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When Project Waitangi was launched in 1986, its aim was to open the debate about the Treaty of Waitangi amongst Pakeha New Zealanders. We realised that one of our first tasks was to challenge the understanding of history that many Pakeha had about this country since 1840. Racist attitudes based on misinformation and historical myths were common, and Project Waitangi sought to counter this through the distribution of easy-to-read, factual information about the Treaty document itself as well as pre-Treaty times and the subsequent 150 years. We saw it to be equally important to have the Treaty recognised as not only of concern to Maori but of central relevance to Pakeha New Zealanders. Project Waitangi groups operating on a voluntary basis now exist in 24 places around Aotearoa. They have offered educational courses on the Treaty of Waitangi to hundreds of groups since 1986.

In the decade of the 1980's the Treaty has come more and more into focus, with such factors as the Royal Commission on Social Policy, Waitangi Tribunal reports and the Court of Appeal case on the State Owned Enterprises Bill. Pakeha views became polarised between those wanting to know more and to take on the challenge of the Treaty, and those fearful and confused wanting to halt the whole process of Treaty debate. The first group eagerly sought information about the Treaty and Project Waitangi National office has had difficulty in meeting the huge demand for our resource material and educational services. The latter group came to be known as the "Pakeha backlash", some of whom formed the organisation called The One New Zealand Foundation, which campaigns strongly against Treaty recognition and implementation.

The Pakeha anti-racism movement of the 1970's moved into the 80's with a shift in its methods. Seminars that tended to provoke Pakeha guilt were recognised as alienating more people than they persuaded. While it was necessary at that time to make strong challenges, there was a move to accept that change happens in people when they are approached in a positive framework. Project Waitangi clearly had a role in these changes, with a commitment to Pakeha having a clear place in Aotearoa, a place determined by and conditional upon the honouring of the Treaty of Waitangi. Alongside this came the exploration of what it meant to be a Pakeha New Zealander. If the two founding cultures of Aotearoa, Maori and Pakeha, were to establish just relationships, it was necessary for Pakeha to identify and specify the dimensions of Pakeha culture. This was a key for Pakeha to recognise how most systems operated along cultural lines that were familiar and comfortable to Pakeha people, which at the same time worked to the disadvantage of Maori.

The fourth Labour Government came into power in 1984 declaring

an openness about settling Treaty grievances. They set upon a course of recognising and giving status to the Treaty, with consequences that they could not envisage. Over the last few years, public servants have attended education courses on the Treaty and we have seen the establishment of Maori responsiveness units, cultural units, advisory groups, and so on.

In the community and at the governmental level, monocultural practices, policies and structures were being widely challenged.

The 1980's were a decade of learning, awareness and understanding for Pakeha about the Treaty and related areas. As we begin the 1990's, the Treaty of Waitangi is now clearly part of Pakeha consciousness. Almost daily one hears or reads reports about Treaty matters.

However, it is necessary to question whether this attitudinal change is leading to concrete results. It has become clear that whereas more Pakeha New Zealanders know about the Treaty of Waitangi, implementation of its guarantees are difficult to achieve.

In the Government arena, there has been considerable backsliding on the Treaty as the consequences of honouring it become more clearly defined. Since the SOE case, where the Crown was limited by the Court of Appeal in selling off state assets, the strength of the Treaty of Waitangi when used within the Pakeha legal system has been recognised. Previously, many Government departments included the recognition of the Treaty in their policy documents e.g. the Department of Health stated "The Treaty of Waitangi is the basis of good health". The use of the term "the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi" in Government policy and legislation has meant that the Crown has defined the meaning of the Treaty in its own interest. Its document: "Principles for Crown Action on the Treaty of Waitangi" was drawn up without formal consultation with its Treaty partner. There is no agreement with Maori that what the Crown has determined should provide the basis for action. However, the Crown is using the vociferous Pakeha backlash to justify pulling back from any commitment to honouring its promise of protecting "tino rangatiratanga" - Maori absolute authority over all their affairs.

Government reviews about the state of our justice, health and social welfare systems with regard to the Treaty have been a feature of the 1980's. Most of these reports have shown clearly the problems with the present structures and have

suggested alternatives. More often than not, the reaction to these has been to shoot the messenger instead of acknowledging the faults that exist and putting them to rights. An example of this is Moana Jackson's comprehensive report on Maori offending released in late 1988. Within this the author pointed to the problems and possible solutions in the area of Maori offending. His report is based on extensive consultation with Maori people. Instead of listening to the collective wisdom of Maoridom the Government marginalised the report by attacking Mr Jackson himself.

In the community there have been attempts to bring about changes in structures and policies in order to recognise the Treaty of Waitangi. Led by women's groups on the whole, community groups have taken seriously the need for establishing partnerships with Maori in their various spheres of activity. Organisations such as Rape Crisis, Women's Refuge, Marriage Guidance, National Youth Council, The NZ Drama School, Film Archive, the Depot Theatre, the Council of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand and so on provide positive models of honouring the Treaty at the community level. The late 1980's reflect a real commitment by many organisations to change their good intentions into practical outcomes.

So what will unfold for us in the 1990's? Certainly in many areas the Treaty is being accepted as a given, and that implementation is just a matter of time.

It is also clear however that those who hold power are unwilling to release it. Project Waitangi has experienced this at many levels, from politicians to school principals. It appears that while Pakeha are willing to understand and accept the dimensions of cultural awareness, when they are faced with the "tino rangatiratanga" guarantees of the Treaty, they are reluctant to make any real changes. Some developments are being limited to Maori having a status defined by Pakeha within Pakeha systems, rather than having full control and authority over their own resources and ways of operating.

Maori initiatives to set up their own structures have been the driving force in challenging the Pakeha consciousness. Successful and exciting developments such as Kohanga Reo, have emerged despite lack of resources and status, community resistance, media indifference and Government inertia.

The ideological battles have been and will continue to be important. However, similar energy has to be channelled into implementation of Treaty guarantees. This has to happen at all levels of our society. This is the challenge of the 1990's for

Pakeha New Zealanders.

Project Waitangi perceives an increasing optimism and hope about the future. More than in other time since 1840, the Treaty Waitangi has come into the minds and hearts of this generation of Pakeha, and is being spoken of as a positive force for the future.

Nelson Mandela's recent release from 27 years imprisonment has shocked and delighted the world. However we must recognise that his release has taken years of struggle by a people committed to gaining justice and self-determination. That struggle does not end with the release of one man from prison. The real work of negotiating a just future for South Africa has only just begun.

In a similar way here in Aotearoa, we enter a new phase in the struggle to negotiate a future where Pakeha can give up power without any loss of self-esteem and Maori can exercise tino rangatiratanga without constraint.

END

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