

**ADDRESS GIVEN TO THE NEW ZEALAND HOLOCAUST CENTRE AGM 10
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The Seeds of Prejudice in 21st Century New Zealand

**“The past helps write the present but it cannot right the future” Phillip D
Green.**

A personal perspective.

It is not possible to reflect on the seeds of prejudice in 21st century New Zealand without having some reference back to the previous century at the very least. I was born into a world where the print media in Wellington comprised The Dominion, The Evening Post, The Truth (forbidden in our household), The Listener and magazines imported from the United Kingdom with a few from Australia. Big Ben’s recording always introduced the BBC world News, and played at least four times a day. Its reporting was trusted with the proportions of a Mosaic delivery. There was local content news. Aunt Daisy with her homespun wisdom and recipes entered the majority of New Zealand homes every week morning. Mothers did not work and were home to listen to Aunt Daisy while doing the ironing, looking after babies and other domestic toil. Post war affluence was building. We had close to full employment. There were strong unions – the Watersiders, the Boilermakers and the National Union of Railwaymen. And in this New Zealand there was no real poverty. Education

included teaching about the British Empire and its history and how they vanquished Māori resistance for the betterment of all in New Zealand. In my primary school, Māori children were scarce. But interestingly, the principal, a Mr William Sparkes was Māori. We assembled each morning, outside if the weather was fine, and to martial music. The “movies” and “cinema” as words did not exist. Rather, we went to the “pictures” and stood for and lustily sang God Save the Queen. New Zealand’s news was presented with a studied English pronunciation. Our economy was tied to Britain and our world view was British even to the extent that people who were New Zealand born and bred referred to it as “home”. I was born in 1949 and this was my world. I remember seeing my first TV ever and on that same day the TV news. Our neighbours had this large boxed TV with pride of place in their lounge and invited us over to see it. In flickering shades of grey, no not that book, the news announcer, a man, talked over the picture of a lone seagull standing on the top of a pier by a Wellington wharf. He solemnly told us “Not much has happened in Wellington today”. I watched the seagull shift its weight and move to stand on one leg and marvelled at Wellington’s news.

We lived in an insulated, isolated, comfortable middle class world. And in it, the seeds of prejudice lay, not dormant, but germinating slowly.

My first understood encounter with prejudice came in the form of anti-Semitism at primary school, probably around 1957. I had a playmate and he and I used to sit, eat and share lunch together outside in the sun. Perhaps surprising or

not for eight year olds we discussed religion. I recall that he was an Exclusive Brethren and I had obviously told him that I was Jewish. One day he said to me *“Mum and Dad say I cannot have lunch with you anymore because you are Jewish.”* And he walked away leaving me utterly bewildered.

I now know that my world was surrounded by prejudice – in seed form but also flourishing. I just did not know that then. Did not see that then. That prejudice was powerfully present in the society within which I lived. It included the stereotypical labelling of Chinese and Indian families, of Māori as happy but lazy people and those people who wore jeans were definitely to be avoided. And the prejudices of my childhood years were there against the Jews as well, where the backwash of Nazi propaganda was infecting the minds of some of the next generation.

Many decades later when researching for another address given to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the German Jewish refugees arriving into Wellington I was astounded to read the openly anti-Semitic writing in the newspapers of the day. Mindful that my brief came from the wonderful Doctor Susi Williams whose father, Doctor Georg Lemchen, brought me into the world, I paid particular attention to the way Jewish German medical doctors were received by their medical colleagues into the country. There, prejudice ran from the tips of sharp scalpels, and no tourniquet could stop the toxic flow until the then Prime Minister Peter Fraser intervened. He wrote to the newspapers in

response to a strident call from a religious minister to send Jews back to Germany now that the war was over, saying that these kinds of sentiments were not good for New Zealand society or for its future. He wanted to see them end. And when the Prime Minister spoke in 1945 people listened and responded with respect.

How different things are today. Only on last Friday (8 Aug 2014) radio national news reported on Mr Dotcom in a You Tube video, holding an effigy to his face of our New Zealand Prime Minister. It allegedly showed young people vilifying the John Key image, hurling sickening abuse at it and with Mr Dotcom seemingly joining in the chanting: this alleged staged incident being used as an apparent positive and acceptable political statement to encourage support for Mr Dotcom and his strange bedfellows, Ms Harré and Mr Harawira.¹ If these three, think it is acceptable in a political campaign to use images of young people hurling abuse at an effigy of our Prime Minister, that is most disturbing, and is uncomfortably close to Nazi propaganda tactics of another era.²

The painful truth is that prejudice is part of the human condition – of a “them and us” view of the world, spawned from many pressures such as nationalism,

¹ The NZ Herald also reported, August 12, 2014 p A9 on this being a first of 2 concerning videos released and which “...included footage of Internet Party founder Kim Dotcom joining in with a crowd chant of F**k John Key.” The second video depicted an effigy of the Prime Minister mounted a pyre which was then set alight to a chanting group of young people saying “F**k John Key.”

² When I gave the address on the evening of 10 August 2014 I set out the facts as I understood them to be. However, at time of releasing this paper for publication I now understand that Ms Haare denies any link between her political party and the release of the clip onto You Tube which showed an effigy of the Prime Minister being burnt as described above.

competition, media spin, social media, print media, radio and television just to name some.

Professor Kenneth Cloke argues that prejudice and hatred always have their genesis in small things. Small things which are allowed in the door without comment and ultimately become clothed in garments of respectability. I support this view. The problem is that all prejudice is bad for society and social order. If prejudice is given the imprimatur of acceptability for one group it is too easy to transfer the feeling of prejudice to another.

“Feeling” you may ask? Yes. I see prejudice as a felt outcome. It is intimately associated with hatred – just one step removed.

Our brains like to use shortcuts. The short cuts are efficient and our brains are programmed for efficiency. One such efficiency is resort to stereotyping – a dangerous process of thinking with the heart and which lets us express views and to act with mindless disregard for the facts, or even the consequences from thinking in that way. And stereotyping inevitably reflects the society within which we live. The stereotype is harboured within the minds of many. It is group owned.

Can you quell prejudice?

One of the sad learnings in my life has been that once we accept stereotyping into our minds it can be surprisingly difficult to eradicate. In my life as a young

solicitor and later as a barrister I was blessed with having one wonderful PA work for me for 24 years. My practice in those days was rather broad based. Even then I was interested in prejudice and how it operated in New Zealand. I am grateful to my prejudiced childhood schoolmate for giving me an early lesson on the need to think about how we think. ³

My work in those early years included that of representing Māori interests. I began that work around 1978 and it has been part of my practice ever since. Sylvia would be my PA today, I am sure, but sadly she died. Her work included typing up briefs of evidence in preparation for Waitangi Tribunal hearings. At that time I was representing the people of Taranaki. This was the first time their story was really being told, comprehensively. While many of our Jewish community responded to the Taranaki Waitangi Tribunal Report when it finally came out, seeing it as an affront, when it coined the phrase the “Māori holocaust”⁴, if one puts those comparatives to one side, any right thinking person would have to concede the experience of Taranaki Māori was worse than appalling. Today it would be war crime territory. People forcibly removed from their homes which were burnt to the ground, while their women were raped, men locked into caves and starved until they died, many of the men being sent to the bottom of the South Island and held in captivity without any law justifying what was being done to them – an endless horrible line up of events. Only a small number of the men removed from Parihaka ever got to return. When they did return it was as physically broken men.

³ I understand that anti-Semitic views are not a universal aspect of the Exclusive Brethren faith.

⁴ The Taranaki Report: Kaupapa Tuatahi. 1996.

One of the briefs of evidence that Sylvia typed included the story of a woman slaughtering a cow and disembowelling it so that she could hide her new-born son inside the cow before the soldiers came through to kill with bayonets. The story was told as evidence by the 91 year son of the very man hidden in that cow at Parihaka. A grim, fear filled time in our history. And this is what Sylvia was typing and reflects the kinds of things that she typed for me over many years. To be human is to have frailties. And for Sylvia, a kind and caring person, dare I say it, one of her frailties was her prejudice against Māori. It was a stereotypically based prejudice which had her respond in her mind to any Māori in her stereotypical negative framework. Interestingly, Sylvia was also a devout Christian. The blurring of a religious message with the stereotype was something she never really got, even though sometimes in my frustrated state I would raise it with her. The truth is Sylvia never ever threw her prejudices and stereotyping away. Despite typing a different truth from the one she ever knew before, and actually meeting these people over many years, she was comfortable living in her world of prejudice. Always a picture of courtesy and pleasantness to those who came to my Chambers she would let slip her views to me even in the knowledge that I did not countenance it. I would go back to my office shaking my head in dismay. Stereotyping is no easy thing to shift. A cold bath of objective fact will of itself not quell lifelong prejudice.

The roots of prejudice.

Today prejudices are nurtured both on the domestic and global stage. No more are we the isolated country of the 1950s. No more are we tightly aligned to the British, or the American way of thinking, because we were thinking of “home” or in the case of America because of its influence as an ally and rescuer in war.

And the domestic and global prejudice pressures are partly different yet the same. I need to deal with aspects of both.

Ghandi held the view that in our world there are seven fundamentally destructive forces which ultimately corrupt the human spirit. These are:

- (1) Wealth without work;
- (2) Pleasure without conscience
- (3) Knowledge without character
- (4) Commerce without morality
- (5) Science without humanity
- (6) Religion without sacrifice, and
- (7) Politics without principle⁵

Cloke adds to this list two others: society without equality and conflict without empathy⁶.

⁵ Cloke Conflict Resolution p. 42

⁶ Ibid p. 43

When the human spirit is corrupted, prejudice seeps in.

Consider our country and some of those destructive forces.

Today we have a New Zealand where rising house prices and falling incomes make the New Zealand home owning dream an impossibility for most young people. Owning your own home and patch of dirt was a privilege for people of my vintage which we have not passed down. Today we have beggars on the street and people sleeping rough. There are life and death struggles for survival played out in our Wellington winters in shop front shelters and under bridges in New Zealand every night. It was Anatole France who said: “... *the law in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal bread*”. And so the perfect proof of equality.

Today we live with persistent chronic dysfunctional social conditions. Such conditions breed the worst kind of prejudice – ultimately hatred.

And it is a curious fact that the prejudice operates in both directions, often with one side oblivious to the thoughts of the other. Domination of any kind corrupts relationships. While some kinds of domination raise abhorrence for many at their mere thought, as was the case for slavery in America, other forms of domination which breed prejudice are much more subtle. Domination requires prejudicial rationalising to make it palatable. We do this quite successfully today. That prejudicial rationalising allows us to remove the prejudicial

breeding ground from our personal selves, distances social compassion and assuages guilt. As Professor Cloke observes *“it is common for dominant economic classes to regard those they are about to treat unequally, unfairly, or brutally as inferior or “not worth listening to” or “don’t value life” or “deserve what they get” or “like” their oppressive conditions or “not intelligent enough to vote” or “naturally lazy” “childlike” and “irresponsible” and therefore not meriting equitable treatment.”*

It came as a terrible shock to me to find on so many marae in Taranaki, that I was tapping into the raw hatred, anger and contempt felt by too many for all Pakeha. It was a shock to discover that I faced prejudice for the sole reason that I was white. Yes, a powerful embitterment projected against me. And this in my own country and with me being oblivious to such powerful prejudice burning down on me. I did not understand at first how this could have happened. Stereotyping working against us, white New Zealanders! At a personal level the prejudice from some was a double whammy. I was white, and a lawyer, a city one at that. For others, curiously the deeply felt prejudice was mitigated by the fact that I was Jewish. Maori and the Jews both understand subjugation. I have learnt that until one has contact with prejudice one cannot take its temperature.

I bathed in a toxic environment of hate for some 18 years, the period of time during which I was directly involved with this and related Treaty work.⁷ I reminded myself that not all Maori I dealt with portrayed such disturbing feelings. Yet it was not a minority held view in Taranaki. I reminded myself that my mother and my father's father were émigrés into our country.....scarcely responsible for the woes of Taranaki. And I reminded myself that those who were living and could claim a direct line to the colonisers could never be held responsible for the ruthless self-serving actions of their forebears....or could they? Could we? And I came to understand that the pain of conquest of the Iwi in the 19th Century was present in the 20th Century. Present as a deeply felt pain of anger which drove the prejudice against the Pakeha every single day. When some of these people came to hui on a winters night in bare feet as I saw, and across the road from the old marae was once iwi owned land, unlawfully confiscated from their grandparents and great grandparents in 1862, confiscated without right and now making white farmers rich as they drove their new Holden's into town.....well their sight, and the smell of the rich furrowed land.....fed a festering hate and anger. Anger especially felt by the less compliant younger generation. I came to understand that this prejudice against Pakeha was fed as a daily diet from one generation to the next. And until Taranaki, I really never understood what true poverty was like in rural NZ. The

⁷ I was briefed to represent the interests of all 8 iwi of Taranaki to take their claim to the Waitangi Tribunal. Separately I was briefed to represent the interests of the Taranaki iwi who had migrated from Taranaki to Wellington well before 1840 when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. My work on the Claim over Wellington began with drafting pleadings around 1984 . For quite a period of time I worked on both claims in tandem, although the hearings were well separated in time. The Taranaki Report: Kaupapa Tuatahi was published in 1996, and Te Whanganui a Tara me ona takiwa: Report on the Wellington District, was published in 2003.

contrast between that and the wealth of others in the community, the white others, was too great.

If you live in a place where your language is close to extinction solely because you parents and grandparents had it beaten out of them at school, Where your home and hearth have been taken ...forcibly removed from you, where your strong economic base has been stripped from you and given to others, where you walk the streets of your closest city and towns and see them named after people like Bryce who led the military into pacifist Parihaka, where memorials have proliferated to record the deaths of the valiant men who killed your family and you have to walk passed these memorials every day, where wealth and opportunity is denied you, and where those who now own your land get rich while you look on.....that was Taranaki.

The past helps write the present but it cannot right the future.

Much of our media language, and particularly during election time, is rights based. That is to say we are told we have rights and if only you will vote for us we will ensure that your rights are recognised. That might be rights to increased personal wealth, freedom rights, tax relief rights, tax imposition rights, rights to a greener society which recognises global warming and so on.

Isiah Berlin when reflecting on political language posed the question: “*In what kind of world is political philosophy – the kind of discussion and argument in which it consists – in principle possible?*” He answered, “*Only in a world where ends collide*”. The fact is that political speech is conflict driven. We see that now every day in the political reporting. Conflict driven speech supports prejudice. One of the greatest exponents of it is of course Winston Peters who brings the plague of persistent stereotype prejudice to bear on the Asian community as if he was smearing peanut butter across a piece of toast.⁸

I am a powerful supporter of democracy as the only way in which to govern and build a healthy society. Yet in NZ there are elements of our present democratic process that are harmful and that nurture prejudice in New Zealand, on never less than a triennial basis⁹. The vitriol hurled by young people at the effigy of our PM is a case in point.

⁸ In the morning following delivery of this paper, Winston Peters again made the Radio National News this time having included a tasteless “joke” at a political rally in Auckland, parodying the Chinese speakers difficulty in saying the letter “r”. The reporter on National radio, Guyon Espiner put it to him that he was being racist. Mr Peters stoutly denied that, seeking to label Espiner as the “PC Nazi Police”. Race Relations Commissioner Dame Susan Devoy described the use of the “joke” as shameful and said: “... that Winston Peters’ comments, where he poked fun at Asians, were not funny, and Mr Peters needed to know that it was an outdated rhetoric that belonged in the past. She said people in New Zealand still had a lot of work to do when it came to treating one another with respect...” From www.radionewzealand news: Monday 11 August 2014. 9.33pm NZT.

⁹ From the Dominion Post August 12, 2014 p. A2: “NEW LOWS HIT FROM THE OUTSET. Comment by Tracy Watkins: You know we may be in for the ugliest election campaign ever when it starts with an effigy of the prime minister being burnt, claims of racism and nasty name calling. We had all three in less than 24 hours after the first big campaign launches at the weekend. Winston Peters’ ‘two wongs don’t make a white’ statement takes him back to familiar territory – he has banged the anti-Asian drum at more than one election. But this has a nastier edge. Recent displays of crowds chanting “f....John Key” and his effigy being burnt could either be put down to youthful hijinks or something

And within the framework of both political speech and international media spin prejudice thrives.

Sadly, and over the decades, to me it seems that much of the media reporting has been dumbed down. And unquestionably we are fed propaganda. It is now all about who controls the spin. A few journalists do exercise their skill to the high professional standards demanded of the Fourth Estate.. A few are courageous enough, when interviewing to pursue the truth, that is an objective truth, and with zeal as is required of their profession. Guyon Espiner is one such journalist, whose pursuit of Laila Haare on National Radio last Friday morning (8 August 2014) met every criteria for journalistic professionalism and excellence. In this Saturday's Dom Post (page C5) Duncan Garner rather confirms my point about our triennial electioneering servings of prejudice on a platter. He begins his article: "*So suddenly we're all against selling off farms to foreigners. Well it's not really just foreigners, is it. Let's be honest- we're worried about the Chinese buying our farms. They're not like us. There you go, I said it. Clearly many are thinking it.*" The debate was about the sale of Lochinver Sation to Chinese buyers for \$70Million. It sits adjacent to the already sold Crafer farm also to Chinese interests. Labour have pledged to stop the

more sinister. The prime minister is in no doubt which interpretation he puts on it. But the ugly rant by Labour candidate Steve Gibson was the worst possible side of politics and took the debate to a fresh low. Among other things he called Key a "shonky jonkey Shylock", an anti-semitic term. Gibson apologised yesterday but the damage was done. It appears to herald the start of a campaign where the focus will be personal." The New Zealand Herald political correspondent August 12, 2014 at p A8 put it this way: " Was it racist? Most certainly – especially in the eyes of the Chinese community,..."

sale if the Government. Yet in 2007 he points out that Labour allowed Poronui Station, right next door to Lochinver, to sell without a murmur. In the last 5 years of the Labour Government 762 Sq Kilometres of NZ farms were sold to foreign ownership. In the last 5 years under National only 390 Squ Kilometres of farms were sold out of NZ hands. Barely half of what Labour sold. Yes, we have sold vast tracts of NZ to Americans, Australians, along with other white nationalities and no-one has complained.

Again, referring to Doctor Kenneth Cloke he says: *“It is precisely this transformation of confession into accusation, analysis into propaganda, and fact into lie and double-speak; this use of language as mere “means” that does not count, and can therefore be distorted with impunity; this huckstering salesman’s approach to truth, that allows it to hide and justify all manner of political and personal crime”.*

Because we are no longer an enclosed microcosm in our larger world, we are influenced by all that happens around the globe.

The painful and horrific events in the war between Israel and Hamas of Gaza has had its tentacles felt in far flung New Zealand as must be the case in almost every tiny part of our globe. We must remember that there have been countless conflicts in world history where accusations of evil have been used to

justify the commission of what later comes to be seen as atrocities. No longer does the victor write the history. History is written by the many, from all sides, and as it unfolds.

As unpalatable as it may be, we as individual nations, we in our separate religions, our separate cultures, and our separate races and tribes seem to vie, not just for revenge, but more importantly for a stubborn refusal to accept the necessity of learning how to live together. And to accept joint responsibility for the slaughter of innocents. Prime Minister Golda Meir put it so graphically when she said: *“We can forgive the Palestinians for murdering our children, but we can never forgive them for forcing us to murder theirs”*.

Again the sad truth is that this statement can be made on both sides of almost any conflict today. For course those driven by dictatorship fall into their own unique category. But we should not be quick to dismiss the principle of equal responsibility for conflict. Nor should we ever forget, and especially now, as those in Gaza count their dead, and as those in Israel count theirs, that one of the important elements of cyclical internecine conflict comes from unresolved grief, loss, fear, pain, and a burning anguish and desire for revenge. All of these emotions and feelings fuel allegations of evil, suppress compassion, encourage pursuit of revenge, amplify anger and of course obstruct resolution and reconciliation.

The twists and turns between pursuit of normality and the building of intergenerational prejudice which then leads to the deaths of innocent babies and children, sometimes can only be captured by something in the nature of an epigram. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley said: *“No man consciously chooses evil because it is evil, he only mistakes it for the happiness that he seeks”*.

When I think of those words I cannot help but apply them to the Middle East conflict. I struggle to believe that some of the young men recruited into Hamas have sat down and carefully thought through, beyond their own indoctrination, what it is that they are about to do or are doing, and what the consequences might be for their mothers, fathers and siblings, as they fire off yet another rocket pointed to Israel.

For the young men and women defending their country in Israel, their first and objectively correct inner statement must be “I am defending my country, hearth, home and loved ones.” Whatever the views of both sides, the ultimate willingness to enter into a truce, and have it extended, even if it has again collapsed, and has again been resurrected, demonstrates a recognition that the human cost of this conflict is too high for thinking people, and no doubt for Israel that world prejudice through condemnation makes the conflicts life in its present form very difficult. We all can understand the strategic need for blowing up “terror tunnels” and even killing those who try to kill innocent Israelis and their visitors. Yet there is a “But”!

Anger and Prejudice

Some of you present may know of my interest in emotion and the way it plays out within the negotiation framework. I am as interested in that at an individual level as at an international level. Over perhaps too long a period, I have come to learn that failing to address the emotional element of conflict, is to fail to address the conflict itself. Our perception of facts no matter how broadly put, is infused by the emotions we bring to bear when we consider those particular facts. To paraphrase Professor Julie Fitness our cognition is affected by the lens of anger which contaminates all we see. I mention this because of my strongly held opinion about the new prejudice brought into New Zealand, and globally, through the visual imagery of human damage in Gaza. Another painful truth is that the only way Israel could ever have matched the prejudicial impact of what it has done in Gaza, would have been if within Israel it too could show the same type of imagery with the same numbers, the same slaughtered children and with the same desperately grieving families following coffins paraded down the street. But Israel has a very effective defence system against rockets. Ironically while it has kept most of its citizens safe, it is receiving global condemnation for having such an effective defence, the existence of which denies the very imagery that excites global sympathy and understanding. And that condemnation, as we know, has been felt just as keenly in New Zealand as anywhere else around the globe. Underpinning that condemnation, and make no mistake about it, is a sense of anger and outrage. That anger and outrage is tapping into the same anger felt by mothers and

fathers, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, grandmother and grandfather, mourning their dead in Gaza. Not for one moment do I discount the tragic loss of life of our Israeli young men and women. But the disproportionate loss of life combined with the disproportionate physical damage done to hearth and home is now problematic.

Once we might have thought that the anger felt over such an event could dissipate fairly readily. But the research tells otherwise. Indeed to the contrary. Here are some things to think about. First of all anger leads us to have rapid resort to stereotyping and prejudice.¹⁰ Our brains take us there as sure as the sun rises for those who live to see it. The research also tells us that anger is the one emotion that we can feel with great intensity again and again through a kind of closed loop attribution/blame process in the brain. The strength of anger is felt not only as it was originally, but by our feeding in new information and feelings we can make the felt anger more intense than at the time of the original incident. Righteous anger as felt by the sufferer, or even vicariously, does not disappear over time. If anger drives and kindles prejudice and stereotyping as part of that package then be warned. Anger requires and drives a desire for outcomes. Typically blame is linked to punishment. For blame is the emotion most closely associated with the need for a fairness outcome, a just and justice driven outcome to address the anger. Until that

¹⁰ See for example S. Lerner & L.Z. Tiedens. Portrait of the Angry Decision Maker: How Appraisal Tendencies Shape Anger's Influence on Cognition. *Journal of Behavioural Decision Making* 19: 115-137 (2006). But note that anger as a mood state can have a different impact on stereotype outcomes. See J.P. Forgas, Negative affect and social behaviour: on the adaptive functions of aversive moods: Ch5 in *Multiple Facets of Anger*. Ed F. Pahlavan.

anger is somehow appropriately addressed, and addressed **by** the right people **to** the right people the prejudice will continue to lie not as seeds, but as full blown flourishing dark forests of hate. And sadly, a hate subsumed into religious fundamentalism, which then makes pursuit of negotiated outcomes exceedingly challenging.

A dark forest of prejudice has been planted in Gaza. What does that forest harbour, and how will it grow? And over how many generations? One thing is for sure, unless and until the people who own that forest have also felled it, prejudice will remain. As that forest continues to grow, potentially for many many decades to come, the seeds will be blown globally. Some will land in New Zealand and will find places to germinate and flourish. Despite my story about Sylvia, reprogramming of our brains is possible.

The problem is that it requires real thought to do it. And there is a great deal of difference between access to a person's mind, and State suppressed prejudice where law enforced behaviour suppressions are left outside the front door – and the actual changing and re-shaping of the person's mind remains indoors, untouched.

Anger gets in the way of empathy, recognition and acknowledgement of others, distorts facts, prevents honest dialogue, anchors people to their past, encourages on-going collective groups to keep the outrage re-kindled – and all

of this the legacy of the Gaza - Israel war.

Individual responsibility.

We cannot look to others to change and pluck out the seeds of prejudice in our own country. We can only look to ourselves. We can reflect on our own personal prejudices and challenge and question them honestly. And honestly, being honest with oneself, at times can be a challenge. But we have to dig deeper than that. We have to do the things that create an environment where prejudice is exposed. We should speak out when prejudice is heaped upon others – be it the gay community, Asians in Auckland, or any other group susceptible of prejudicial stereotyping? How do we ourselves see power exercised? Do we want to be a visible part of democratic process? Visible by being a critic seeking change or a supporter pursuing change. Do we stand up to be counted rather than keeping our heads and ourselves invisible? Do we react quickly, stridently and strongly against the tiniest infringement of negative prejudice to expose it for what it is? Do we just compromise the moment, ourselves and our values by saying nothing for fear of embarrassment or perhaps even shame? Do we focus then on positively working to help change the way those around us think? Remember prejudice and its cousin stereotyping are brain things. Only at brain level can stereotyping and prejudice ever change. Achieving that mental shift is hard work. It was the poet Maya Angelou said *“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said,*

people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

The things that change us in life and the things we remember most in life, are the things we remember as our anchor points. They are the things that we feel. They are the things we tell our children so that they can tell their children and so that “we” never forget.

In New Zealand and some 170 years after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, we can genuinely say that we are now well through a process of cross generational change. We are felling the dark forests of hate.....even in the far flung Urewera's. We are sowing different seeds. Seeds that feed and allow life to flourish. When we all saw the photograph of Tama Iti drinking tea with the Commissioner of Police many saw a hardened NZ criminal inexplicably having tea with the highest policeman in the land. I saw a different picture. I saw a an old warhorse, much embittered, much imprisoned, much frustrated and angry, now sipping from the cup of reconciliation. If I could read tea leaves, I would say the signs for a better future are looking good in Aotearoa.

We need to continue down our path, address the economic disparities, and create a greater sense of fairness and fair play than exists in NZ today. With time it may happen. The Waitangi Tribunal process of fact finding, apology and reparation delivered in multiple ways including land return, dollars, kaitiaki

status acknowledgements, substituting of European imposed place names for the original names as given by the tangata whenua and so on are a vital part of the making amends and prejudice felling process.

Because the winds of politics, like a Wellington Southerly, are never too far away we need to be vigilant and stand up against the smallest forms of prejudice before it is too late. We owe the Duncan Garners and Guyon Espiners of our media world a large vote of thanks. And we need to be visible in supporting them.

I could end with the oft quoted words of Edmund Burke painted on the wall of this room. *“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”*. They are there to read and reflect upon. They are a call to each and every individual here.

But I have chosen these words from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. They speak to each of us as individuals who may be engaged in conflict *“... the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”*

Thank you.

Phillip D. Green

Mediator, Arbitrator and Barrister.

10 August 2014