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Indigenous Education in New Zealand and New South Wales: Assimilation through 'insultation' rather than 'consultation'

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ABSTRACT
In New South Wales and New Zealand the issue of consultation with indigenous peoples about their education appears to be a relatively recent historical phenomenon. This paper traces the broad education policy shifts since 1788 in New South Wales and New Zealand in order to identify similarities and differences between these geographic localities in relation to the consultation process. It suggests that lack of consultation had its roots in nineteenth century ideologies of 'race', and, that in spite of some differences, aspects of each country's education policies have always been written so as not to exclude any particular race of people, while others have specifically been formulated to ensure that Aboriginal and Maori cultural needs are not taken into consideration. In both cases there has been very little involvement of Maori and Aboriginal people in the decision-making stages of the policy-making processes, even in the late twentieth century. A prolonged failure on the part of governments to provide 'ownership' of education for those people together with ever-pervasive assimilationist policies have resulted in an unjust and inequitable balance of power in society that is only now beginning to be addressed through the struggles over schooling by Maori and Aboriginal people.

Introduction

In New South Wales and New Zealand the issue of consultation with indigenous peoples about their education appears to be a relatively recent historical phenomenon. This paper traces the broad education policy shifts since 1788 in New South Wales and New Zealand in order to identify similarities and differences between these geographic localities in relation to the consultation process. It suggests that lack of consultation had its roots in nineteenth century ideologies of 'race', and, that in spite of some differences, aspects of each country's education policies have always been written so as not to exclude any particular race of people, while others have specifically been formulated to ensure that Aboriginal and Maori cultural needs are not taken into consideration. In both cases there has been very little involvement of Maori and Aboriginal people in the decision-making stages of the policy-making processes, even in the late twentieth century. A prolonged failure on the part of governments to provide 'ownership' of education for those people together with ever-pervasive assimilationist policies have resulted in an unjust and inequitable balance of power in society that is only now beginning to be addressed through the struggles over schooling by Maori and Aboriginal people.

An introduced agenda of civilisation by christianisation

In 1814 the William Shelley/Lachlan Macquarie Native Institution commenced its 'trading' in New South Wales. In the same year the Reverend Samuel Marsden recorded his views which led to the establishment of the Maori Seminary, also at Parramatta in NSW, in 1815. Both can be seen as having had similar intentions of 'Civilising by Christianising'. Maori Seminary, also at Parramatta in NSW, in 1815. Both can be seen as having had similar intentions of 'Civilising by Christianising'.

The Maori Seminary intended to bring sons (or near relations) of rival chiefs from New Zealand in order to 'civilise' the "finest and noblest race of heathens known to a civilised world" to European standards, return them to their homes, and bring harmony to New Zealand (and with it, of course, safety for the white settlers).[1] Similarly, Macquarie felt a need to improve relations with the Aborigines of the Sydney area and so set up Shelley's school to that effect. It was not to be long, though, before Macquarie resorted to capturing Aboriginal children from their families, placing them in the Institution, and commencing to 'civilise' them.[2]

The missionaries involved in the two schools had differing ideas about the educability of Aboriginal and Maori children. Shelley found the Aboriginal children "remarkably teachable" and felt that they were "as capable of instruction as any other untutored Savages",[3] while Marsden's opinion of Aborigines was that "it was impracticable to civilise these natives, that they were little above the rank of beasts of the field and that all attempts to ameliorate their condition and improve their minds would be useless".[4] On the other hand, Marsden saw the desirability of working with Maori from a commercial point of view. To support his philosophy that "Commerce promotes industry - industry civilization, and civilization opens up the way for the Gospel", Marsden pursued Maori education as a profitable proposition, training Maori youths in agriculture and in working flax.[5]

The Native Institution had a stated objective for "the civilization of the Aborigines of both sexes".[6] It is obvious that the Maori Seminary had similar intentions, although only male civilization was pursued. Marsden failed to recognise the *mana* Maori women possessed, probably due to his commercial interests and his likely belief that only men were viable in the production of marketable goods. In his ignorance, Marsden also missed the vital point that working flax was traditional *wahine* work.[7]

Although the two schools had varying success over a relatively short period of time, the Maori Seminary closed in 1827 and the Native Institution (after a move to Black Town) closed in 1830.[8] Both schools failed in their philosophies of appeasement, civilisation and socialisation. It could be argued that the Native Institution did not meet the needs and aspirations of Aborigines. The education received in the Institution was alien to the styles of teaching and learning that children had already gained from their parents in traditional life. Similarly, Maori students were in Australia for only a short stay, during which time their traditional cultural learning also proved dominant and uncompromising. In any event, neither school involved indigenous peoples in decision-making processes about education. Given the aims of both schools this is not surprising. Almost by definition Aborigines and Maori were seen by missionaries and governors as 'savages' with limited intelligence, whose social organisations required replacing with more sophisticated European structures. To include Maori or Aborigines in decision-making would not only contradict the assumption of limited intelligence but would fly in the face of the stated aim to Europeanise Aboriginal and Maori children through schooling.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, and continuing into the 1840s, a number of other missionary schools were set up in both Australia and New Zealand along similar lines to these two initial institutions. In New Zealand this was facilitated by the increasing availability of, and demand for, printed publications in the Maori language. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and, reasonably, should have led to a further increase in literacy learning for Maori people.[9] But by the mid 1840s Maori people were becoming frustrated that they were not, in fact, learning enough English.[10] Maori people saw that to compete on equal terms, there was a need to be literate in

English, and their frustrations about not making strong enough advances in this area resulted in a wane in their interest in literacy and schooling. Differing interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi by Maori and Pakeha have also played a strong role in the poor response to Maori educational needs by succeeding governments ever since.[11]

Maori mission schools taught in the Maori language until 1847 when Governor Grey's Education Ordinance decreed that instruction would be in English. Grey hoped that this would provide a means of "speedily assimilating the Maori" to become European in their ways.[12] To this end Grey decided to provide subsidies to missionary-run Maori schools, providing probably the first State involvement in Maori education. To gain such subsidies the schools had to become boarding rather than day schools.[13] This was a clear indication of the government's assimilationist tactics whereby children would be removed from the 'demoralizing' influences of their people and provided with industrial, religious and English language training, 'Europeanising' them on the way. It was soon realised by Maori that children entering these schools would not return to their families without suffering the effects of severe acculturation to the English ways, and later removal of children from Aboriginal families in New South Wales would follow similar 'de-culturising and re-culturising' patterns.

Australian missionaries began their task of Christianising Aborigines in some earnest in the 1820s. While an effort was made to learn Aboriginal languages by the missionaries, it was only done in an attempt to undermine the Aboriginal cultures and to enforce Biblical doctrines.[14] It seems that a similar agenda existed in the New Zealand model.[15] However, Aboriginal children were not, at this stage, removed from their parents to boarding schools, except in small numbers to the Native Institution. What followed instead was a decision in 1848 by the NSW Board of National Education on the impracticability of providing education for Aboriginal children. This was, perhaps, unusual in that there were no enrolled Aboriginal children in Board schools at the time. According to Fletcher this policy remained until about 1867 at which time the NSW Council of Education placed no bar on Aboriginal enrolments. This could well have been due to the official non-recognition of Aborigines as a 'Race' of people in Australia.[16] In any case, the first pupils recognised as Aboriginal did not find their way into State Schools until the 1870s.[17]

Land and law

Maori people, having seen the value in gaining literacy in English as a means of retaining their power status through British Law and, in particular, having at least signed a Treaty with the colonising invaders, acquired the right to four seats in Parliament in 1867. This is a feat which has yet to be accomplished for Aborigines in either NSW or any other Australian state. At this stage the Land Wars, which resulted in the confiscation of vast tracts of Maori lands by Pakeha, were at an end. Mission boarding schools had been virtually abandoned by Maori and consequently, in 1867, the Native Schools Act was set up. This Act provided government-run secular day schools for 'Native' children.

The provision of this school system, the enfranchising of Maori (men) and the granting of Maori seats in parliament were all vehicles of a renewed policy of assimilation - this time by appeasement. In spite of this, and because of this, the 1867 Native Schools Act also provided for the inclusion of Maori (men) in local school boards. This was the first official policy which indicated that Maori should be included in the education decision-making process, albeit in limited ways and for the purpose of hastening assimilation.

Further limitations to the extent Maori could capitalise on this new avenue for involvement in educational decision-making lay with their extensive loss of land following the Land Wars. Not only did land confiscation lead to economic difficulties but it resulted in psychological effects which obviously played a big part in the ensuing rapid drop in the Maori population.[18] Similarly, the dispossession of lands from Aborigines under the impact of colonisation and the concept of *Terra Nullius,* or 'Empty Land' under which the Crown had claimed sovereignty of Australia, was strongly

felt. It could be assumed that the subsequent drop in population for both peoples contributed to a reticence towards European education. In 1877 Chief Justice Prendergast stated that New Zealand had been acquired *'jure gentium* (by discovery and priority of occupation, as a territory inhabited only by savages)'.[19] This, he felt, nullified the Treaty of Waitangi. In this sense New Zealand had aligned with Australia in its claim of the land under *Terra Nullius.* In the eyes of many white New Zealanders schooling for Maori would no longer have to be a priority. Nor was it to be a priority in NSW.

Free, secular and compulsory education

The New Zealand Education Act of 1877 guaranteed a universal primary education - free, secular and compulsory for all children. Nevertheless a segregated system of schooling for Maori had already been established by the 1867 Act. Under the 1877 Act, however, the Department of Education took control of Native Schools from the Department of Native Affairs, and managed them as a separate system until 1969.

In NSW the Parkes government passed the Public Instruction Act in 1880 which committed government to provide schooling for all children, "regardless of sect, faith, country of origin, or social standing".[20] According to Fletcher, as the number of Aboriginal children attending public schools increased, there soon came a time when white parents began to object to the attendance of Aboriginal children at the same schools as their own children. Around this time the first 'Protector' of Aborigines had been appointed (1881) and the Aborigines Protection Board established (1883). Consequently the Minister for Education, George Reid, decided to establish separate schools for Aboriginal children who had been 'excluded' from state schools. It barely needs saying that Aboriginal people were not being consulted in regard to these policy decisions. Indeed, their objections to the exclusion of their children from state schools usually were over-ridden by government bureaucrats.

During the early part of the 1880s Aboriginal children were increasingly being excluded from state schools under a hastily improvised policy which stipulated that:

> no child whatever its creed or colour, or circumstances ought to be excluded from a public school. But cases may arise, especially amongst the Aboriginal tribes, where the admission of a child or children may be prejudicial to the whole school'.[21]

If an Aboriginal School for the 'excluded' children could be set up on the Aboriginal Reserves emerging under the new Protection Board it sometimes was. But in many cases there was a government reluctance to do so because, it was argued, the number of children did not warrant the establishment of even a provisional school. Subsequently numbers of excluded children received no schooling whatsoever.[22]

The Reid statement was later watered down to allow Aboriginal children, in some areas and in small numbers, to attend public schools if they could prove that their state of health, cleanliness and manner were acceptable. Little research has been done in the area of why Aboriginal families endured this process and still wanted their children to attend schools. As has been evidenced through limited research in New Zealand, however, it was probably the case that Aboriginal expectations were much different to those of government. Indeed, Maori people sought new skills and knowledge through the education system in order to positively enhance their own cultural lifestyles and traditions. Not, obviously, for assimilation. It is highly likely then that Aboriginal Australians were similarly disposed and, although the process of assimilation may have seemed to be further advanced, a great amount of traditional culture was still being practised. Traditional languages, for example, were still being taught in Aboriginal homes within Reserves. A whole hidden cultural process was at work whereby 'underground' maintenance of culture was occurring despite government policies.

Nevertheless, welfare organisations in NSW could and did make claims of parental negligence and remove children from their parents if children were not attending school. If Aboriginal children had been excluded from the local public school and could not attend, an avenue was then open to take the children and place them in institutions - various laws were thus utilised by government agencies to more quickly effect assimilation policies. This most often led to permanent separation whereby children were later fostered out to non-Aboriginal families. These policies remained in place until the 1960s. Although child removal policies were practised more systematically in NSW (and Australia) than in New Zealand, this strategy was deployed from the mid-nineteenth century in New Zealand through Maori boarding schools.

Whilst mission schools in neither country could ever fully exclude traditional customs from being practised, and while they were never totally successful in Christianising either Aborigines or Maori, they were nonetheless a powerful factor in the assimilation process that was managed increasingly by governments as the nineteenth century progressed. As Grey's 1847 Ordinance first indicated in New Zealand, language was to become an important component in this process as well.

Language loss through assimilation

The closing years of the nineteenth century saw schooling made compulsory for Maori children, mostly in their own 'Native Schools', while Aboriginal children in NSW were increasingly being taught in their own segregated system of Aboriginal schools. It would seem that neither Aborigines or Maori were being educated with the intention that they would some day compete on equal terms with the non-Aboriginal/Pakeha communities in either social or governmental arenas, but would be expected to provide only labouring power. Although there were some schools in New Zealand which provided an academic curriculum for a time, the *Te Aute Commission* of 1906 soon halted this practice.[23]

On a more positive note, Apirana Ngata, a product of Te Aute College before the Commission, became the first Maori University graduate in 1894.[24] It was to be another seventy-two years before the first Aborigine was to gain a degree in NSW (or Australia). Ngata battled for the rest of his life in an attempt to have the Maori language used in teaching in both schools and in the University of New Zealand's colleges.[25] The Maori language, being a single language, was barely to survive whereas languages of the NSW's Aborigines were to suffer greatly. New Zealand government policy continued in the line of cultural assimilation - "it was to bring an untutored but intelligent and high-spirited people into line with our civilization".[26] While in New Zealand the indigenous people were recognised as 'intelligent', and there was some recognition of the value of their language, this more 'enlightened' policy of the late nineteenth century nonetheless reflected the core of earlier racial ideology - and, presumably, justified the limited consultation at this time by Pakeha with Maori about Maori education.

In NSW tum of the century policies continued to reflect the earlier assumptions of Aboriginal inferiority which justified a total lack of government consultation about with Aboriginal people about Aboriginal education. The government policy of integrating those Aboriginal children who could prove themselves to be 'acceptable' was often overcome by stronger criticisms from the white communities fired by strikes and economic factors.[27] In all schools only English was used for instruction (as in New Zealand Native Schools) and attempts were made to prohibit Aboriginal languages on the reserves and missions. In both NSW and New Zealand these attempts to limit the use of indigenous languages and promote the exclusive use of English were reasonably successful.

During the 1930s there was further clarification of government policies on the place of language in the schooling of Maori and Aborigines. A NSW Public Service Board Inquiry in 1938 recommended that instead of the segregated system now in place, education and training programmes should be specially created to promote the assimilation of Aborigines into the white community.[28] It would appear that the NSW government felt assured that Aborigines were finally

becoming less of a 'problem' and that perhaps they could now be better educated in the 'white' system. The same report recommended that Aboriginal children be educated in regular state schools. Policy decisions regarding the education of Aboriginal people were being strongly influenced by Aborigines Protection Board policies, which were seeking to cope with the enormous strain placed on their resources by the Depression - and which did not include Aboriginal input.[29] Assumptions were still being made that Aborigines were not capable of deciding their own needs. In spite of this Report local pressure ensured that the Education Department maintained their exclusion policy, and it was not until 1939 that any Aboriginal School in NSW taught beyond Grade Three.[30] And regardless of this Report, education continued to be conducted in the English language.

In New Zealand the situation was changing marginally. The 1925 publication of the *Advanced Commission on African Education Report* led to some change from teaching mainly agricultural skills to Maori, towards more technical education, although it is apparent that Pakeha expectations were that Maori would still undertake the work for which they were 'best suited' ie manual work[31] More importantly, from early 1931 a number of schools sought the assistance of Maori adults in teaching aspects of Maori culture in their programmes. This enhanced the possibility of the Maori language being spoken in and around the classroom (even though this was not the intention of the policy). Yet voluntary help was not easy to come by and progress was slow through the 1930s. This was, perhaps, partly due to Maori recognition that the artificial context of the schools' environment was alien to their own cultural teaching and learning methods.[32]

It is apparent, however, that some Maori were being involved in the formal education of Maori children in ways that were not occurring in NSW. It is equally apparent that just like the involvement of Maori men in local school boards from the 1860s, this was to be a limited form of involvement which did not instigate any fundamental changes to the Pakeha domination of educational decision-making.

NSW had still not recognised the richness of Aboriginal cultures and no attempts were made at all to incorporate Aboriginal culture into the school or to draw on the expertise of Aboriginal adults in the classroom. Instead the newly suggested assimilation policies in NSW were being seen by some as better than the previous 'Protection' policies, due to some of their seemingly positive directions (such as the 'on-the-surface' acceptance of Aborigines into white society). Consequently assimilation became the official government policy in 1940, with the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board and the introduction of the Aborigines Welfare Act.

World War Two saw both Aboriginal and Maori active representation, as had World War One. Aborigines were placed on an even lower priority than before in terms of resource allocation and their involvement in the War was played down by the media. Maori school pupils placed their support behind the Maori Battalion and some rejuvenation of their Maori fighting spirit occurred as a result. In those years quite a few more Maori teachers became qualified and took up teaching in the Native Schools.

Very few Aboriginal teachers appeared in NSW schools. This would appear to be related to the comparatively less opportunities to progress educationally for Aboriginal people; opportunities that were framed by official policy. Aborigines began to be admitted to High Schools in NSW only from 1949 and, as mentioned previously, the first Aboriginal university graduate did not appear until the 1970s.[33] Yet the period from the 1930s to the 1950s was one where some acceptance of Maori and Aboriginal people and cultures in education began to emerge.

The beginnings of 'acceptance'

During the 1940s and 1950s NSW was moving towards the end of segregation in schooling and some Maori culture as well as Maori educators had been incorporated into school programmes. It can be argued that this was partly due to the decreasing visibility of indigenous cultural practices,

and the subsequent decreasing 'problem' that Maori and Aboriginal people posed to nonindigenous societies. There can be no doubt that the earlier period of 'passive assimilation' had slowly but surely eroded traditional cultural practices and languages in both NSW and New Zealand, and that this process was facilitated further in the 1940s and 1950s as both groups moved in larger numbers towards urbanised areas. It is also the case, however, that attitudes among non-indigenous peoples were also slowly changing as more enlightened theories about other cultural groups emerged. In 1955 the Committee on Maori Education was formed. This Committee operated as a National Advisory Committee on Maori Education and had Maori input. Around then, Maori teachers also proved instrumental in the introduction of Maori Art into the schools curriculum. Unfortunately this was considered as only a 'craft' activity, and the stigma has continued into the 1990s where much of Maori art is still labelled 'design' rather than 'art'.[34] Soon after, the release of the Hunn Report in 1960 saw official policies for New Zealand change from 'Assimilation' to 'Integration'.[35] This was the government's first attempt to document the disadvantages of Maori, and to integrate Maori labour into the capitalist system, as Maori people continued their drift towards the cities.

Overall, however, it is arguable whether these (and earlier) policies advantaged Maori, or moved very far away from the previous assimilation models. Most probably, the changes introduced by the Hunn Report further adversely effected Maori family structures, especially for *whanau,* as families often tended to change their more traditional social patterns to fit city life. In particular, and as a consequence of the Hunn Report, Maori were now recognised as a 'problem' as far as education was concerned. That 'problem' was to be blamed on cultural deprivation through Maori upbringing and led to further state emphasis on the need for assimilation. It also led to some divisive consequences for supporters of Maori schools with those for Board schools.[36] Simon has argued that the 'integration' emphasis of the Hunn Report in fact 'served to conceal and strengthen the existing relations of dominance' by Pakeha.[37]

The Currie Report of 1962 suggested that it would be desirable to quicken the rate at which Maori schools were being transferred to Education Board control, as overseas visitors were beginning to suggest that New Zealand practised segregation in education. The report further stated that 'the benefit that could finally accrue in the field of race relations, if the Maori could play the important part in all areas of the community that his *(sic)* numbers warrant, needs no emphasising'. In spite of this clear statement about the need to involve Maori at all levels of society, Currie was satisfied that while there were difficulties amongst 'minorities' (including Maori), 'education would continue to develop slowly and by concensus toward a completely fair system on the basis of its already established principles'.[38]

Integration was not adopted as an official policy in NSW until 1965. In that same year, however, and before the policy statement was issued, the actual definition of 'assimilation' had been redefined to state: 'The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent *will choose* to attain a *similar* manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community'.[39] The choice has never actually been provided; Aborigines were not included in decision-making stages of the policy process.

As was the case with New Zealand it appears that such statements were fuelled more by a concern to appear to be not practising racial segregation on the international stage. The 1960s, but even more so the 1970s, witnessed media concern fired with the angle of sensationalism and spurred by international rebukes against apartheid in South Africa. In Australia this led to greater reporting on Aboriginal affairs. Whilst most proved negative for Aborigines, some positive strategies resulted. These included the Aboriginal Student Scholarship Scheme, vigorous re-visiting of policies by church groups, and some 'sabre-rattling' by doctors and lawyers with regard to the health and legal situations for Aborigines. Aboriginal organisations also began to make their presence felt politically. University students took up the challenge, organising Freedom Rides and, soon after, Charles Perkins became the first Aborigine to graduate with a degree from a University in NSW (and Australia).

Changing policies: A voice!

In 1967, the Australian population accepted a referendum which granted Aborigines the right to be counted as citizens of Australia. This also gave the Commonwealth Government powers to legislate in respect of Aborigines for the first time. By 1972 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was operating in Canberra, headed by an Aborigine - Charles Perkins.

Around the same time the New Zealand National Advisory Committee on Education was supplemented by the establishment of a Division of Maori and Islands Education within the Department of Education (1968). In 1970 the National Advisory Committee on Maori Education (NACME) finally had a majority of members who were Maori, with a wider representation of Maori interest groups. Through these changes Maori people gained a much greater input into educational policy. They appear to have used this to their advantage by supporting positive initiatives together: NACME recommendations were reinforced through changes initiated by a report released by the division of Maori and Islands Education in 1971. With the setting up of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 to investigate breaches of the original Treaty, the future was expected to see major improvements for Maori in all areas, including education. This process, however, has been long and slow.

A similar spirit of optimism - although along a different axis - permeated NSW. A new edition of the NSW Teachers' Handbook in 1972 was welcomed by Aborigines in that the *Enrolment of Aboriginal Children* section was deleted. This section had read:

> It is the policy of the Department to encourage the assimilation of aborigine children as members of the Australian community by permitting their attendance at public schools. Nevertheless, if the principal of a school is of the opinion that there are circumstances in the home conditions of aborigine children, whose enrolment is sought, which justify refusal or deferment of enrolment or if he is aware that substantial opposition to such enrolment exists in the local community, he should inform the district inspector of schools and await the departmental decision on the matter.[40]

This was the final 'upfront' assimilation policy statement which had hindered the unassailable rights of Aboriginal children to enrol in a state school. Aboriginal children were now entitled to similar access to public schools as Maori children in New Zealand without the fear that an obscure paragraph in a Departmental handbook could further disadvantage them. It can be argued, however, that in practice the enrolment of Aboriginal children in state schools is still contingent on 'no objection' being raised by white parents.

In the following year the newly elected Labor Party's federal policies introduced many new programmes which expounded 'self-determination' for Aborigines. To facilitate this the National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (NACC) was constituted with full Aboriginal participation. Yet there was still no clear Aboriginal voice on education. The first of three Karmel Reports, *Schools in Australia,* pointed to the special needs of Aborigines in terms of education and led to the release of significant increases in funding for Aboriginal education in all States. Under the broader rubric of 'self-determination' it also led to the establishment of the Aboriginal Consultative Group to the Schools Commission in 1974, with two NSW representatives.

In 1977 this became the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC). All members were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) also formed in 1977. Both the NAEC and AECG played a critical role in the improvement of Aboriginal education over the next decade. In spite of this new structural participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in education policy formation it was quite clear that these agencies were to act in the limited capacity of *advisory bodies to government.* Although the federal Labor Government extolled the idea that Aborigines would share in policy-making under its 'self-determination' strategies, it clearly did not intend to relinquish its control over Aboriginal education.[41]

In 1982, however, the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy (NSW AEP) was released by Minister for Education, R.J. Mulock. This was the first policy of its kind in NSW to be developed with full Aboriginal consultation. Mulock's release statement stressed that the lifestyle of non-Aboriginal society should not be imposed upon Aboriginal people but, at the same time, made it known that Aboriginal culture should not be expected to be necessarily accepted by other Australians.[42] The President of the NSW AECG, Mr Robert Morgan, hoped that Aboriginal people could now 'exist in a society where one culture is not subservient to any other', after previously not being able to fully access the full benefits of education, nor the necessary cultural support.[43] Mr Morgan's remarks did not spur the Education Department into acting with any urgency, because the Policy was not made mandatory until 1987. A Departmental report is pending regarding the success (or lack thereof) of the NSW AEP implementation.

A similar lack of urgency appears to have shaped New Zealand government approaches to education in the late twentieth century. So too does the limitation of Maori involvement in decision-making by constituting NACME as an advisory body. NACME's 1980 Report, *He Huarahi,* made recommendations with regard to the extension of Maori language and studies into all primary schools in New Zealand, and encouraged similar programmes for pre-school and secondary schools. Other recommendations with regard to early childhood education and care, teacher training and cultural philosophies in support of Maori were made. The apparent lack of substantive government support for such recommendations has, not surprisingly, led to alternative initiatives by Maori.

Language revival

For Maori the development of *Te Kohanga Rea* preschool kindergartens in 1982 has provided an environment in which pupils are immersed in Maori language. To the present they have proven to be very successful. In 1984 a *hui* was held at Turangawaewae Marae to talk about Maori education. From this meeting a number of resolutions were made, one of which urged Maori withdrawal from the public school system, and the establishment of an alternative schooling system based on the Kohanga Reo model. Confidence in the public school system by Maori was at an ebb.

Kohanga Reo, as a Maori initiative, has not been fully funded by the Government and has been a struggle for those dedicated Maori who were farsighted enough to see the long-term benefits, particularly in regard to the survival of Maori language and culture:

> Without the Maori language there can be no Maori culture, and the survival of a unique Maori identity; this is the spiritual force behind the creation of Te Kohanga Reo'.[44]

Following on from the Kohangas, Kura Kaupapa Maori primary schools were gradually introduced, teaching not only in Maori language, but also in Maori philosophy and principles. This has provided a vital link towards development of the currently emerging Maori High School.

A hard core of Maori people have become very active in monitoring these initiatives. They usually foresee most 'assimilationist' and 'disempowering' strategies, such as the gradual move by the Pakeha dominated government to 'take' the initiative from Maori, and claim all successes as being government initiatives, before they can become too threatening.

This is the context in which the introduction of Taha Maori to state schools can be seen; as an attempt by government to co-opt Maori initiatives so that they do not threaten the status quo. In 1984 the Review of the Core Curriculum for Schools introduced the notion of *Taha Maori* which intended to introduce Maori language and a modicum of Maori culture into "the philosophy, the organisation and the content of the school".[45] Smith has noted that Taha Maori, as a Pakeha initiative toward 'biculturalism', is actually another method of subverting the "interests and aspirations that Maori people hold for their culture". He states that it is, in reality, a further strategy to maintain "the position of Pakeha dominance and may be in fact promoting the acculturation of Maori culture".[46] Also, as a curriculum policy initiative, Smith feels that Taha Maori should have responded to the

specific cultural needs of Maori pupils by reasserting the legitimacy of Maori language, rather than capturing the definitions of *Taha Maori* and then using it to preserve the status quo of Pakeha dominance.[47]

As Taha Maori was instituted under the name of Maori Education and funded from the Maori Education vote, Smith's fears are probably well-founded. It has always been the practice in both New Zealand and in NSW that, even though consultation often takes place (at least in the last two decades) the appointments to decision-making positions, resource allocation, and even some manipulation of those consulted usually occurs in favour of the dominant group, ensuring that the interests of that group are preserved. Often funding identified for Aboriginal and Maori programmes has been diverted into strategies which have been designed to do just that - maintain the status quo.

Wally Hirsh, in 1986, noticed that some Pakeha Aucklanders were selecting schools that had few Maori and Pacific Islander students, or did not have Maori programmes.[48] It was felt that some sort of 'segregation' was occurring in Auckland, Christchurch, and probably further afield, where Pakeha were avoiding Maori in schools and conversely, Maori were seeking schools that provided culturally sensitive programmes.[49] It could be argued then, that in this segregationist attitude was implicit racism - racist attitudes against Taha Maori and the importance of Maori language and culture. If the motives were not racist, but because parents were looking for the 'best' education for their children, then it becomes obvious that schools that allocated resources for Maori programmes could not match programmes that other schools offered, and that therefore there was a discrepancy in resource allocation at the Departmental level.

The 1980s: Policy renewal for excellence?

From the *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs* (The Miller Report), in 1986, the Australian government developed the *Aboriginal Employment Development Policy* (AEDP). In both the Policy and the Report several indicators showed that poor education retention rates, low graduation rates and low self esteem amongst Aboriginal students were significant in accounting for low employment rates for Aborigines. In addition the curricula and teaching methods of the school systems were shown as not being 'sufficiently flexible to cater for Aboriginal needs'.[50]

A Task Force was set up as the first stage in developing a National Aboriginal Education Policy. The *Report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force* (The Hughes Report) in 1988 revealed many alar1ning statistics to support fears ·about the state of Aboriginal education in Australia and, amongst others, comparisons shown through studies of these statistics revealed that if parity in participation in education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Australia was to exist, another 23000 Aborigines aged between 5 and 24 years would need· to be enrolled in education in that year.[51] The Task Force identified a definite need for the National Aboriginal Education Policy which was released in 1989.[52]

From another aspect, an increased awareness of International Human Rights (particularly as exposed during Australia's Bicentenary celebrations) and some signs of a guilt complex elicited by the 1988 'party' and subsequent Aboriginal responses, must also be considered when assessing the Government's move to formulate a national policy.[53]

Remnants of the NAEC, as well as AECG bodies from the various States, were major stakeholders at the early formation and formulation stages of the AEP. Other Aboriginal people were invited to be involved in writing the AEP, at least in its early stages, and these included an Aboriginal Reference Group, made up of a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with substantial experience in Aboriginal education issues. There are reports of a lack of communication between the Reference Group and the Working Party who actually framed the Policy. The consultation process in development of this Policy became rather 'ritualistic', and the eventual policy has been

highly criticised by Aboriginal educationalists for its assimilationist overtones. In fact, one of Australia's most distinguished (non-Aboriginal) economists and public servants, Dr H.C. Coombs publicly branded the Policy as "distinctly assimilationist" and one which would result in "cultural genocide" for Aboriginal people.[54]

The final draft of the AEP reflected the societal values of (the Commonwealth) Department of Employment, Education and Training administrators and senior Federal politicians, and to this end was a reversion to' assimilationist' strategies where it is assumed that Aborigines should change to suit the existing education systems rather than providing suggestions for altering the systems to meet the needs of Aboriginal people. On the other hand, as the first national policy of its kind it is vitally important to Aborigines, and will be 'milked' for all it is worth by Aboriginal educators.

During the 1980s New Zealand also established a Task Force. This was to review educational administration, and its report, *Administering for Excellence* (Picot Report), was released in 1988.[55] The Report tended to repeat many fundamental and historical faults with policy for Maori in New Zealand. Some of these included using research based from outside New Zealand, failing to redress power imbalances at decision-making levels, and a continuance of the 'blame-the-victim' approaches incorporated in deficit, deprivation, and self-esteem theories.[56] The old 'band-aid' treatment which has been used effectively in NSW to fend off political attacks from Aboriginal pressure groups seems to work similarly in New Zealand to slowly increase the vulnerability of indigenous people to acculturation processes leading to greater assimilation. Once again a non-Maori taskforce chose to make decisions for Maori and provided Pakeha solutions for the 'Maori problem'. *Tomorrow's Schools* was a follow-up to the Picot Report and contained very little to improve the situation of schooling crisis for Maori New Zealanders.[57]

While *Tomorrow's Schools* was being released in New Zealand, NSW released a report entitled *School-Centred Education. Building a More Responsive State School System* (The Scott Report). The Scott Report was in a similar vein to the *Picot Report,* although in the Scott Report there is no specific mention of Aboriginal needs. It seems that administration of schools is not responsive (nor responsible) to changes which may benefit Aborigines. The devolution of responsibilities to school councils allows Aboriginal input, of course. But, as in New Zealand, even if indigenous people gain positions in such groups the power of decision will still work against them - they will still be a substantial minority in the power-stakes, and non-Aboriginal dominance will prevail.

More recent Maori and Aboriginal initiatives: Into the 1990s

In September 1991 the Maori Congress recommended that a taskforce for each of eight identified goals for priority action over the ensuing twelve months be appointed to advance their objectives. A year earlier a *Runanga Matua* paper for the Minister of Education· had envisaged the setting up of a Maori Education Authority as a Crown Agency, with the goal of '*iwi* control of *iwi* education'. This would be expected to move the locus of control from government policy level to people level - a target of the NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Network and the NSW AECG for many years, but one which has not yet been near to attainable.

In response, the Ministry of Education's Maori Group, 'Te Wahonga Maori', put forward a Ten Point Plan For Maori Education which appears to have looked at where Maori education was already headed under Maori initiatives, and captured it in a paper. There were Maori represented on the production team, but it is a topic for debate in the Maori communities as to just how representative of the community they were. Perhaps the Plan was a 'quick' policy response under a new National government. The collapse, by Pakeha interests, from fourteen to ten points is suggestive of some erosion of the initial plan. Although copies of the Ten Point Plan have been distributed to all Maori Principals and Board Chairpersons for perusal it would, perhaps, have been much better to have had some of these people in the Group which made the decisions. Each school seems to be operating autonomously, not necessarily using the Plan, but continuing its own initiatives as previously.[58]

In NSW, two Aboriginal-run schools have been operating. Mirriwinni Gardens accepts both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and teaches from Kindergarten level through to Year 11. It has a School Board dominated by Aborigines and, although the school does not yet provide Aboriginal principles and philosophy through Aboriginal language (as do the *Kura Kaupapa Maori* schools) the intention is to meet the needs of Aboriginal children wherever possible, and to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and perspectives into all courses and subjects. Pemulwuy Koori College also opened its doors in Sydney, in 1991. Unfortunately, Federal recurrent funding was only approved up until the end of 1992, while NSW provided 'top-up' funding. Even though the college met all Board of Studies requirements in regard to syllabi and curriculum! the school failed to attract enough students for 1993 and was forced to close. The College was populated with many Aboriginal students who had poor attendance histories, and the reality is that this would not change overnight. In the eyes of the funding bodies, the school was expected to be up and running satisfactorily within two years. A realist would have seen that it would take at least five years for such an initiative to overcome all (or most) of the perceived difficulties. There are probably many who would feel satisfied that another Aboriginal initiative has failed and that Aborigines are, once again, compelled to compete in the culturally inappropriate mainstream public school system.

There is a definite need for Aboriginal teachers teaching in Aboriginal controlled primary and secondary schools to provide a follow-on for the increasing number of pre-school children who are experiencing their first schooling in Aboriginal Kindergartens and Child-care Centres. Maori experiences in seeing children pass from Te Kohanga Reo pre-schools into mainstream primary schools and, to then 'forget' the language they were immersed in, accelerated the introduction of Kura Kaupapa Maori. Aborigines in NSW need also to bridge this gap.

Recent political trends: Future dimensions

Recent policies in both New Zealand and NSW have shown the influence of New Rightism which should be of vital concern for the indigenous peoples in each locality.[59] Individualism, competitiveness, and disregard for other cultural and language concerns through the ethnocentrism ingrained in New Right ideology can only lead to further erosion of Aboriginal and Maori traditional politics, society, values and attitudes and further assimilationist development. As 'Equity' seems to be a major concern for New Right ideology to cope with, it is one area on which indigenous peoples must concentrate for social and educational justice.

Education and schooling cannot be reduced to purely economic considerations. Aboriginal and Maori educationalists need to ensure that programmes thus far initiated are not seen as simply 'flavour-of-the-month' fads, or a fashion trend, but are pursued at the highest levels in a bid to arrest the covert assimilationist policies that still abound under various guises. Even though government policies developed for Maori and Aboriginal Education have been heralded under different themes such as 'Christianisation', 'Civilization', 'Integration' or 'Self-Determination', all have had the same underlying goal - that of' Assimilation'.

Much of the reason that NSW Aborigines lag behind Maori in the quest for control of their schooling is historical, in that there has been no Treaty for Aborigines and that there has been a wider spread of language loss due to the diverse range of languages in existence at the initial European invasion. On the other hand, the survival of Maori language is still at a critical stage, and cultural survival for Maori is seen as dependent on retention and renewal of language. Only for the fact that *ad hoe* Maori political movements have become more organised, that there is a hard core of Maori people to fight other political thrusts, and that Maori representation in government is guaranteed, the future would not look so good.

With the Maori population in New Zealand increasing rapidly one wonders just how much this will influence the government into offering a larger 'bite of the pie' to Maori. NSW has recently

passed all other States to have the highest Aboriginal population in Australia. Aborigines (like the Maori) will not die out, and resistance to total assimilation will continue, although some acculturation will always be accepted, but on the terms of the Aborigine and the Maori.

Conclusion

Although no exact formula can be identified which would provide indicators that policy for one group will soon become policy for the other, Maori and Aboriginal education policies have historically tended to follow a similar pattern. Australia seems to follow New Zealand in much of its policy-making with regard to its indigenous groups, and recent trends in non-Aboriginal areas have seen a similar following. This could indicate revival programmes for Aboriginal languages, but could also be a harbinger of social 'death' by racism inherent in New Right ideology.

In any case, a positive future for Aborigines in education in NSW will probably hinge on similar factors as those for Maori in New Zealand - Aboriginal education in Aboriginal hands. For indigenous peoples to overcome the obviously insistent assimilationist policies of successive governments, they have little alternative but to take control of their own education, make their own decisions, and hope that their Governments will agree to pick up the bulk of the tab.

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3. Ibid, 57.
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6. Ibid, 61.
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9. The Treaty of Waitangi is a solemn contract between the Crown of England and the Maori people of New Zealand which is divided into three articles. In simple terms, the first cedes to the Crown sovereignty over New Zealand, the second assures Maori of the Crown's protection of all cultural and property rights, and the third gives Maori New Zealanders full rights of British citizenship.
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29. The NSW Aborigines Protection Board was set up in NSW in 1882 and later operated under the Aborigines Protection Act of 1909. It administered a deliberate absorption policy for mixed-blood Aborigines, intending to continue until the final destruction of the Aboriginal race. See Broome (1982), 82.
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31. Spoonley, P. (1988) *Race and Ethnicity.* Auckland: Oxford University Press, 74.
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53. Australia celebrated its 'Bicentenary' without the participation of most Aborigines, who instead mourned the loss of their ancient belonging to the country.
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56. Researchers are often still labelling pupils as 'backward' who are seen as culturally deprived when coming from a culture different from the mainstream culture. Reference is still made that pupils from 'cultured' homes are more likely to succeed in school, but only referring to the mainstream white Europeanised cultures. Some good definitions may be found in Chazan, M., Laing, A., Cox, T., Jackson, S. & Lloyd G. (1976) *Deprivation and School Progress.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
57. New Zealand. Department of Education (1988) *Tomorrow's Schools: The Reform of Education Administration in New Zealand.* Wellington: Department of Education/Government Printer.
58. This argument is offered following discussion with Ms Kuni Jenkins from the Research Unit for Maori Education, University of Auckland.
59. New Rightism is defined in this instance as a social philosophy or free market anarchical ideology which serves to increase and legitimate social and economic inequalities and public squalor through a return to *laissez faire* liberalism.