan-Polynesian organisations like 'Black Unity' became increasingly committed to their own agenda, and a huge agenda it was, too: of decolonisation.

I'd like to refer here to Paolo Freire. Not only was his influence great, both in terms of his teachings and writings, but

more than anybody else I can think of, he expressed the kind of things that the emerging movement was trying to do, whether or not those involved had studied his works or not. Because of his great accuracy and humanity, many people who have struggled through painful situations, voiced their dreams and started to set up programmes to meet their goals, read his words and recognise themselves.

In this paragraph, I am only signalling a tiny proportion of the insights which helped so many of us: the liberation and restoration of humanity, with loving care for both oppressed and oppressor;
oppressed objects becoming subjects, naming reality and seeking their own education which changes the situation;
violence embedded in injustice and domination;
love, courage, hope, dialogue, trust, critical thinking;
anti-dialogical actions like cultural invasion maintaining dominance and therefore preventing true humanisation which is the vocation of humanity;
development, true transformation, consciousness and revolutionary action: cultural synthesis.

As we worked through the 1970s, we began to figure out how what is appropriate for the oppressed is not what is appropriate for the oppressor group and those who are co-opted into it. Their humanisation and liberation requires a different kind of conscientisation and education, and different forms of action.

Communication between groups was a strength at this time, as huge and painful learnings took place. Truth was often devastating, but love and support was also revelatory. We were developing co-intentional education and action, to find appropriate processes for the needs of different groups.

Joint development of education for Pakeha happened during the years between 1975 and 1980, at least, the basic outlines and principles were laid down. I think this was an essential stage, as Pakeha needed help and support to develop their work, and it was useless unless the oppressed group were able to monitor and direct that work, even though this demand upon them was very heavy and interfered with the urgency of their own agenda. Some very gifted people were set aside or made themselves available to work with Pakeha, and to develop consultancy and monitoring skills. I'll comment further on how workshops developed, but first I want to mention the other part of our praxis, the action which gives credibility to education. Education, especially education outwards, can also be understood as action, and should be subject to reflection just as much as any other action. But for those engaged, reflection is also part of their own education.

Joint actions and co-operative actions were very important during

this stage, and taught us all a great deal about who can best do what, and how to stay in touch. (E.g. work on the racism of Auckland policing patterns when team policing was introduced, "pig patrols", media pressure, deputations, research, writing it up, interpreting and debunking statistics and arguments, addressing groups, etc)

Policies of divergence in anti-racism and Treaty work were firmly in place by the early 1980s. Coalitions of separate groups and caucuses during joint events, we had learnt, were extremely constructive. In education, "white on white", monitored when necessary, continued, and oppressed groups pursued conscientisation, politicisation, and structural analysis. Liaison continued, but mainly around new developments and joint campaigns.

During the 1980s these origins became more obscure, as people came into the network in the post-basic development stage. New groups of Pakeha were more dependent on other Pakeha for information and identity, and were often uncertain about trusting this body of knowledge (hence the desire to hear a Maori person say it). This was offset by the fact that Maori were also newly entering the network. For Maori, the experience of monitoring Pakeha workshops and committees works as a form of consciousness raising, so monitoring through the uncertainties of development has been possible, though I think at times people have been trapped when they assumed that being Maori was in itself sufficient for the role, not understanding that there is a body of analysis, skills and ground rules for monitoring.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed influence in developing workshops

Oppressors and Oppressed have different needs and tasks. Different but cointentional processes of education and action, although action by oppressor group should be consultative. Sometimes action will be joint.

White on white.

Use Pakeha energy to shift Pakeha.

Maori need Maori energy for C.R., development and healing.

e.g. Maori Section of NCC becoming Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga i Nga Hahi o Aotearoa.

1982 Pon R - setting up a response by the churches acting together, to explore how God's quest for justice and the living out of the Gospel should be pursued in this area.

statement of racism

Success in CR and confrontation of institutional power base led to co-option of language.

class origins, class position
cultural communication
expressive/inscrutable
cultural replication

NOTES ON THEOLOGICAL THINKING DURING THIS PERIOD

It may be helpful to indicate briefly some of the theological trends which were influential during the period which led up to the formation of the Programme on Racism, and some which have been important to its style, priorities and work.

Sometimes I refer to a writer or a book, but not intending to imply that this was the only writer or book on the subject!

The late fifties gave us the rediscovery of the laity (Kramer) and the central place of the laity in the life and mission of the church. Church transformation and renewal, and an interest in liturgy characterised the early sixties. But the secular age had sneaked up on the church, suggesting the death of God (Honest to God) and the ir/relevance of faith. (Faith in a Secular Age). A discussion about the historicity of Jesus (Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth; The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History) marked the early quest for a modern, sustainable faith.

As decolonisation proceeded, the credibility of proclamation was challenged by those who had once been "mission fields". This challenge, for the churches in Europe, mingled with the challenge of irrelevance at home. Evangelical credibility requires consistency of relationships among Christians (koinonia) with relationships with those outside the faith community (diakonia) in tune with what is said about God and Jesus. If the gospel is good news, and God desires loving justice, this must be shown, not merely spoken. (Christian presence, worker priests, moratorium on mission)

In theology, and, in some places programmatically, conscientisation of christians and politicisation of the gospel were a faithful response. Liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology, base communities, faith households and other expressions of Christian life emerged, centred on an understanding of God as a God of justice, who has special concerns for the poor, Jesus with the marginalised, Jesus as a loving revolutionary, revolution as a way of love. These are all part of de/remythologising the gospel in a secular age.

Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly (Micah)

The spirit of God is upon me (Isaiah/Jesus)
Give an account of the faith that is in you if you are asked.

Love is paramount (Corinthians)

Love is God is incarnational (Johannine writings)

Our struggle is not against people but against institutions,
powers, spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

trial and error, lots of learnings, tighter analysis

Maori having strengthened the cultural, social base and taken
emergency action eg re language - Kohanga Reo as salvage
operation... turned into far more more pursuit of economic and
political space tino rangatiratanga, tribal economic ventures
and pan-tribal efforts

Maori achievements such as TKR not presented as results of
struggle but, by the state, as "what we have here"!

economic directions of the late 80s (see Kelsey)
Maori resistance

disillusion with Waitangi Tribunal, land and identity still being
eroded
despair increasing, especially among alienated young

greatest hope is in the proactive Maori ventures education,
health, welfare, reclaiming young some help from eg CYP&F
Act. Tribal identity resurgence e.g. Nga Tikanga o Ngati Te Ata

doing the analysis but still piking on the consequences e.g. Te
Kahukura

tribal versus Maori tension

colonisation

Pakeha side, learnings and commitments
real small prototype changes, vulnerable, can be demolished or
snatched away

related to the substance of contextual faith

justice was a luxury item for when times were good

need for sharp and truthful analysis of present patterns which include racism without subsuming it

Treaty?

information, networking, support and supervision,
holding ground and developing new ways of being and acting

unless justice is done, becoming nicer Pakeha is acquisitive,
exploitative,

infinite supply of ignorance, candidates for basic education

but just in early stages of developing what else we need -
theology, structures, ways to evaluate, ways to co-operate

CCANZ - Te Runanga Whakawhanaunga i Nga Hahi
partnership relationship not an end in itself but a base from
which to proclaim the Gospel better

how we relate to each other (koinonia)
how we relate outwards (diakonia)
role of laity v understanding of role of clergy
credibility of proclamation

basis of peace and survival of planet

churches strung out along the trail, some still at home in bed
some hostile
at the people level

at the structural level more to do theory of the perfection
of the church a block; denial of institutional reality of church
is a block; theory of individual sin/responsibility a block, some
theories of how god shows pleasure are blocks;

goals of conference, ecumenical attempts (staff statement)

inclusiveness
international perspective
mission and evangelism
bicultural relationships
unity
justice, peace
women's participation
prophetic courage
links with churches
communication and dialogue
theological development

POSSIBLE FUTURE STRUCTURES

renaming wouldn't matter so long as the name was tougher not a backing off.

Continue to work with Te Runanga on this. Maybe a joint unit. For CR and advocative education. Information, networking, joint action?

Negotiated denominational appointments for a team base doing some ecumenical work and meeting specific needs of denomination.

Writing it more closely into all job descriptions and mandates of every part of the conference.

Subsuming its administration into the National Office and Putting it into other half-time of Te Runanga Coordinator Plus a half-time Pakeha appointment?

